

Artists of the Canadian Pacific Railroad  
1881 - 1900

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A Thesis  
in  
the  
Department  
of  
Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts at Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

December 1983



Donald Allan Pringle, 1983

## ABSTRACT

### ARTISTS OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILROAD : 1881 - 1900

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This thesis is an examination of the extent and ramifications of Canadian Pacific Railway's promotion and patronage of Northwest landscape painting, its causes, and William Cornelius Van Horne's influence on Canadian art and artists. This is accomplished by a detailed study of business correspondence between Van Horne and the artists, by evaluating Van Horne's direction of the C.P.R.'s free pass program, his personal aesthetic preferences and his commission instructions to painters. Canadian art acquisitions by the Company, its directors and its associates are noted. The subject matter of the paintings produced under Company 'sponsorship' and its contribution to the development of a uniquely Canadian (ie. national) art statement is assessed. Critical reviews describing the reception of these paintings are cited.

The paper is a study of the pictorial side of a C.P.R. promotional campaign as it occurred in three phases; 1881-85, the C.P.R. sought a scheme to draw world attention to the opening of Canada's Northwest and prominent Dominion artists sought a theme of 'national'

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significance; 1886-88, the C.P.R.'s free pass program drew a flood of R.C.A. members and international artists westward believing Rocky Mountain landscapes to be the long-sought 'national' theme; 1889-1900, the C.P.R. severely restricted its sponsorship of artists but continued to commission specific topics for installation in C.P.R. institutions. The first phase was dominated by illustrators; the second, by Academicians extremely prolific in the production of mostly watercolours; and the third, by predominately Paris-trained painters executing large oil compositions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the staff of the Canadian Pacific Railway Archives (Montreal); Mr. David Jones, Mr. Jim Shields, Mr. Cecil Halsey, Mr. Peter Hrycaj, Mr. Jonathan Hanna, and Mlle Danielle Lalonde, for their warm welcome and generous assistance in this project. I also wish to thank Mr. Omer S. Lavallée for his expressed interest in my research. I am indebted to Professor Laurier Lacroix and Professor Donald Andrus who acted as readers and provided me with many valuable suggestions and insights. Finally I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Sandra Paikowsky, my thesis advisor, whose perceptive editing, inspiration and guidance saw a floundering project through to a successful conclusion.

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### List of Abbreviations

A.A.C. - Art Association of Canada  
A.A.M. - Art Association of Montreal  
B.C. - British Columbia  
B.R.A. - British Royal Academy  
C.P.R. - Canadian Pacific Railroad  
C.P.R.A. - Canadian Pacific Railroad Archives (Montreal)  
C.P.R.A.C.F. - Canadian Pacific Railroad Archives  
Correspondence File  
N.W.T. - Northwest Territories  
O.S.A. - Ontario Society of Artists  
R.C.A. - Royal Canadian Academy  
S.C.A. - Society of Canadian Artists  
T.S.N. - Toronto Saturday Night  
VHL - Van Horne Letterbook

## ARTISTS OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC-RAILROAD : 1881 - 1900

### The Railroad and the Dominion: Early Promotion and National Enthusiasts

In all but the very earliest years of railway planning and building in Canada, two aims have been dominant. One has been political, the desire to clamp together the settlements scattered across the continent, to fill the waste spaces and thus secure the physical basis for national unity and strength. The other has been commercial, the desire to capture the trade and traffic of an ever-expanding and ever-receding west.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1847<sup>2</sup> and 1879 Canada saw a flurry of railway construction and speculative activity spurred on by government policies offering liberal subsidies in cash and land. Unfortunately, many of these railway ventures faltered and failed.<sup>3</sup> All efforts to induce capitalists

<sup>1</sup> Oscar D. Skelton, The Railway Builders: A Chronicle of Overland Highways (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook and Company, 1920) p.28.

<sup>2</sup> William C. Van Horne, Letter to G.M.Dodge, July 1888, VHL, Vol.26 (Montreal: C.P.R. Archives, n.d.) p.455. The idea of a railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in Canada, was first expressed by Major Carmichael Smith, a British army officer, who in 1847, embodied his ideas in a letter addressed to Mr.(Judge)Haliburton, author of Sam Slick. In 1848, Major Smith enlarged upon his ideas, publishing a pamphlet on the subject, complete with a map of the proposed route - a map, which followed almost precisely the path taken by the C.P.R. line when it was completed some thirty-seven years later.

<sup>3</sup> Skelton, Railway Builders, p.55 and Plate opposite p.92.

to undertake the intercolonial project proved unsuccessful. Governments were swept in and out of power wholly on the issue of the need for a completed transcontinental route.<sup>4</sup>

For a great many Canadians the concept of a completed intercolonial railroad had become synonymous with nationhood. Without the railroad British Columbia threatened to leave Confederation<sup>5</sup> and there was a mounting danger that the Americans would settle the Manitoba Territory first, crushing any hopes of an unbroken link between Canada's East and West. Public pressure for national unity demanded positive government action.

Finally, on October 21, 1880, Sir Charles Tupper, on behalf of Sir John A. MacDonald's Dominion government, signed a contract with the newly formed Canadian Pacific

<sup>4</sup> Numerous political scandals resulted from efforts to complete the transcontinental route, and clouded the careers of early Canadian politicians such as Sir Allan MacNab, Sir Francis Hincks, Sir John A. MacDonald and Alexander MacKenzie. For detailed accounts see Skelton, The Railway Builders or Walter Vaughan, The Makers of Canada, Vol.10 (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1926).

<sup>5</sup> When British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871, its ten thousand inhabitants (native peoples not included) made construction of an overland railway link, between East and West, an indispensable condition of union. The Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, accepted this condition and declared the road would be built through private enterprise aided by generous government incentives.

Railway Syndicate.<sup>6</sup> In exchange for a guarantee of the road's completion the Syndicate was given the seven hundred and ten miles of already laid track and roadbed, twenty-five million dollars cash and twenty-five million acres of selected land from the fertile belt.<sup>7</sup> The C.P.R. Syndicate was allowed ten years to fulfil its promise - a steel rail from sea to sea.

The construction of a railroad over Northern Ontario's Precambrian Shield; across one thousand miles of prairie, then through some of the world's most rugged mountain terrain was no small feat. To accomplish the task the C.P.R. required the services of an experienced railway builder with superior management abilities. Fortunately, James Hill, one of the original Syndicate incorporators, was able to persuade his friend and fellow American, William Cornelius Van Horne, former President of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad and consultant

<sup>6</sup> Skelton, Railway Builders, p.141. Original incorporators of the C.P.R. Syndicate included: George Stephen, President of the Bank of Montreal; Richard B. Angus, General Manager of the same bank; James J. Hill, a prosperous American capitalist and railroad man; John S. Kennedy, a New York banker; Duncan McIntyne, a Montreal merchant; Martin, Rose and Company, a London investment firm; and Cohen, Reinach and Company, Paris bankers. Later Donald A. Smith, Chief Commissioner of the Hudson Bay Company joined the group.

<sup>7</sup> Skelton, Railway Builders, p.142.

for the Union Pacific transcontinental line, to undertake the challenge.<sup>8</sup> In early 1881, Van Horne took up residence in Montreal and commenced his duties as General Manager of the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

Van Horne was prompt to realize the need for an efficient, large-scale, promotional scheme to attract world attention to the opening of Canada's Northwest. He knew that the economic survival of the C.P.R. would depend upon the successful settlement and commercial development of the vast open plain between Portage la Prairie and the Rocky Mountains. The demand for freight and passenger service from the existing Western centres along the proposed C.P.R. route (Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg) would be insignificant in relation to the huge capital outlays required for the building of the road. Settlers and the traffic their presence would generate was desperately needed.

Guided by Van Horne's foresight, the C.P.R., with assistance from the Dominion government, assumed a leading role in the promotion of immigration to the Canadian west. In the autumn of 1881 they launched an advertising campaign in Great Britain with the publication of a settlement guide

<sup>8</sup> Walter Vaughan, "Sir William Van Horne" in The Makers of Canada, Vol. 10 (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1926) n.p.

entitled, The Great Prairie Provinces of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.<sup>9</sup> By 1884, the Emigration Department of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Great Britain and Europe, under the direction of Alexander Begg,<sup>10</sup> General Emigration Agent for the railway, was distributing folders, maps and pamphlets, in ten languages, to thousands of agencies in Britain and over two hundred centres in Northern Europe.<sup>11</sup>

As a prominent art connoisseur/collector and gifted amateur artist, Van Horne was most concerned with the pictorial side of the C.P.R.'s campaign. In 1881, he borrowed photographs and watercolours of Northwest scenery from his friend Sir Sandford Fleming, the former Engineer in Chief of the early transcontinental survey expeditions. Van Horne established exhibitions that began circulating throughout Great Britain to provide visual 'evidence' in support of the 'written' promotional material promising new beginnings to prospective emigrants.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> James B. Hedges, Building the Canadian West (New York: MacMillan Company, 1939) p.94.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Begg reported directly and regularly to Van Horne in Montreal.

<sup>11</sup> Hedges, Canadian West, p.95.

<sup>12</sup> Hedges, Canadian West, p.101. These exhibitions were held at various agencies, mechanics institutes, hotels, reading rooms and agricultural fairs.

It was Sandford Fleming who first realized the potential of visual images as a means of promoting the opening of Canada's Northwest. His employment of photographers Charles Horetzky and Benjamin F. Baltzly in 1871, Alexander Henderson commencing in 1872,<sup>13</sup> and watercolourist William Armstrong in 1877<sup>14</sup> launched the C.P.R.'s future as an art patron. The work of these men provided inspiration to many young artists in the new Dominion. It proved to be the invitation to artistic adventure that helped draw many artists into the service of the C.P.R. during the 'Van Horne campaign.'

<sup>13</sup> Dennis Reid, Our Own Country Canada (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1979) pp.145-59. Fleming gathered the work of these three photographers into a portfolio of one hundred and twenty plates. Three sets were produced. One was deposited with the Department of the Interior, one became the property of the Department of Public Works, and the third remained in Fleming's possession. Copies of photographs from the latter set were distributed among Fleming's friends, published in various periodicals and loaned to the C.P.R. advertising campaign.

<sup>14</sup> J. Russell Harper, Early Painters and Engravers in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970) p.10. The C.P.R.'s possession of William Armstrong's Otter Head Island, Lake Superior, 1872, watercolour on paper, 26.4 x 45.7 cm., suggests that the artist may have had an earlier involvement with the survey parties and that his association with the transcontinental route may have continued after the incorporation of the C.P.R. Syndicate. (Ref: C.P.R. Archives Photograph File # CR 16-53)

One of the cleverest and most interesting aspects of Van Horne's 1881 publicity plan was the adoption of a policy offering free transportation to the west coast and return to any artist-illustrators whose work would serve the promotional interests of the Company.<sup>15</sup> This scheme was intended to produce a large number of first-hand accounts and sketches which would point out the abundance of opportunities (eg. agricultural, commercial, touristic) in the Northwest. Favourable articles and accompanying illustrations published in journals of Great Britain and the United States endorsed the C.P.R.'s advertising campaign by providing apparently objective accounts of the Northwest's potential prosperity and the railroad's efficiency. Non-commissioned writers and artists lent an air of credibility to the Company's often boastful and perhaps over-stated advertisements.

<sup>15</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to Edwin A. Norberry (London, England), April 21, 1886, VHL, Vol. 16 (Montreal: CPRA), Microfilm, pp. 278-9. Referring to the C.P.R.'s free pass program active since 1881 Van Horne states: "... in all cases where we find an artist (illustrators included) of acknowledged merit desirous of making sketches along our line, we (the Company) take pleasure in affording him all the facilities in our power (this included free passes, letters of introduction and occasionally accommodation) ..."

Van Horne's decision to sponsor the 'special artist' (illustrator) was by no means a novel concept. In the years 1853-54 six intercontinental railway survey parties were sent to the western frontier of the United States in search of the best possible routes for what were to become the Union Pacific, the Central Pacific, and the Northern Pacific railroad lines. All expeditions were accompanied by illustrators taking advantage of varying degrees of corporate hospitality<sup>16</sup> ranging from free transportation to all expenses paid/full employment. Following the completion of the first Pacific railway line in 1863 the pictorial exploration of the American west became extremely popular. Harper's Weekly and Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper regularly dispatched artists westward.<sup>17</sup> Both the magazines and the illustrators capitalized on the free pass privileges offered by the railroad.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Taft, Artists and Illustrators of the Old West: 1850-1900 (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1953) pp. 1-8.

<sup>17</sup> Taft, Old West, pp. 36-176. Among the better known illustrators to take advantage of free passes from American railways are Joseph Becker, Paul Frenzeny, Jules Tavernier, Henry Worrall, John Mulvany, Harry Ogden, Walter Yeager, William Allen Rogers and Mary Hallock Foote. During the 1870's the Union Pacific, the Northern Pacific, and the Chicago and Northwestern railroad companies all offered free pass privileges to illustrators. Between 1880 and 1893 nearly every issue of Harper's contained a full or double page illustration by Charles Graham, a recipient of 'sponsorship' from most major American roads.

Among the first to take advantage of Van Horne's free pass program was Sidney Prior Hall (1842-1922), an English illustrator, who was dispatched by William Luson Thomas' London Graphic magazine in 1881 to illustrate the events of the Marquis de Lorne's<sup>18</sup> three month, trans-continental, promotional tour of the western provinces.<sup>19</sup> Between August 1881 and February 1882 more than one hundred of Hall's sketches recording the white man's peaceful encounters with the North American Indian were published as wood engravings in London Graphic.<sup>20</sup> These provided a valuable visual account of the last days of the great Indian tribes and promoted the High-Victorian concept of an ever-expanding Empire. Stories of romance and adventure in a new frontier sold newspapers in Great Britain while fulfilling the promotional needs of the 'Canadian Lobby' for immigration.

<sup>18</sup> Sir John Douglas Sutherland Campbell, the Marquis de Lorne, was Governor-General of Canada between 1878 and 1883.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Hogarth, Artists on Horseback: The Old West in Illustrated Journalism 1857-1900 (Toronto: General Publishing Company, 1972) p.275.

<sup>20</sup> Harold and Peggy Samuels, The Illustrated Biographical Encyclopedia of Artists of the American West (New York: Garden City Press, 1976) p.202.

Other Hall studies portrayed the day-to-day activities of the Governor-General, Princess Louise, and their entourage of prominent journalists, army officers, politicians and men of science.<sup>21</sup> Many were used to illustrate Lord Lorne's Canadian Pictures published in 1884 (London). The text was an account of Lorne's travels in the Dominion and intended as a guide book for prospective emigrants.<sup>22</sup>

Of the many illustrators who received pass privileges<sup>23</sup> William Daniel Blatchly (1838-1903) and F.W. Curzon (n.d.)

<sup>21</sup> See Sidney Prior Hall's "Canada 1878, Northwest 1881", a sketchbook in the collection of the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa. For a complete list of Hall's Northwest studies see Hogarth, Artists on Horseback, pp. 275-77.

<sup>22</sup> Hogarth, Artists on Horseback, p. 270.

<sup>23</sup> For a more detailed account of the many illustrators involved with the C.P.R. free pass program see Hogarth, Artists on Horseback. Among the more noteworthy of these 'special artists' were those who reported on Royal Tours and important historical events - Frederick Villiers (1852-1922) with Lord Stanley's 1889 tour; Melton Prior (1845-1910) reporting on the impact of the C.P.R. in opening the Canadian west in 1888 and accompanying the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York's tour in 1901; Inglis Sheldon Williams (1870-1940), Richard Caton Woodville Jr. (1856-1927), and Sidney Higham (active 1890-1905) reporting on the progress of settlement in 1887, 1890, and 1904 respectively; and Charles E. Fripp (1854-1906), Julius Mendes Price (1860-1924) and R.C. Woodville Jr. covering the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush.

were the most widely published.<sup>24</sup> They accompanied the Middleton Expedition, a militia garrison from Kingston, which was rushed to the Manitoba Territory to put down the 1885 Louis Riel Rebellion. Blatchly and Curzon's illustrated reports, citing the swiftness and success of the police action, were picked up and carried by most international magazines. This proved to be a substantial benefit to the C.P.R.'s campaign. World-wide, people read about the efficiency and reliability of Canada's transcontinental railway, tested and proven in a crisis situation. Would-be tourists or immigrants were assured that they could place their security in the able hands of the Canadian military and Northwest Mounted Police.

The work produced by C.P.R. 'sponsored' illustrators was of more historical than artistic importance. By 'academic' standards their drawings and engravings were crude and unsophisticated, but they were significant historically for two reasons. First, because they were for newspapers and magazines they did provide an accurate pictorial account of incidents that occurred in the opening

<sup>24</sup> Harper, Early Painters, pp.35 and 81. Blatchly and Curzon were originally dispatched by Illustrated London News and Canadian War News respectively.

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of the Northwest frontier - episodes for which there were no other forms of visual record.<sup>25</sup> Second, C.P.R.

'sponsorship' of the 'special artist' occurred during a period of sharp decline in Canadian illustrated journalism. The growing popularity of the photograph was rapidly phasing out the need for illustrators and a C.P.R. 'contract' was, therefore, among the final assignments of a last generation of 'special artists.'

On November 7th 1885, five years ahead of schedule, the 'Last Spike' was driven home by Sir Donald Smith at Craigellachie, British Columbia.<sup>26</sup> The ceremony marked the completion of the longest railway line in the world - the last great transcontinental route blazed by mankind.<sup>27</sup> Nationhood, national pride and the railroad were now inextricable. After the aforementioned, highly publicized Riel Rebellion and the 'Last Spike' ceremony, the C.P.R. had no difficulty in attracting artists whose work would support the Company's promotional efforts. The free pass program continued to act as an incentive, drawing a flood

<sup>25</sup> Except for landscape photography and engineering analysis (ie. photographs of trestles, rock cuts, roadbeds) the photographer was rarely employed in the Northwest.

<sup>26</sup> Two construction crews worked on the C.P.R. line. One started in Vancouver and worked its way eastward; the other commenced in Northern Ontario and proceeded west across the prairies. They met at Craigellachie.

<sup>27</sup> By 1885 both the United States and Russia had already completed transcontinental railway lines.

of artists to Canada's western frontier over the next twenty year period.

Commencing in the summer of 1886 many of Canada's most important landscape painters began to play an active role in the C.P.R. campaign. The reasons for their sudden interest and involvement are numerous and complex. When Confederation politically united Upper and Lower Canada in 1867, a wave of national pride swept the country. To a great many Canadians, the untamed bearing of this country's huge tracts of relatively unchartered and undeveloped land, began to take on a spiritual meaning. It created a mood of optimism and promised opportunities for seemingly unlimited economic growth and prosperity. Several Canadian artists, principally the landscape painters, promoted this association between the 'land' and the flourishing spirit of 'nationalism.' Just four months before Confederation, their demands for a uniquely Canadian art gave rise to the creation of the Society of Canadian Artists.<sup>28</sup> This Montreal based organization sought to establish a national identity in Canadian art through the exhibition of paintings by exclusively 'Canadian' artists. Landscape subjects by Dominion artists(those residing in Canada) such as Otto

<sup>28</sup> Reid, Country Canada, pp.101-2.

Jacobi, Charles Jones Way, John Arthur Fraser, William RapHael, Allan Edson, Adolph Vogt and Thomas Mower Martin, dominated the S.C.A.'s first two exhibitions in 1868 and 1870. Though largely unsuccessful from an economic point of view, these shows were a valuable first step in the establishment of a truly 'Canadian' art movement. Their importance and contribution did not go unrecognized. On May 12th 1870, less than three months after the close of its second exhibition, the Society of Canadian Artists was incorporated by an act of the Dominion government<sup>29</sup> officially acknowledging it as Canada's only art association aimed at expressing a 'nationalistic' interest. During this same session of parliament, the Manitoba Act was passed annexing the Hudson Bay Company's Manitoba Territory to Canada, creating a fifth province.<sup>30</sup> Thus a group of Canadian painters became linked, albeit coincidentally at this point, by date alone, to the political aspirations of the federal government and to its plans for western development.

When British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871, the city of Toronto replaced Montreal as the future

<sup>30</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.143.

economic centre of Canada. Due to its geographical location, Toronto had for years attracted the exchange interests of both New York and Montreal.<sup>31</sup> With the promise of an intercolonial railroad, the 'Western Metropolis' began to rapidly expand its commercial and industrial base in preparation for becoming the trade centre and trans-shipment site for the expanding hinterlands of the Northwest.<sup>32</sup> This growing prosperity caused an increased interest in the arts, which in turn, inspired John Arthur Fraser and Thomas Mower Martin to break with the S.C.A. and join with five other Toronto painters in the creation of the Ontario Society of Artists (June 25th 1872).<sup>33</sup> The principal goal of this new society was the establishment of a permanent collection of paintings by Canadian artists to serve as a basis for a 'National' gallery.

In September 1873 Wall Street collapsed and Canada was plunged into a depression. In Montreal the S.C.A. ceased its activities. Most of its members either left the city or temporarily postponed exhibitions. In Toronto the O.S.A. was seriously affected by the economic crash

<sup>31</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.196.

<sup>32</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.199.

<sup>33</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.199. Landscape painters Marmaduke Matthews and Robert Ford Gagen were among the original members of the O.S.A.

but it was able to carry on the promotion of a 'Canadian' school of painting as initiated by the S.C.A. When the O.S.A. held its first exhibition in April 1873, its two newest members, Frederick Arthur Verner and Lucius Richard O'Brien were singled out for highest praise in the critic's reviews.<sup>34</sup> For the balance of the decade Fraser, Verner and O'Brien were considered the most accomplished painters in the Dominion. Their work set a standard for Canadian landscape painting<sup>35</sup> that attracted other landscape artists to the O.S.A. (Henry Sandham and John Hammond joined in 1874, and Forshaw Day in 1879), creating a solid foundation from which to build the much talked about 'national' school of art.<sup>36</sup>

Feeling the time was opportune, in 1879, Canada's Governor-General, the Marquis de Lorne, suggested the establishment of a Royal Canadian Academy to represent the 'national' aspirations of all artists active in the

<sup>34</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.204.

<sup>35</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.204.

<sup>36</sup> "Rev. of O.S.A. Exhibition, 1875," The Nation, Vol.2 (Toronto: May 14, 1875) p.226.

"Howland's 1876 Annual Address to the O.S.A.," The Nation, Vol.3 (Toronto: June 23, 1876) p.294.

Dominion.<sup>37</sup> Initial Academicians were selected from the memberships of the Art Association of Montreal (comprised largely of former S.C.A. artists) and from the Ontario Society of Artists. Considering the popularity of landscape painting throughout the 1870's and the emphasis its practitioners placed on delineating Canadian subject matter, there was little surprise when the Dominion's most prominent landscape artists formed the core of the Canadian Academy in March 1880. (It was given Royal assent that July and was thereafter referred to as the Royal Canadian Academy.) L.R.O'Brien was appointed by the Governor-General to serve as President and Marmaduke Matthews was to serve as Secretary.<sup>38</sup> Of twenty artists nominated as Academicians at that time, fourteen regularly painted landscapes (other than O'Brien and Matthews, the most notable were Fraser, Martin, Day, Edson and Jacobi), five prospective members confined their work to portraiture, and one gentleman was an architect. The organization was clearly oriented towards advancing the landscape image as a symbol of national art.

<sup>37</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.224.

<sup>38</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.285.

Following the incorporation of the Canadian Pacific Railroad Syndicate in October of that same year, Canada's focus of attention turned more and more to the Northwest. So too did the interests of the Royal Canadian Academy. As the R.C.A. was officially viewed and charged with representing Canada's nationalist interests in the arts, more than ever its members were in need of subject matter that would be interpreted as uniquely 'Canadian' by its patrons and the Dominion government. In particular, the landscape painters were in search of a new, largely apolitical image which would not be associated with the 'nationalistic' interests and philosophies of either rival parent society, the O.S.A. or the S.C.A./A.A.M. The Rocky Mountains ideally fit the bill. Being beyond the geographical boundaries of both former Upper and Lower Canada, the painting of Rocky Mountain vistas could not be seen as partisan by any party concerned. As the most foreboding physical barrier between Canada's East and the populated centres of British Columbia, the rugged alpine terrain symbolized the struggle to unite the Dominion and the strength of that bond. To a large portion of the Canadian public the Rocky Mountains had already come to symbolize nationhood. The C.P.R. line would allow the Royal Canadian Academicians to readily explore and exploit this fervent and growing national theme.

It would be less than honest to state that Academicians looked to the Northwest for wholly aesthetic or patriotic reasons. Granted, it is true that new, uniquely Canadian subject matter would have created a vital and stimulating atmosphere at Academy exhibitions while at the same time promoting the federal government's plans for western settlement and development. It is equally important to note that following nearly a decade of depressed art sales, the artists were 'hungry.' They hoped that the presentation of Northwest scenery, and in particular Rocky Mountain landscapes, would prove as commercially rewarding as it had been in the United States two decades earlier for artists such as Bierstadt, Moran, Keith and Kensett.

While the transcontinental railway lines in the United States also opened the western frontier to American landscape painters, the railway companies themselves were for the most part unprepared to offer fine art patronage beyond the 'survey' stages of their operations. Albert Bierstadt accompanied the Pacific Coast Railway survey in 1859,<sup>39</sup> Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell followed the

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock, "Stereoscopic Photography and the Western Paintings of Albert Bierstadt" Art Quarterly, Vol. 33, no. 4 (Winter 1970) p. 363.

Northern Pacific Railway expeditions in the early 1870's, and H. W. Hansen was commissioned to paint three canvases for the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad during the course of its construction in 1879.<sup>40</sup> Though many other 'established' American landscape artists ventured westward over the railroads to paint there is no evidence that indicates they were recipients of corporate 'hospitality'. Thus the extension of free pass privileges to Dominion landscape painters by the C.P.R. was an act unprecedented in scope and generosity.

The C.P.R.'s intent to sponsor Academicians and other landscape artists of reputation was dual-purposed. Its officials attempted to 'publically' justify their substantial expenditures in the area of fine art patronage by claiming the works of art served as part of the Company's advertising campaign to promote immigration to the Northwest. It is dubious, however, that the work of sponsored R.C.A. and O.S.A. members had any direct impact on the influx of settlers to the Canadian West. Most pioneers of this country's prairie land were land-poor emigrants from the agriculturally sterile regions of England, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Germany and the

<sup>40</sup> Taft, Old West, pp. 177-79 and 235.

Ukraine. It is doubtful that they moved in the 'right circles' to attend or patronize ~~fine art exhibitions~~. Their only exposure to work by prominent Canadian painters would have been through the wood and steel engraved reproductions appearing in penny magazines and in C.P.R. promotional brochures. Furthermore, a visual image would have offered little inducement to emigrate when compared to the promises made by the C.P.R. and the Dominion government for free or inexpensive farmland.

It would be more realistic to speculate that fine art patronage was principally aimed at serving the vanity and aesthetic tastes of the C.P.R. directors and their business associates. Exhibitions by C.P.R. sponsored artists tended to promote the Company's image as 'nation-builder' and contributor to the development of Canadian cultural affairs (ie. a 'national school' of art). Though some paintings were utilized in the C.P.R. advertising campaign, many more found their way into the private collections of Company officials and their friends.

Founding members of the Canadian Pacific Railroad Syndicate, George Stephen, Richard B. Angus, Donald Smith and James Hill, together with William C. Van Horne (General Manager of C.P.R. construction), Charles Hosmer (General Manager of C.P.R. Telegraph), Robert Reford (President of Donaldson Steamship lines - a company working

closely with the C.P.R. in its immigration efforts), and James Ross (President of the Dominion Bridge Company - the firm which constructed most major bridges and trestles for the transcontinental railroad) ranked among the foremost art collectors and patrons in North America.<sup>41</sup> Profits in the hands of these railroad magnates and corporate leaders went into the building of private art collections not to be surpassed even in Europe.

It was Van Horne who often influenced his colleagues in matters of aesthetic taste. His art purchases included old and recognized masters,<sup>42</sup> as well as works by Courbet,

<sup>41</sup> Observations from various sources including:

R.H. Hubbard, European Paintings in Canadian Collections (Toronto: 1956) Vol.1 pp.XXII and XXIII.

Vol.2 pp.XVII through XXII.

Arcadia 1 no.21:453-54. Mr 1 1893 (re: Angus and Smith)

Canadian Magazine of Politics 1 no.2:156-62. (re: Van Horne)

Dominion Illustrated 1 no.1:94 Ag 1888 (re: Angus)

2 no.41:227 Ap 13 1889 (re: Angus)

2 no.42:252 Ap 20 1889 (re: Angus)

Toronto Saturday Night 8 no.47:9 O 12 1895 (re: Angus)

9 no.19:9 Mr 28 1896 (re: Van Horne)

9 no.23:9 Ap 25 1896 (re: Van Horne)

9 no.31:9 Je 20 1896 (re: Ross)

9 no.34:9 Jl 11 1896 (re: Stephen)

9 no.37:9 Ag 1 1896 (re: Stephen)

<sup>42</sup> Martin Conway, "Sir William Van Horne's Collection in Montreal," Connoisseur XII (July 1905) pp.135-142.

The Van Horne collection included Rousseau, Velasquez, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Maes, Hals, Ruysdael, Cuyt, Van der Helst, Van de Velde, Corot, Daubigny, Delacroix, Constable, Goya, Tiepolo and Zurbaran.

Daumier, Pissaro, Cezanne, Casatt, Ryder, Toulouse-Lautrec, and El Greco before other collectors had come to appreciate their worth.<sup>43</sup> His convictions on the subject of art proved so strong that even his closest friends feared to advise him.<sup>44</sup>

Van Horne became the C.P.R.'s guiding light. In 1884 he was promoted to the Vice-Presidency and with this appointment came the responsibility of selecting those artists who might best serve the interests of the Company and its 'friends.' It was a task for which he was particularly well suited because, as an amateur artist himself, his sketching companions included C. J. Way, J. A. Aitken, George Horne Russell, John Hammond, William Brymner, Robert Harris, Homer Watson, Horatio Walker, L. R. O'Brien and Frank Darling. Through these associations, Van Horne was kept abreast of the most recent developments in Canadian art, allowing him to make shrewd judgements concerning artists potentially most valuable to the C.P.R. 'cause.'

Thus, when the C.P.R. began its 'full service',<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Hubbard, Canadian Collections, Vol.2, p.XVII.

<sup>44</sup> Hubbard, Canadian Collections, Vol.1, p.XXII.

<sup>45</sup> Full service included regular and efficient passenger and baggage service to Vancouver and return, as well as modern hotel facilities en route.

operations in the summer of 1886 there was a well-informed art connoisseur at the helm of the Company's free pass program, a large number of organized, professional artists anxious to seek 'fame and fortune' in the Northwest, and a prominent group of art collector/patrons ready and willing to offer their 'corporate' hospitality to the most gifted painters. The stage was set for the beginning of the most extensive corporate patronage of the fine arts in the history of this country.

The Artists  
1886

The awarding of free passes or commissions to artists was part of Van Horne's daily business activities. As such, an examination of his business correspondence currently bound in volumes entitled Van Horne Letterbooks (C.P.R. Archives, Montreal) provides many references to art and artists. Unfortunately the record is incomplete. Several volumes have deteriorated to the point where they can no longer be read.<sup>46</sup> The responses by artists to Van Horne's letters were not preserved intact. Some may have been redirected from the office to Van Horne's personal residence. Most have been lost or discarded. Due to a shortage of paintings by C.P.R. sponsored artists available for study in public institutions and the inaccessibility of private collections, the scant remaining documentation becomes indispensable in the study of Company patronage. It provides valuable clues as to the C.P.R.'s 'real' contribution to the development of Canadian art.

<sup>46</sup> Van Horne (or his secretary) wrote on very thin onion skin paper with highly acidic ink. The ink has eaten through the aged and brittle paper. Today his letters literally disintegrate at the touch. Fortunately a large percentage of these letterbooks were microfilmed before the deterioration was too severe. Two copies of the microfilm exist, one in the C.P.R. Archives, Montreal, and the other in the Public Archives, Ottawa.

From the outset Van Horne was discriminating in his selection of artists. First among the Royal Canadian Academicians to receive C.P.R. 'sponsorship' were Lucius Richard O'Brien(1832-1900), the country's most prominent landscape painter and President of the Academy; John Arthur Fraser(1838-1898), O'Brien's closest rival; and John Colin Forbes(1846-1925), O'Brien's favourite sketching companion. Aside from their membership in the R.C.A., it was most probably their previous experience in sketching and painting Northwest landscape scenery that influenced Van Horne's decision to 'sponsor' them. O'Brien, Fraser and Forbes were the only three active artists in the Dominion to have shown interest in Rocky Mountain subject matter prior to the completion of the transcontinental route in 1885.

L. R. O'Brien first visited the Rockies in 1882,<sup>47</sup> completing sketches for engravings to be published in the monumental, two-volume Picturesque Canada(1882) of which he was art editor. Regrettably the publishers devoted too much space to illustration of Canada's eastern provinces resulting in the omission of O'Brien's Northwest scenes.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Dennis Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977) p.88.

<sup>48</sup> L. R. O'Brien(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), October 21, 1885, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #11189.

Despite this oversight, O'Brien's sojourn to the west was most significant for it brought him to the realization that he should motivate other R.C.A. members "to seek a supportive 'spirit' in the environment, which would express the new federal ideal of a nation linked in common purpose from sea to sea."<sup>49</sup> He believed that powerful portrayals of the Rocky Mountains' legendary grandeur would stimulate the growth of Canada's landscape 'movement' and would serve as a basis for a truly 'national' art.

In 1883, J. A. Fraser ventured as far westward as Calgary via the incomplected C.P.R. line.<sup>50</sup> There appears to be no documented reason for this trip but it may have had much to do with O'Brien's search for a 'supportive spirit in the Northwest environment' and Fraser's desire to steal attention away from his bitter rival. Fraser was at least partially successful in 'challenging' O'Brien as two of his 1883 paintings, The River Kaministiquia at Fort William and On the Prairie near Calgary, found their way

<sup>49</sup> Dennis Reid, "Our own Country Canada," Journal Vol.31, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, November 24, 1978) p.6.

<sup>50</sup> "Affair with the Land," a review of Dennis Reid's "Our Own Country Canada" landscape exhibition, Weekend Magazine (Toronto: November 25, 1978) p.11.

into the private collections of Van Horne and of C.P.R. board member Richard B. Angus, respectively.<sup>51</sup> These sales paved the way for future C.P.R. 'corporate' commissions.

Unlike O'Brien and Fraser, Forbes did not view the Rocky Mountains 'first hand' prior to 1886. Working from Notman and Son photographs, he painted a number of impressive Rocky Mountain landscapes which were exhibited in Montreal as early as April 1884.<sup>52</sup> A critic for The Week described one oil painting of a "rocky cañon in the rockiest part of the Rockies" as being "...sufficient to attract much attention ... remarkable as being striking."<sup>53</sup> Encouraged by the critical success of these early landscape

<sup>51</sup> Kathryn L. Kollar, "John Artur Fraser, 1838-1898," M.F.A. Thesis Concordia University (Montreal) 1981, p.75. Kollars paper gives a more detailed account of the events leading up to Fraser's 1883 western tour and discusses in detail many of the resulting works of art.(pp.70-78.)

<sup>52</sup> "Notes on the Montreal Art Exhibition," The Week I, Vol.22 (Toronto: May 1, 1884) p.345.

<sup>53</sup> "Notes on the Montreal Art Exhibition," The Week I, Vol.22, p.345.

efforts,<sup>54</sup> Forbes continued to produce and exhibit photo-inspired Rocky Mountain scenes throughout 1885. Mount Stephen on the Line of the C.P.R. (location unknown) and Mount of the Holy Cross (location unknown),<sup>55</sup> both oils, were shown at the combined A.A.M./R.C.A. exhibition which opened in Montreal that April. Mount Stephen (perhaps the same painting) and Colorado Cañon (location unknown), also in oils, were praised by Sir George Stephen during their display at the Parliamentary Library in Ottawa that May.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Hector Charlesworth, "Canada's Oldest Portrait Painter," Toronto Saturday Night (Toronto: July 28, 1923) n.p. J. C. Forbes was principally a portrait painter. Some of his important commissions included Sir Wilfred Laurier, Sir John A. MacDonald, Sir Charles Tupper, Sir Oliver Mowat, Edward VII of England, Queen Alexandria and Governor-General Dufferin. His striking portrait of Alexander Manning, Mayor of Toronto c. 1885 (exhibited in Charles Hill's "To Found a National Gallery" exhibition, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Nov.-Dec. 1980) indicates he was highly accomplished, quite possibly at the peak of his career when he began painting Rocky Mountain landscapes. He was very much in demand, particularly by New York state politicians and businessmen throughout the 1880's. His paintings of Northwest landscapes were therefore more patriotic than economic in inspiration.

<sup>55</sup> A.A.M. Exhibition Catalogue (April 1885) n.p.

<sup>56</sup> J. C. Forbes (Toronto), Letter to Sir George Stephen (Montreal), May 22, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13224.

The artist's decision to exhibit views of Mount Stephen in both Montreal (the location of the C.P.R.'s head office) and Ottawa (at an exhibition to which Sir George Stephen was invited to attend) probably had something to do with attracting C.P.R. assistance for future exhibitions by flattering the Company's President. Forbes was fortunate enough to receive exhibition space for Mount Stephen on the Line of the C.P.R., Mount of the Holy Cross, and Colorado Cañon at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition which opened in London in May of the following year.<sup>57</sup> It was a show in which the C.P.R. played a considerable organizational role.<sup>58</sup>

Yet another reason for Van Horne's interest in Fraser, Forbes and O'Brien was undoubtedly their close ties to American art. In the early 1880's both Fraser and Forbes were regular contributors to and members of several art societies in the United States.<sup>59</sup> O'Brien had painted with

<sup>57</sup> "Colonial and Indian Exhibition," catalogue (London: May 1886) n.p.

<sup>58</sup> see discussion under Fraser section of this paper

<sup>59</sup> Fraser belonged to the American Watercolour Society, the Salmagundi Club of New York, the New York Watercolour Society and the Boston Watercolour Society. see Kollar, "Fraser," pp.70-80. Forbes exhibited in Philadelphia and New York prior to his involvement with the C.P.R. see Harper, Early Painters, p.122., "Art Notes," TSN, Vol.6 no.21 (Toronto: April 15, 1893) p.15; Vol.6 no.23 (April 29, 1893) p.15. and Vol.6 no.24 (May 5, 1893) p.14. Fraser took up full-time residence in Boston in 1885 and Forbes in New York in 1893.

famous American artist Albert Bierstadt in Quebec City in 1880 and had worked closely with Thomas Moran on his illustrative work for Picturesque Canada in 1882.<sup>60</sup> As an American citizen, Van Horne would have been well aware of the impact that the Rocky Mountain 'school' had had in the opening of the western United States. In Van Horne's mind, a sound knowledge of this American landscape 'movement' (an offspring of the Hudson River School), was a valuable prerequisite for his earliest sponsored painters.

The success of J. A. Fraser's 1883 trip secured him the first C.P.R. 'commission.' In November of 1884 Van Horne was in correspondence with Fraser suggesting that he undertake illustrative work for a proposed Company guide book.<sup>61</sup> However, it was not until October of 1885 that Fraser agreed to engage the assignment. In a letter to

<sup>60</sup> L. R. O'Brien's Royal Canadian Academy diploma picture, Sunrise on the Saguenay, 1880, oil on canvas, 87.6x125.7cm., in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, was painted in the style of American 'luminists' Bierstadt and Moran. It was a style that O'Brien continued to use throughout the 1880's - a style that would have much pleased Van Horne.

<sup>61</sup> J. A. Fraser (Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), October 12, 1885, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #11071.

Van Horne the artist stated:

I could prepare many of the drawings and cuts during the winter using any photographs you have and arrange for work in the field in the summer. Will you kindly favour me with an early communication stating your views which I hope to be able to meet and oblige. 62

An agreement was reached and Fraser was sent a series of photographs by Alexander Henderson to supplement his collection of Notman and Son scenes.<sup>63</sup> Documentation does not reveal the title of the proposed guide book and further reference to it does not appear in Fraser-Van Horne correspondence. It can only be assumed that Fraser completed his contract,<sup>64</sup> as his business relations with the Company continued.

<sup>62</sup> J. A. Fraser (Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), October 12, 1885, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #11071.

<sup>63</sup> Fraser had previously been Notman's Toronto-based partner.

<sup>64</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letters to T. H. Lee (New York), March 18, 1885; May 21, 1885; June 9, 1886; VHL Vol. 11, pp. 153 and 633; Vol. 16, p. 935. The C.P.R. published a British Columbia guide book (possibly titled Golden Northwest) in November 1886. The Herald printing company of New York was authorized to print one thousand copies on June 6, 1886. The issue measured eight and one half by eleven inches and included electrotype illustrations from photographs, four wood engravings (the drawings presumably by Fraser) and sixteen pages of text equivalent in quality to that found in Picturesque America or Picturesque Canada. The four wood engravings were views of Castle Mountain, Canmore, Mount Stephen and the Kicking Horse Pass. Van Horne instructed the engraver to add a railroad line and a train to the foreground of the latter image which was used as the cover design. Unfortunately a copy of this publication is unavailable for study.

In a note to A. Piers, Van Horne's personal secretary, dated November 25th 1885, Fraser offered the Company the use of his three watercolours, Rock Slide - Debris Great Glacier (location unknown), East of Yale - Near Sunset, and Last Kiss of the Sun on Mount Stephen, all painted from photographs and all shown in the Montreal gallery of A. J. Pell.<sup>65</sup> Last Kiss bears close resemblance to a photographic image and has been described by Dennis Reid as having "an open snap-shot-like composition, with no evident framing devices. The sense of space in it is determined by the changing light values throughout the scene, and the contrast between shadow and light is heightened, in certain areas, to an extreme degree."<sup>66</sup> Ann Thomas states that East of Yale also shows influences of the photographic aesthetic

<sup>65</sup> J. A. Fraser (Boston), Letter to A. Piers (Montreal), November 25, 1885, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #18830. I believe Mountain Landscape, Yale, B.C., n.d., watercolour on paper, 45.7x66.0cm., in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada is the painting Fraser referred to as East of Yale - Near Sunset. Judging by the tree line in the National Gallery piece, the righthand side of the picture is the south facing slope, therefore we are looking from east to west. The lightened area of sky to the upper left of the composition and the mountain slopes facing the viewer cast in shadow indicates that the sun is behind the mountains. If we are facing west at Yale and the sun is low in the sky directly in front of us, we are indeed East of Yale near sunset. The Sun's Last Kiss on the Crest of Mount Stephen, from Field, Rocky Mountains, British Columbia, 1886 (sic 1885), watercolour on paper, 43.8x67.3cm. Beaverbrook Art Gallery.

<sup>66</sup> Reid, "Our Own Country Canada," Journal, Vol. 31, p. 7.

and adds: "...the looser brush technique suggests a deliberate attempt on the part of the artist to inject vitality into the work and deny a mechanical quality of outline and surface that is frequently associated with the photograph."<sup>67</sup> Both compositions also sadly lack in naturalistic colouring.

Van Horne, as a gifted amateur artist himself, was well aware of the problems of working from a secondary source and was willing to overlook the shortcomings in Fraser's paintings, so much so that he purchased another watercolour titled Fraser River and the C.P.R. Line for his private collection.<sup>68</sup> In January 1886 he proposed that Fraser undertake a second Company commission writing:

Mr. Stephen, our President, is anxious that some large watercolour views of our mountain scenery should be exhibited at the Colonial Exhibition, which is to be held in London next May. We have a quantity of photographic views here, new ones, which I presume would have to be depended upon for material, as nothing could be done otherwise at this season of the year and Mr. Stephen will undertake to buy the pictures himself, if no better sale is made before the Exhibition closes. <sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Ann Thomas, Fact and Fiction: Canadian Painting and Photography: 1860-1900 (Montreal: McCord Museum, 1979) p.98.

<sup>68</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.394. According to Reid Fraser River and the C.P.R. Line, 1886, watercolour on paper, 46.3x66.8cm., Art Gallery of Hamilton, was once in Van Horne's private collection.

<sup>69</sup> W. C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to J. A. Fraser (Boston), January 6, 1886, VHL, Vol.14 (Montreal) p.857.

Fraser did not hesitate to engage the commission. An opportunity to exhibit paintings in England and a guaranteed sale was an offer very few artists would refuse. Once more Fraser was supplied with a collection of photographs, this time by Professor Oliver Buell<sup>70</sup> as well as by Henderson.<sup>71</sup> Fraser promptly prepared one Buell photograph of the Mountains at Leancoil for an engraving that was published in the February issue of Century magazine.<sup>72</sup> Later that spring another Fraser sketch of the Beaverfoot

<sup>70</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to J. A. Fraser (Boston), February 12, 1886, VHL, Vol.15 (Montreal) p.338. Professor Buell's photographs were not, as a rule, commercially available. He did not sell his work as a livelihood but was involved in photography for purely aesthetic reasons. In return for pass privileges in 1885 and 1886, Buell was obliged to sell the C.P.R. one complete and one partial set of his Northwest views. (VHL, Vol.19, pp.224-27). A complete set was framed and installed in the C.P.R.'s London office. A portion of the partial set was forwarded to Mr. Stewart Cumberland who required illustration for his text dealing with the C.P.R. He received twenty-five images. The balance, eleven photos in all, was sent to Notman and Son to be fitted with advertising frames as specified by Van Horne (VHL, Vol.19, p.489.).

<sup>71</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.385. Fraser received ten Henderson photographs; From the Summit of the Selkirks, Mouth of the Beaver near 6-Mile Creek, Down Stony Creek, Mist of Mount Stephen, Devil's Club on Tote Road - Selkirks, At Bearpaw near Leancoil, Near Summit, Kicking Horse Pass, Summit Lake - Rockies, and After Rain - Mount Stephen.

<sup>72</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to J. A. Fraser (Boston), February 12, 1886, VHL, Vol.15 (Montreal) p.338.

Mountains appeared in the same publication.<sup>73</sup> It too was based upon a Buell photograph. Illustrations of this sort served as advanced publicity for the artist's participation in the upcoming Colonial Exhibition.

By March 24th, Fraser had completed three major water-colours and had placed them in the hands of Williams and Everett of Boston for framing and fitting for a packing case.<sup>74</sup> Early in April they were shipped to Montreal for Van Horne's inspection.<sup>75</sup> Fraser valued Van Horne's criticism highly and was most anxious to met his aesthetic expectations, writing: "... there will be plenty of time to make any alterations that you may suggest on seeing them."<sup>76</sup> The three views sent to receive Van Horne's approval included Summit Lake, Mount Stephen, and Mount Hermit, the former two painted from Henderson photographs and the latter from a Buell. Their creation as mere

<sup>73</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to T. H. Lee (New York), November 26, 1886, VHL, Vol.19 (Montreal) p.357.

<sup>74</sup> J. A. Fraser(Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), March 24, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #11977.

<sup>75</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to J. A. Fraser (Boston), April 2, 1886, VHL, Vol.15 (Montreal) p.983.

<sup>76</sup> J. A. Fraser(Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), March 24, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #11977.

interpretations of a photographic image had caused Fraser a considerable degree of difficulty. In correspondence with Van Horne during their execution Fraser had expressed a concern that the photographs he had been obliged to draw from could not provide him with adequate information to paint 'true to nature' renditions of the scenes:

I am treating the Summit Lake view as a sunrise, the mountains illuminated, the west in shadow and I am keeping the light in the same direction as in the photo - and am anxious to know if such treatment is consistent with fact.

The sky in the photo is printed in from another negative and I think the view was made when the light was low while the sky negative was made about midday or afternoon. 77

Inconsistencies presented in such 'composite' images furthered Fraser's difficulties in exactitude of detail. Provided with Henderson memos referring to atmospheric conditions existing at the time the photograph was taken, Fraser also learned that Henderson used a wide angle lense.<sup>78</sup> The wide angle lense gave the impression that the mountains were less grandiose in stature, therefore less imposing than they would appear on location. This

<sup>77</sup> J. A. Fraser (Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), February 16, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #11977.

<sup>78</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to J. A. Fraser (Boston), February 19, 1886, VHL, Vol. 15 (Montreal) p. 410.

dilatory information did not advance Fraser in his efforts.

He wrote:

I am sorry that I did not know that the view was taken with a wide angle lense as the picture is about half done and of course my labor is lost. I see nothing in the other views to indicate that such a lense has been used and I certainly hope I am right for the pictures are well along on the proportions shown in the photos and I must ask you to learn, how that is, in the case of Mr. Henderson's view of Mount Stephen - the time of day and aspect of the mountain, as regards point of the compass (I have somewhat raised the mountains, here, above the proportions of the print). I am certain that the view of Hermit Mt. was not made with a panoramic lense and I have given the same treatment to the mountains. By the way, can you remember whether the impression you got of the purple color was due at all to having seen it at, near or after sunset or sunrise, and I would like to know how these mountains face also. 79

Despite further Henderson notations forwarded by Van Horne and Fraser's most sincere attempts to utilize them to his advantage, Summit Lake (location unknown), Mount Hermit (location unknown), and Mount Stephen,<sup>80</sup> suffered from many weaknesses that can be attributed to the photographic source. In Mount Stephen the 'filled in' areas of the

<sup>79</sup> J. A. Fraser (Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), February 20, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #11977.

<sup>80</sup> Mount Stephen (near Leancoil, Canadian Pacific Railway), 1886, watercolour on paper, 66.0x91.4cm., Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Baxter, Montreal.

background are particularly distracting, the result of moving from a small scale photograph to a large scale hand drawn sketch without sufficient 'detail' to incorporate into the enlarged view. Nonetheless, Sir George Stephen was enough impressed to purchase all three paintings prior to their departure for London.<sup>81</sup>

In a note dated April 15th 1886, Van Horne alerted Alexander Begg that the paintings were on route:

These paintings which are the property of the President have been sent by him for Exhibition at the 'Colonial' and I have had them consigned to you in order that the proper care of them may be assured and so that they will receive the position in the Canadian Gallery of Art at the Exhibition which their merit entitles them to. I mention their being hung in the Art Gallery particularly because to place them with the exhibition pertaining to the Railway would give them the appearance of an advertisement and possibly detract from their success. <sup>82</sup>

Begg arranged with Sir Charles Tupper to have these paintings properly hung in one of the best positions in

<sup>81</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to J. A. Fraser (Boston), January 1, 1893, VHL, Vol. 42 (Montreal) p. 455. Mount Stephen, Mount Hermit, and Summit Lake were installed in the dining room of Sir George Stephen's London residence following the close of the Colonial Exhibition. There they remained for several years despite pleas by Fraser to borrow them for various touring shows.

<sup>82</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to Alexander Begg (London), April 15, 1886, VHL, Vol. 16 (Montreal) p. 172. Fraser's Landscape, 1886, a watercolour the property of R.B. Angus was also sent on loan to the 'Colonial'.

the Canadian Art Gallery.<sup>83</sup> Van Horne was cautious. He was determined that Sir George's paintings should receive maximum exposure. He further advised Begg:

Mr. (John William Hurrell) Watts (1850-1917), R.C.A. of Ottawa has been appointed by the Government to superintend the hanging of the pictures in the Canadian Art Gallery of the Colonial Exhibition. I understand that Mr. Watts is a disciple of O'Brien whose pictures he will incline awards as regards the selection of good places and being a disciple, as I said of O'Brien it is fair to suppose that his teachings will have prejudiced him against Fraser's work. (Though Van Horne had been in correspondence with O'Brien by this date concerning the possibility of painting on behalf of the C.P.R., O'Brien had not yet produced any paintings to favour Van Horne's 'promotional' campaign.)

It will be necessary for you to keep a sharp lookout when the day arrives for arranging the Gallery and see that justice is done to our pictures. <sup>84</sup>

Begg replied that though Mr. Watts had caused "considerable trouble" and had been "somewhat meddlesome all round," the situation was well in hand. Sir Charles Tupper had instructed Mr. Watts to follow his hanging directions to the letter. <sup>85</sup> Watts, however, proved to be obstinate. He

<sup>83</sup> A. Begg (London), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 1, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13080.

<sup>84</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to A. Begg (London), April 27, 1886, VHL, Vol. 16 (Montreal) pp. 410-11.

<sup>85</sup> A. Begg (London), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 15, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13080.

disregarded Sir Charles Tupper's personal interest in the exhibition and chose to hang two of Fraser's watercolours on a screen and the third in a position which according to Begg was "neither prominent nor befitting the character of the picture."<sup>86</sup> Tupper was forced to intercede again and set up a meeting between Begg and Watts which resulted in more satisfactory positions being afforded Fraser's works - "better almost than those of O'Brien."<sup>87</sup> Each of Fraser's paintings was awarded a central wall position.

At the close of the exhibition Begg hinted at the favouritism shown towards Frasers watercolours, not because of outstanding artistic merit, but because of the influence of the C.P.R. and its shareholders in the organization of the show. With reference to the fine lodgement that was ultimately given Fraser's pieces, Begg wrote: "...Fraser has to thank in large measure, the fact that three of his works have been painted for the President."<sup>88</sup> Furthermore it appears that the C.P.R. played a role in soliciting

<sup>86</sup> A. Begg(London), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 15,1886, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #13080.

<sup>87</sup> Begg to Van Horne, May 15,1886, C.P.R.A.C.F., MS, #13080.

<sup>88</sup> Begg to Van Horne, May 15,1886, C.P.R.A.C.F., MS, #13080.

favourable exhibition reviews for Fraser. J. E. Hodgson, Professor of painting at the British Royal Academy, was 'commissioned' by Canada's Governor-General Lansdowne to complete a report on the standard of achievement in the Canadian section of the exhibition.<sup>89</sup> Hodgson was probably chosen for his bias towards a Ruskinian concept of 'truth to nature,' thus favouring the landscape art of Fraser and O'Brien over that of other Canadian painters who had been trained in Paris and who exhibited predominately figurative subjects. It is significant that Hodgson's critique was published in Sir Charles Tupper's general Report on the Canadian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition appended to the Report of the Minister of Agriculture for 1886.<sup>90</sup> Tupper's partiality towards C.P.R. related subject matter was well-known. Since signing the C.P.R. contract on behalf of the Dominion government in 1880, he had become a close friend of W.C. Van Horne. Remember it was Tupper who was responsible for Fraser's paintings receiving 'exceptional' exhibition positions and he had already procured C.P.R. passes for O'Brien's 1886 summer tour of

<sup>89</sup> Reid; Country Canada, p.382.

<sup>90</sup> Sir Charles Tupper, "Report on the Canadian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition," Report of the Minister of Agriculture (Ottawa: Dominion Government, 1887) pp.61-8.

the Northwest. It was the Governor-General and the Ministry of Agriculture which principally assisted the C.P.R./Canadian lobby for immigration. The Tupper/Lansdowne/Hodgson/Fraser association can therefore be seen as largely C.P.R. orchestrated to assist the Company's promotional scheme.

Predictably Hodgson's report served as a counterposition to more avant-garde reviews such as the one by R. A. M. Stevenson of The Magazine of Art who praised the younger Canadian painters, William Brymner, Paul Peel, Robert Harris and Percy Woodcock.<sup>91</sup> Hodgson only briefly mentioned the work of these men, then hailed O'Brien as a "very considerable and accomplished artist"<sup>92</sup> (an adequate introduction to the artist's future work for the C.P.R.), and singled out Fraser's Rocky Mountain landscapes for highest praise:

<sup>91</sup> R. A. M. Stevenson, "Review of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition," The Magazine of Art, Vol. LX (Montreal: May 1886) pp. 516-20.

<sup>92</sup> J. E. Hodgson, "Review of the Canadian Art Gallery," a part of Sir Charles Tupper's "Report of the Canadian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition," Report of the Minister of Agriculture (Ottawa: Dominion Government, 1887) pp. 66-7.

(Fraser) may appropriately be called the pioneer of a new School of Art. He seems to have gone forth into the wilderness in search of the picturesque ... he shows some daring spirit in the subjects he chooses and the natural effects he tries to represent. ... Mr. Fraser's drawings ... have, to my mind, more of the world in them than anything in the Exhibition ... I thoroughly applaud Mr. Fraser, painting his own country and to the manner born, in his effects to grapple with the artistic difficulties of such atmosphere; if he is not thoroughly successful, and if a certain rawness is observable in his pictures, time and practice will, I feel certain, bring ultimate triumph. A more serious indictment to be brought against him, is carelessness in the matter of form ... (and) colouring ... harsh and exaggerated. 93

Other than the non-naturalistic colouring already criticized in Fraser's earlier C.P.R. commissioned paintings, Dennis Reid points out it was the 'focus' that Hodgson found most objectionable.<sup>94</sup> Had Hodgson been aware of the photographic sources for Fraser's watercolours he would have understood the artist's difficulty in producing naturalistic effects. Had he known about the artist's true sources of 'inspiration' it is doubtful that he would have been persuaded to write such a favourable review. Fraser's 'arbitrary' colouring and his failure to complete studies 'from nature'

<sup>93</sup> Hodgson, "Review of the Canadian Art Gallery," Report of the Minister of Agriculture (Ottawa:1887) p.66-7.

<sup>94</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.383.

would have placed these paintings outside the boundaries of the whole Ruskinian aesthetic. Fraser's 'deception' passed as a well kept secret shared by the artist and high ranking C.P.R. officials.

Fraser's 1886 summer sojourn to the Rockies proved only slightly more productive than his winter's painting from photographs as his 'venture' was plagued with hardships from the outset. In early June he departed from Boston<sup>95</sup> where he had taken up residence a few months before, and travelled straight through to Burrard's Inlet on the West Coast where it rained almost continuously during his stay.<sup>96</sup> Near Vancouver he managed to complete studies for his oil painting, Mount Baker from Stave River, at the Confluence with the Fraser on Line of C.P.R., 1886.<sup>97</sup> It should be considered the highlight of his seasons's activities, bearing many similar compositional elements to his earlier masterful oils September Afternoon, Eastern

<sup>95</sup> J. A. Fraser(Winnipeg), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 16, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13452.

<sup>96</sup> J. A. Fraser(Lytton), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), July 20, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13815.

<sup>97</sup> Mount Baker from Stave River, at the Confluence with the Fraser on the Line of C.P.R., 1886, oil on canvas, 56.0x76.8cm., Collection of Dr. G. W. Archibald, Woodridge, Ontario.

Townships, 1873, and Laurentian Splendour, 1880.<sup>98</sup> The mountain is set back in the distance, the details of its rocky face visible through a slight haze and reflected in a tranquil body of water in the mid-ground. The sharp focus of the vegetation in the immediate foreground leaps towards the eye of the observer creating a strong three-dimensional effect in the near distance - a typically stereographic compositional trick. Dennis Reid notes that Mount Baker was completed in Fraser's Toronto studio that November<sup>99</sup> but the extremely naturalistic colouring and the intense detail could only have been achieved by carefully utilizing his 'field' sketches.

By Mid-July Fraser was working his way inland. At North Bend bush fires began in earnest;<sup>100</sup> through the irritating smoke only rare glimpses of the superb mountain scenery could be viewed. Accommodations were, according to Fraser, "abominably filthy, bad and expensive," transportation was irregular and nearly impossible to attain, free telegraph service was denied and the C.P.R.'s

<sup>98</sup> September Afternoon, Eastern Townships, 1873, oil on canvas, 76.5x132.1cm., National Gallery of Canada, Accession #18.159. Laurentian Splendour, 1880, oil on canvas, 48.9x95.3cm., National Gallery of Canada, Accession # 72.

<sup>99</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.406.

<sup>100</sup> J. A. Fraser (Lytton), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), July 20, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13815.

Western Division representative, Mr. Eagan, was reluctant to assist the artist in his work.<sup>101</sup> Consequently Fraser returned to Boston in the fall with little in the way of 'finished' paintings.

Once more he was obliged to rely on photographs in the preparation of three C.P.R. advertising illustrations for Century magazine. Mount Stephen, Mount Sir Donald (the namesakes of Sir George Stephen and Sir Donald Smith) and Syndicate Peak were drawn and engraved under the poignant supervision of Van Horne himself. Once more Fraser encountered difficulties. In referring to the preliminary sketch for Mount Stephen, Van Horne wrote:

The black and white sketches will hardly answer our purpose, the mountain not being sufficiently imposing. I made last night a rough sketch in lamp-black which will illustrate my idea: it is made mostly from memory and I have taken a great deal of license but I do not think that any one going to the spot without picture in hand to compare will ever accuse us of exaggeration ... You will of course be able to make a great many improvements on my sketch, but I hope you will preserve the scale. 102

In response Fraser praised Van Horne's conception as a

<sup>101</sup> J. A. Fraser (Lytton), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), July 20, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13815.

<sup>102</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to J. A. Fraser (Boston), December 8, 1886, VHL, Vol. 19 (Montreal), p. 445.

"grand one" but stressed the difficulty in accomplishing Van Horne's exact design "on account of the great mass of mountain without anything to contrast against it."<sup>103</sup> As a solution the image of a train was added to the foreground of the sketch. Mount Stephen, Mount Sir Donald and Syndicate Peak were scaled for reduction to a six by four and one half inch block and were published as three quarter page illustrations in early 1887.

Thanking Van Horne for his valuable assistance in the project, Fraser wrote: "...though you are the manager of the greatest railway in the world, Art has lost an able practitioner."<sup>104</sup> After further reflection, Fraser came to the realization that Van Horne's contribution to the drawing was significantly greater than his own:

I fear that in my anxiety to get away the Mount Stephen I mechanically and without due thought signed it with my name.

If so it was a mistake as whatever credit is due, is to you alone. I have merely interpreted your idea for the engraver. <sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> J. A. Fraser(Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), December 22, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #15295.

<sup>104</sup> J. A. Fraser(Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), December 23, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #15295.

<sup>105</sup> J. A. Fraser(Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 8, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #15295.

Other studio compositions executed by Fraser in the fall of 1886 show improvement over those painted prior to his visit to the heart of the Rocky Mountains. The beneficial effect of 'field study' is apparent. Unfortunately some weaknesses attributed to the photographic source remained. In the watercolours The Peak of Sir Donald in the Selkirk Range and Roger's Pass,<sup>106</sup> and an oil version of the latter, all dated 1886, the details of the mountain peaks are sharply defined, the play of light across the rocky faces is capitally rendered. Regretably the forest in the mid and foreground of all three pictures is lacking in focus and naturalistic colouring. It would appear that Fraser returned to Boston with a collection of studies of mountain facades then incorporated them into compositions largely drawn from photographic sources. Furthermore, when comparing the watercolour of Roger's Pass to the oil, it becomes evident that Fraser's artistic temperament was better suited to the opaque oil paint medium.

<sup>106</sup> The Peak of Sir Donald in the Selkirk Range, B.C., Taken from the Glacial Stream (Near its Source) Called the Illecillewaet, 1886, watercolour on paper, 66.0x44.4cm., Collection of Dr. Donald A. Grace, Calgary, Alberta.  
The Roger's Pass, 1886, watercolour on paper, 38.1x66.1cm., National Gallery of Canada, Accession #14.578.  
The Roger's Pass, 1886, oil on canvas, 55.9x76.2cm., National Gallery of Canada, Accession #4227 was commissioned (after the watercolour) by Sir Edward Watkin, former President of the Grand Trunk Railway.

One can assume that Fraser's preoccupation with the watercolour medium during the period of his career in which he painted Northwest landscapes had little to do with his personal preference. None of his Rocky Mountain water-colours can favourably compare to his masterful oils such as Mount Baker, September Afternoon, or Laurentian Splendour, all already mentioned, or A Shot in the Dawn, 1873, and Morning on the Beach at Percé, 1881.<sup>107</sup> Fraser's reluctance to put a great deal of effort into any one Rocky Mountain piece undoubtedly had much to do with the 'commercial' nature of his dealings with Century magazine and the C.P.R. Both parties imposed deadlines on the artist and demanded a substantial quantity of drawings at the expense of quality. Watercolour was a rapid and portable medium that enabled him to fulfil his 'contracts.'<sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> A Shot in the Dawn; Lake Scugog, 1873, oil on canvas, 40.6x76.2cm., National Gallery of Canada, Accession # 6938. Morning on the Beach at Percé, 1881, oil on canvas, 63.5x152.4cm., Metropolitan Toronto Library, Accession # B13-155.

<sup>108</sup> Francis K. Smith, Daniel Fowler (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1979) p.189; Reid, Country Canada, p.405; and Kollar, "Fraser," pp.100-101 and footnote 12. Watercolours by Daniel Fowler, F. A. Verner, C. J. Way, L. R. O'Brien, and Allan Edson in Fraser's personal collection suggests he admired those artists who were technically more accomplished than himself in that medium.

Fraser exhibited ten Rocky Mountain watercolours at the Queen's Hotel in Toronto in November 1886 - The Great Glacier, Mount Baker, Mount Field, Peak of Mount Field at Sunrise, Ross Peak Glacier, Summit of the Selkirks, Mount Sir Donald and Mount Stephen were among those shown.

C.P.R. patronage of Fraser between 1884 and 1886 came very close to what some seventeenth century Italian writers referred to as "servitù particolare."<sup>109</sup> The patron, in this case Van Horne, was very much involved in the production of the artist. Not only did Van Horne commission Fraser to complete illustration for specific purposes such as guide books and magazine advertisements, but he provided the artist with photographic source material, detailed suggestions as to composition and format, free transportation to the west coast and return, free accommodation where Company hotels existed, free telegraph service, letter introductions to C.P.R. superintendents instructing them to assist the artist in every way possible, and promises for purchase of completed paintings. Furthermore, Van Horne arranged for the exhibition of Fraser's work, supervised the installation of those paintings selected to be shown so as to allow them maximum exposure and solicited favourable critical reviews. C.P.R. sponsorship of Fraser was exceptional. No other artist was to receive such extensive assistance.

<sup>109</sup> Francis Haskell, Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963) p.6.

L. R. O'Brien's 'call to service' came in October of 1885 when Van Horne learned from Sir Charles Tupper that the artist was contemplating a second western tour. Realizing that few artists in this country held attitudes on art more closely aligned to the interests of the C.P.R., Van Horne was prompt in extending the full hospitality of the line to O'Brien.<sup>110</sup> O'Brien, however, reluctantly concluded that it was too late in the season to start westward with "the hope of painting anything satisfactorily"<sup>111</sup> and postponed his plans until the next spring. On April 29th 1886, O'Brien wrote to Sir Charles Tupper requesting that he correspond with Van Horne on his behalf to finalize arrangements for procuring the necessary documents. "My object," he wrote:

... would be to paint a series of pictures illustrative of the different phases of the scenery for Exhibition in London next year. If I can do this successfully I trust I may rely upon your influence and support in bringing them before the English public.

No doubt the pictures would excite much interest here in our provinces but the London public would be most important.

<sup>110</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), October 19, 1885, VHL, Vol.14 (Montreal) p.998.

<sup>111</sup> L. R. O'Brien(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), October 21, 1885, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #11189.

... I should have to take my tent and a man so as to be able to camp whenever desirable and in that wild country we would be entirely dependent upon the Courtesy of the Railway officials. 112

The resulting communication between Tupper and Van Horne set the departure date for June 14th<sup>113</sup> even though Van Horne thought that date was a little too early in the season to start.<sup>114</sup> He further advised O'Brien that he should seek a camping assistant en route, instead of bringing "a man from Ontario" who would be unfamiliar with the Northwest territory.<sup>115</sup> Van Horne fulfilled his commitment on June 12th:

Enclosing herewith a trip pass to Calgary and return and a station to station pass between Calgary and Sananas Ferry, the furthest point to which I can at present issue free transportation. You will see that I have made the station to station pass good until the 31st of October. I enclose a letter to the General Superintendent (Harry Abbott, Vancouver) and the Superintendent of the Pacific Division (R. Marpole, Donald) which may be useful to you while in the mountains.

112 L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to Sir Charles Tupper (London), April 29, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13224.

113 Charles Tupper (London), Letter to W.C. Van Horne, (Montreal), May 11, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13224.

114 W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), June 7, 1886, VHL, Vol.16 (Montreal) p.900.

115 W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), May 25, 1886, VHL, Vol.16 (Montreal) p.777.

If you have not secured one helper by the time you reach Donald, Mr. Marpole, I shall say will be able to assist you in getting hold of a good man to serve as a camp assistant. There is so much in the mountains that is uniformly magnificent and grand that it would be a difficult thing for me to specify any particular points to which to pay attention, but I think the neighborhood of the Summit of the Selkirks and the surrounding peaks is probably about as fine a range of scenery as could be found anywhere in the world. 116

Despite the most careful planning, O'Brien's departure for the mountains was ultimately delayed by final preparations required by his fellow artist and travelling companion, J. C. Forbes. Forbes had received the same pass privileges and letters of introduction as O'Brien as a result of a letter sent to Sir George Stephen in May,<sup>117</sup> at the time of his Parliamentary Library exhibition in Ottawa. In this same letter Forbes had informed the President of his desire to complete a number of Rocky Mountain sketches to serve as studies for a series of large canvases "destined for exhibition in Europe" sometime in 1887.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>116</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), June 12, 1886, VHL, Vol.16 (Montreal) pp.998-99.

<sup>117</sup> J. C. Forbes(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 19, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #13224. The artist was permitted to travel free of charge but he was required to pay freight on his camping and painting gear. Despite the fact that Forbes' work would serve the interests of the railroad, the C.P.R. sought to maximize its profits in this bizarre and tight-fisted manner.

<sup>118</sup> J. C. Forbes(Toronto), Letter to G. Stephen(Montreal), May 22, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #13224.

O'Brien waited five days for Forbes, grew impatient and departed alone on June 19th. Forbes followed on the 26th<sup>119</sup> and met O'Brien in the mountains the next week. They passed the months of July and August sketching in the vicinity of Glacier Hotel.

The subject matter found in L. R. O'Brien's paintings can be related to the sketching carried on in the region of the hotel that summer. In a letter published in The Mail, September 4th 1886, O'Brien related their (Forbes and his) fascination with the scenery:

We have been unable to tear ourselves away from these lovely mountains of the Selkirk Range. All we have done in the way of moving is to shift our camp three miles west to where the Glacier Hotel is being built. The interest of this scenery is inexhaustible, not only from the varied aspects it presents from different points of view, but from the wonderful atmospheric effects. At one moment the mountains seem quite close, masses of rich, strong colour, then they will appear far away, of the faintest gray. At one time every line and form is sharp and distinct; at another, the mountains melt and mix themselves up in the clouds so that the earth and sky are almost undistinguishable. Now the mountain sides are of the softest velvet, and presently they look like cast metal. The foregrounds, too, away from the desolation made by the railway cuttings and banks, are rich and luxuriant; large-leaved plants and flowers

<sup>119</sup> J. C. Forbes (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 19, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13224.

clothe the slopes. The trees, where the timbermen have not culled out the finest, are most picturesque. 120

It was Van Horne who suggested that the artists, first of all, confine their sketching activities to the area immediately surrounding the hotel. The C.P.R. had taken great care to strategically locate Glacier House so as to take advantage of neighbouring natural attractions. "The Big Glacier" was situated just to the right of the hotel entrance, "Syndicate Peak" was directly in front, "Rogers' Pass" was to the near left, and the "Valley of the Illecillewaet" was to the extreme left.<sup>121</sup>

O'Brien closely followed Van Horne's instructions. In a letter dated November 22nd 1886, O'Brien invited Van Horne to his Toronto studio to review the results of his summer's efforts, and to discuss a series of black and white drawings completed near Glacier Hotel.<sup>122</sup> It was probably during this visit that Van Horne saw a monochromatic watercolour of a bridge spanning the Kicking Horse Pass. The artist had sketched from a vantage point

<sup>120</sup> The Mail (Toronto: September 4, 1886) quoted in Reid's Country Canada, p. 397.

<sup>121</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to Harry Abbott (Northwest Territories), August 23, 1886, VHL, n.v., n.p.

<sup>122</sup> L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), November 22, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13224. O'Brien returned from the mountains in September.

as far back from the trestle crossing as the confines of the valley would allow. From here he drew a vista of the valley with two steam engines labouring to pull a train up a steep incline, a foaming torrent of water channeling far below and mist shrouded mountain peaks pressing in from above. A battered tree stump in the foreground and the diminutive proportions of the train in comparison to the gigantic scale of the mountain landscape seemed to represent man's triumph over staggering odds in bringing an industrialized civilization to the wilderness. Van Horne was so impressed by both the masterful technical execution and by the 'symbolism' that he commissioned a large, full-coloured watercolour to be 'worked up' from the study. Bridge - Kicking Horse Pass - Second Crossing was completed in the early months of 1887<sup>123</sup> and was forwarded to Van Horne in Montreal. It became a banner piece for the C.P.R.'s advertising campaign and was prominently exhibited throughout Great Britain until as late as 1892.<sup>124</sup> Van Horne also purchased six black and

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<sup>123</sup> Bridge - Kicking Horse Pass - Second Crossing, 1887, watercolour on paper, 103.0x69.2cm., Collection of Mr. and Mrs. F. Scheffer, Toronto. It was titled Through the Rocky Mountains, a Pass on the Canadian Highway in Reid's "Our Own Country Canada" landscape exhibition and appears in Country Canada, Plate 169, p.415.

<sup>124</sup> Van, "Art and Artists," TSN, Vol.6, no.13 (Toronto: February 18, 1893) p.15.

white watercolour drawings from O'Brien. These included A Bridal Path - Valley of the Illecillewaet, Glacier House and the Great Glaciers, Mount Sir Donald, Glacier Mountains from Summit Pass and a rendition of Roger's Pass (locations of all unknown).<sup>125</sup> Further details of this purchase were not disclosed, and the precise utilization of these sketches is unknown.

Mountain Scene - Loop at Glacier, 1886,<sup>126</sup> a small monochromatic watercolour presently in the C.P.R. Archives collection, may well be one of the previously mentioned studies retitled. It shares several similar compositional elements with Bridge - Kicking Horse Pass - Second Crossing. In this instance, not one but two trains are being hauled up steeply inclined gradings by locomotives, to the extreme left and right of the horizontal format and male and female horseback riders have been sketched into the near foreground. They create a romantic image of lovers standing at the gateway to some exotic paradise - a 'sublime' nature reminiscent of earlier American landscape 'styles' such as that of the Hudson River School. It is a picture that would have doubtlessly much pleased Van

<sup>125</sup> L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), March 10, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #16131.

<sup>126</sup> Mountain Landscape - Loop at Glacier, 1886, water-colour, 35.6x54.6cm., C.P.R. Archives, Montreal.

Horne.

From a commercial point of view O'Brien's involvement with the C.P.R. proved most rewarding, even more profitable than for Fraser. It seems that Company officials could not resist the purchase of an O'Brien watercolour. In early 1887 Sir Donald Smith acquired Mountain Landscape,<sup>127</sup> so nearly identical in size and composition to Bridge - Kicking Horse Pass that it is inviting to speculate both paintings originated from the same 'field' study. On April 12th, O'Brien extended an invitation to Van Horne to attend the opening of the R.C.A.'s 1887 exhibition held in Montreal.<sup>128</sup> Eleven full-coloured watercolours by O'Brien illustrating the Canadian highway through the mountains were on display. These had been painted for exhibition at the Dudley Gallery, London, England, an institution to which the artist had been invited to contribute works.<sup>129</sup> Encouraged by Van Horne, Sir George Stephen purchased all

<sup>127</sup> Mountain Landscape, 1886, watercolour on paper, 101.0x53.3cm., Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Accession # 27.355. A gift of Lord Strathcona (Sir Donald Smith), 1927.

<sup>128</sup> L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 12, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #16838.

<sup>129</sup> L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 12, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #16838.

eleven paintings prior to their departure for Great Britain late the following month.<sup>130</sup> The sale netted more than two thousand dollars for O'Brien.<sup>131</sup> O'Brien was much pleased that his Rocky Mountain landscape paintings were gaining acceptance and he was indebted to Van Horne for his generous support. In an act of appreciation O'Brien nominated Van Horne as honorary member of the Royal Canadian Academy,<sup>132</sup> finally establishing a strong and lasting link between the nationalistic aspirations of the C.P.R. Syndicate and those of the Academy of art.

In sharp contrast to O'Brien's critical and commercial success, John Colin Forbes failed to exhibit a single Rocky Mountain landscape at the A.A.M., O.S.A., or R.C.A. shows in the years that followed even though he had remained in the mountains nearly two months longer than O'Brien. There is no evidence available that indicates he actually

<sup>130</sup> Sir George Stephen sold the bulk of his European art collection in 1884 to invest in the C.P.R. project. The near-empty walls of his Montreal and London mansions cried out to be filled with paintings. Sir George covered them with Canadian art - predominately C.P.R. oriented. The eleven O'Brien watercolours were probably installed in his London residence after the close of the Dudley Gallery showing and they remain in England today.

<sup>131</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.410.

<sup>132</sup> L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 12, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #16838.

painted his proposed series of 'large canvases' or that he exhibited Rocky Mountain landscapes abroad despite what he had said to Sir George Stephen. Perhaps he was preoccupied with his profitable portrait business that enabled him to purchase a large house and studio on fashionable College Avenue in Toronto in December of 1887.<sup>133</sup> There is no further reference to Forbes in C.P.R. business correspondence. He simply vanished from the 'picture.'

Other artists granted pass privileges in the summer of 1886 were less stringently tied to the C.P.R. promotional program. William Brymner (1855-1925) was provided with a list of proposed painting sites but otherwise was given free reign over his sketching activities. In 1879 he had been one of the first Canadians to study under A. W. Bouguereau and Tony Robert-Fleury at the Académie Julian, France. He returned to Canada in 1885, much influenced by 'grand manner' naturalism and by the palette of the French Impressionists. When Van Horne learned that

<sup>133</sup> "Art Notes," TSN, Vol.1, no.2:10; Vol.2, no.79:7; Vol.6, no.21:15 and Vol.6, no.24:14 (1887, 1889, 1893) The O.S.A.'s 1889 exhibition was the first time Forbes publically exhibited paintings after his four and one half month visit in the Canadian Rockies. (He remained in the mountains at least until November 15th 1886.) He showed only two insignificant still lifes, Bananas and Peaches. In 1893 he sold his Toronto home and his entire Canadian collection (one hundred paintings sold through Dickson and Townsend Co., 22 King St., May 2,3,4) and moved to New York State. There may have been Northwest views in that sale.

William Brymner was anxious to paint Northwest scenery with hopes of attracting buyers in the East, he did not hesitate to offer the artist free transportation to the Pacific and return.<sup>134</sup> Van Horne was keenly aware that Brymner's French training<sup>135</sup> offered a valuable opportunity to add a new dimension to landscape painting in the Dominion. The depiction of breathtaking mountain vistas alone produced an overpowering sense of 'wild' that did not readily attract homesteading types. The inclusion of human figures in the wilderness setting was required for good promotional art. Brymner's long-time involvement with portraiture and his passion for landscape painting blended to create a genre-like flavour in his work that Van Horne knew was ideally suited to the publicity needs of the Company.

In early May of 1886 Brymner arrived at the Blackfoot Indian reservation at Gleichen, Alberta, in the heart of the Selkirk Range.<sup>136</sup> Here he undertook a series of sketches portraying Indian domestic life and the native

<sup>134</sup> The praise heaped upon Brymner's paintings at the Colonial and Indian exhibition by R.A.M. Stevenson could have prompted Van Horne's generous offer.

<sup>135</sup> Janet Braide, William Brymner (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1979) p.21.

<sup>136</sup> Braide, Brymner, p.33. Thanks to his father's influence, William Brymner was granted special permission to remain on the reservation (North Camp) with the Anglican minister John Tims.

people's interaction with the white man. The notational style of a number of these drawings<sup>137</sup> indicates they were intended only as 'aide-mémoire' for future studio compositions. They were artistically far removed from the magnificent oil paintings that resulted. Giving Rations to the Blackfeet Indians, N.W.T., 1886,<sup>138</sup> is a prime example of Brymner's oil paintings dating from his stay on the reservation. Unlike Sydney Prior Hall, who five years earlier painted the Blackfeet as a proud, ceremonial people adjusting well to 'civilization,' Brymner showed them as sullen-faced, docile and pathetic in pose and down-trodden in spirit - the shattered remains of a once mighty tribe. Regrettably the latter's interpretation was probably closest to the truth. Brymner referred to them as "comical" and "painted savages."<sup>139</sup> His attitude was typical of nineteenth century white man's opinion of native peoples.

Brymner exhibited Giving Rations at the A.A.M. in April of 1887 along with two other 'genre-like' oil

<sup>137</sup> The Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario, presently owns the Brymner sketchbooks he used during his 1886 visit to the Canadian Northwest.

<sup>138</sup> Giving Rations to the Blackfeet Indians, N.W.T., 1886, oil on canvas, 67.1x81.9cm., Art Gallery of Hamilton.

<sup>139</sup> William Brymner(N.W.T.), Letter to Douglas Brymner (Montreal), May 12, 1886, in Braide, Brymner, p.33.

paintings of Indian subjects in the landscape titled, Yale in the Morning, 1886,<sup>140</sup> and Along the Bow River, N.W.T., 1886' (location unknown). All three works were well received despite some prejudice against subject matter and the dominance of 'pure' landscapes in the show. Yale and Giving Rations were purchased by Sir George Stephen during the course of the exhibition.<sup>141</sup>

The only other Brymner painting known to exist dating from his 1886 tour of the Northwest is Mount Cheops from Roger's Pass, Selkirk Range, a large oil landscape considerably less impressive than his Indian 'documentaries.'<sup>142</sup> Though not inscribed with a date Mount Cheops has been ascribed to that summer's work. In September, Brymner had written to his father stating his intention to beat his "artkins" who had been sent out by the C.P.R. and mentioned he was working on a painting exceeding four feet in length.<sup>143</sup> Unprecedented in scale and unique in subject

<sup>140</sup> Yale in the Morning, 1886, oil on canvas, 66.0x 81.3cm., Collection of Mr. Rowland Webb, Vancouver.

<sup>141</sup> Braide, Brymner, pp.33-4.

<sup>142</sup> Mount Cheops is in the collection of the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Ontario.

<sup>143</sup> Braide, Brymner, pp.34-5.

matter when compared to the remainder of his summer's projects, Mount Cheops was probably a C.P.R. commission. In Mount Cheops the human element for which Brymner was noted has been entirely overpowered by the grand scale of the mountain peaks and the prominence of the train. Where the locomotive in L. R. O'Brien's Bridge - Kicking Horse Pass binds the composition, Brymner's train distracts from the whole. It gives the work a 'commercial' quality - the overall impression of an advertisement poster. Mount Cheops was not exhibited at the A.A.M. and there is no mention of it in the literature referring to other Brymner shows. Presumably it was presented directly to the Company or one of its officials for purchase as it hung in the dining room of the C.P.R.'s Royal Alexandria Hotel in Winnipeg until the hotel's demolition in the early 1960's.

Upon his return from the Selkirks in October of 1886, Brymner took up the position of Master of the School of Art at the A.A.M. There he remained for many years, his teaching activities and the need for a steady income, preventing him from returning to the Rockies on behalf of the C.P.R. until 1892.

Less is known about the work of other artists who were involved with the C.P.R.'s western tours in 1886. The Scottish painter, James Alfred Aitken (1846-1897), for example, visited the Rockies as a result of a personal

invitation from his long-time friend W. C. Van Horne.<sup>144</sup> He was provided with free food and accommodation at the Glacier Hotel for the entire summer, and transportation to and from the resort. It is believed these expenses were underwritten by Van Horne himself.

During his stay in British Columbia, Aitken was supplied with a series of thirteen photographs taken by Professor Oliver Buell.<sup>145</sup> In what way these views were utilized has yet to be determined as Aitken apparently did not exhibit in Canada. His sponsorship by Van Horne, instead of by the Company, indicates his studies may have been of an intimate nature, intended for private use only. He did however strike up a friendship with Fraser and O'Brien and returned to the Rockies to sketch in the latter's company the following summer.<sup>146</sup>

George Robert Bruenech(1851-1916); like O'Brien and Brymner, became involved with the C.P.R. immediately after his successful participation in the 1886 Colonial and

<sup>144</sup> Bone, When the Steel went Through, p.125.

<sup>145</sup> A. Piers(Montreal), Letter to Professor Oliver Buell(C/o R. Marpole, Donald, B.C.), November 16, 1886, VHL, Vol.19 (Montreal) pp.224-27.

<sup>146</sup> L. R. O'Brien(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 12, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #16812.

Indian exhibition. This indicates that the show may have served the Company not only as a display case for Rocky Mountain subject matter (ie. the watercolours of Fraser), but as a 'testing' ground for future artists worthy of sponsorship.

Incomplete documentation eliminates the possibility of determining Bruenech's precise relationship with the C.P.R. It is known that he introduced himself to Van Horne in a letter dated June 2nd 1885, and invited Van Horne to visit his Toronto studio and view his sketches taken along the St Lawrence River, the Upper Ottawa, on the Muskoka Lakes and in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton.<sup>147</sup> These were probably the studies for the paintings Bruenech exhibited at the R.C.A. exhibition in February 1886; a selection of which were forwarded to the Colonial show in London. The next 'existing' correspondence between the artist and Van Horne dates from November and December 1886, and refers to a proposed, Company financed British Columbia exhibition for which Bruenech had already completed the paintings.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>147</sup> G. Bruenech(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 2, 1885, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #9846.

<sup>148</sup> The C.P.R. Archives Letter Index cites letters that are now missing. File #8663, 11131, 11331, 11790, 10458. Vague reference is made to a B.C. exhibition held in Sherbrooke in early 1887(File #13524) and another in Toronto around the same date(File #13285). One or both of these may have involved Bruenech.

Bruenech and his paintings were granted free transportation to and from the site of the exhibition, the location of which remains unknown. Nothing else is known about this 1886 C.P.R. commission.

Not all artists drawn to paint in the Rocky Mountains in 1886 were professionals. Ellen Elizabeth (Elsie) Spragge was both an author and amateur artist who produced several articles and watercolours thematically related to the C.P.R. and the magnificent scenery along its line. She is said to have been the first woman author to illustrate her own writings.<sup>149</sup> Mrs. Spragge was in correspondence with Van Horne in May of 1886 outlining her intentions to publish a series of illustrated articles on British Columbia.<sup>150</sup> She was very much concerned that despite the C.P.R. advertising campaign, information about the West was not readily available to interested parties in eastern Canada. She wrote:

... no such books are to be found in Toronto. I have made every inquiry as I wished to procure facts and statistics ... I have seen no sketches or pictures or photographs ever of any part of

<sup>149</sup> J. R. Harper, Early Painters, p.295.

<sup>150</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to E. Spragge (Toronto), May 27, 1886, VHL, Vol.16 (Montreal) pp.806-7.

the Rockies or B.C. through which the line passes ... 151

The offer of her services to undertake a publicity project and her subsequent request for free transportation was refused by Van Horne. He informed her that a great many requests for transportation had already been granted and that a large number of articles dealing with the C.P.R. were in progress.

Referring to herself as a person of some public spirit, "determined to do good for her country,"<sup>152</sup> Elsie Spragge undertook the voyage westward at her own expense. She travelled via the C.P.R. as far west as Donald, B.C. making notes and sketches en route. She remained in the mountains until late October sending detailed notes of railway activities and vivid descriptions of scenery, on and off the line, east to Week magazine in which they were published.

In November Mrs. Spragge mailed Van Horne two large black and white sketches of the mountains in the hope that the Company could utilize them in some way. Once again she

<sup>151</sup> E. Spragge (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 30, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #13393.

<sup>152</sup> E. Spragge (Donald), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 13, 1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #28205.

was disappointed. Writing on the Vice-President's behalf,  
A. Piers informed Mrs. Spragge:

Thanks to the good services of a photographer and several kindly disposed artists we have already on hand a good deal more pictorial material than we shall be literally to make use of for various plans and such being the case he (Van Horne) would not feel disposed to incur any more expense in that particular direction. Reproducing pictures even by the patent processes which are now in use I find to be an expensive job. 153

In response to this letter Mrs. Spragge decided to have a number of her watercolour sketches chromo-lithographed in England and would arrange for their publication herself. Realizing that he had a most determined and dedicated promoter of the C.P.R. on his hands, Van Horne made arrangements to facilitate Mrs. Spragge's travels during the following four seasons. The Company's investment proved most worthwhile for Elsie Spragge became one of Canada's most prolific authors on the subject of the C.P.R. and its related activities. Her numerous sketches and articles in penny magazines such as Week, Dominion Illustrated, Century, and Vancouver World reached more people than any of the paintings executed by members of the Royal

<sup>153</sup> A. Piers (Montreal), Letter to E. Spragge (Donald), November 11, 1886, VHL, Vol. 19 (Montreal) p.177.

Canadian Academy.<sup>154</sup>

Another artist to volunteer assistance to the advertising campaign came from the ranks of the C.P.R. itself. By April of 1886, Bradley Herbert Lewis, a Company lake topographer, had completed a series of twenty watercolours showing the railway line as it passed through the Rocky Mountains.<sup>155</sup> These attracted the attention of Van Horne who arranged to have them displayed in the C.P.R. section of the Colonial and Indian exhibition, alongside the Northwest photographs of Notman and Henderson. Lewis' works were greeted warmly and Van Horne purchased several for his private collection. Encouraged by this initial success, Lewis passed another year in the employ of the C.P.R. using all his spare time in the study of art. In December of 1888 he resigned his position to dedicate all

<sup>154</sup> By April 1887 Mrs. Spragge had published a little book entitled From Ontario to the Pacific. It was later rereleased in Great Britain. She contributed some thirteen articles and fifty sketches to Dominion Illustrated in 1889 alone. She received no remuneration for her efforts from either the railway or the periodicals. Her selfless dedication to the cause of the C.P.R. was second to none.

<sup>155</sup> B. H. Lewis (Winnipeg), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 20, 1886, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #12925.

his efforts to painting and if possible further his service to the Company in that capacity.<sup>156</sup> Apparently the transition from part-time amateur to full-time professional was too much for him, as Bradley Herbert Lewis, 'Artist,' has faded into obscurity.

<sup>156</sup> B. H. Lewis (Donald, B.C.), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), December 14, 1888, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #23033.

### 1887 : Interest in the Northwest Landscape Peaks

The summer of 1887 saw a much increased flurry of art activity in the Rocky Mountains with C.P.R. sponsorship reaching its peak as many artists put demands upon the Company for free transportation. Certainly the success of the 1886 Colonial and Indian exhibition and the world-wide growing popularity of mountain landscapes also influenced the migration of artists westward. O'Brien, Forbes, Aitken, Fraser and Spragge returned to British Columbia that summer. In addition, Forshaw Day(1837-1903), Frederic Marlett Bell-Smith(1846-1923), Marmaduke Matthews(1837-1913), and Thomas Mower Martin(1838-1934), all of the Royal Canadian Academy, made their appearance on the scene. French 'marine' painter Gaston Roullet and English artist/illustrator Edward Roper(1857-91) received free pass privileges.

John Arthur Fraser spent the early months of 1887 in a crusade to give Van Horne a lasting favourable impression of his form of artistic expression. He forwarded numerous, selected critics' reports on his work to Van Horne in an effort to secure C.P.R. financial backing for proposed exhibitions both in North America and abroad. Referring to Fraser's works in a New York exhibition the critic Gath of World had written: "... they are the finest things shown here in years, all worthy of careful study and a few such

in the next watercolour exhibition would be an education."<sup>157</sup> One Mr. Richard, a New York gallery owner, was also quite interested in Fraser's paintings, commenting on another New York showing by the artist:

... they (Fraser's watercolours) are first rate in every respect and I know no man who could have done as much with these large subjects ... the colour is splendid, the technique superb ... (the) details ... masterly ... I cannot imagine it better done. <sup>158</sup>

Van Horne was so pleased with the reception given Fraser's paintings in New York that he ventured to underwrite the expenses of the latter exhibition. In a letter dated April 17th 1887, Van Horne expressed his appreciation to Mr. Erastee Wiman, owner of the Broadway-Avenue gallery:

<sup>157</sup> J. A. Fraser (New York), quoting Gath in a telegraph to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), March 19, 1887, C.P.R.A. C.F. (Montreal), MS, #15835. Fraser was exhibiting seven oils and thirty-six watercolours at the Canadian Club, New York, March 1887. The oils were all Northwest scenes - The Summit of the Selkirk Range, Western Peak and Shoulder of Mount Stephen from the Kicking Horse Flats at Field, The Hermit Range - Early Afternoon, At Hastings - Burrard Inlet, Floating Wharf on Burrard Inlet, A Rainy Afternoon on the Hermit, Selkirks, and The Flash of Sunset on the Ross Peak Glacier. Among the watercolours were Lytton at the Junction of the Fraser and the Thompson and Peak of Mount Field at Sunrise. (see Kollar, "Fraser," M.P.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1981.)

<sup>158</sup> J. A. Fraser (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), March 29, 1887, C.P.R.A. C.F. (Montreal), MS, #15835.

We (the C.P.R.) feel under obligation to you for your kind assistance in the exhibition of Mr. Fraser's pictures which I think will result in a great deal of good in the way of making our magnificent Canadian scenery known.

I trust that you will send me an account concerning your expenditures in the matter; it is something we should pay and not you. 159

C.P.R. sponsorship for Fraser during 1887 proved extensive.

In April Fraser travelled to London with another exhibition.

He was furnished with letters of introduction to Harry Moody, the C.P.R.'s overseas promoter; Mr. Boissivain, a prominent art connoisseur/collector living in London; and Mr. H. Koekkoek, a successful art dealer.<sup>160</sup> Together they made arrangements for the display of his paintings at rooms in Picadilly. Here they were greeted with the same enthusiasm as they had received in New York, and in Boston before that. Critics for the London Daily News praised Fraser's Western Peak and Shoulder of Mount Stephen from the Kicking Horse Flats at Field and Peak of Sir Donald from the Illecillewaet as:

<sup>159</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to Erasteed Winan (New York), April 16, 1887, VHL, Vol. 21 (Montreal) p.156.

<sup>160</sup> H. Moody (London), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 19, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #16965.

... remarkable for the truthful impression they give one of the height, broad shadows and curious effects of mist ... Mr. Fraser handles water-colours with a bold, free hand, and is apparently a studious observer of the transient effects of light and various aerial changes that constitute the charm of landscape beauty. 161

The London Times described Fraser as:

... an artist of ability ... his sketches which do not differ in character from the work of many of the Scotch artists of the day, are vigorous and truthful. The scenery that he paints is magnificent; indeed, like the Alps, it is almost too much for the landscape painter. 162

Van Horne and Moody went to great lengths to ensure that all the 'right' people viewed the show. Many prominent politicians, dignitaries and members of London's high society were invited and attended the opening. Among these were Sir Edward Watkin, Lord Burham, Count Gleichen, Lord Lorne, Lord Wolseley, Lord Revelstoke and Sir Richard Temple, all of whom held a key interest in the activities of the C.P.R. and encouraged the growth of the Canadian Northwest. 163

161 "Rev. of John Arthur Fraser's Picadilly Exhibition," London Daily News (London: May 31, 1887) n.p.

162 "Rev. of John Arthur Fraser's Picadilly Exhibition," London Times (London: June 2, 1887) n.p. Fraser forwarded Van Horne clippings of the reviews from both London newspapers on June 8, 1887 (C.P.R.A.C.F. #17180).

163 W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to H. Moody (London), April 16, 1887, VHL, Vol.21 (Montreal) p.144.

A study of Van Horne/C.P.R. business correspondence reveals that the assistance awarded Fraser went beyond organization of his Picadilly exhibition. In April Van Horne advised Harry Moody:

... in so much as the Company will profit by the success of his (Fraser's) Exhibition as an advertisement, it is most desirable that we should do what we can to contribute to his success ... ours is to seek through Mr. Fraser's works prominence for the attraction of the Railway, but beyond a sum which I have agreed to contribute towards the expense of the journey, the Company must not be at any expense in effecting Mr. Fraser's desires. 164

Fraser, however, was not satisfied with Van Horne's personal sponsorship and pressed Moody for further funds, insisting the Company should pay his expenses in full so long as he served their cause. In an unprecedented move Van Horne placed Fraser on the temporary payroll of the C.P.R. Records indicate that no less than three vouchers for one hundred dollars each were made payable to Fraser in late April and early May of that year.<sup>165</sup> Incomplete documentation eliminates the possibility of tracing the duration of these weekly payments but funding was sufficient to have Fraser's name placed on the 1887 employment role.

<sup>164</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to H. Moody (London), April 16, 1887, VHL, Vol.21 (Montreal) p.144.

<sup>165</sup> A. Piers (Montreal), Letter to J. A. Fraser (London), April 22, 1887, VHL, Vol.21 (Montreal) p.202.

Fraser's summer sojourn in the Rockies, which may have commenced in mid-July, also proved rewarding to the Company. By the end of September Van Horne had purchased six water-colours from Fraser. These included A Glacier Stream on Mount Stephen, Beaver Foothills - Morning Mist, Hermit Peak after Snow Storm, Near Vancouver (Showery), Rock Slide and Debris from Glacier, and Sunset on Mount Stephen.<sup>166</sup> A sketch of a Siwash - Klootch Man forwarded to Van Horne in the same shipment was complimentary. The liberal financial backing afforded Fraser in 1887 was exceptional. No other artist was to be so fortunate. The C.P.R.'s generosity towards Fraser did, however, set a mood of prosperity and optimism that paved the way for many more artistic ventures.

<sup>166</sup> J. A. Fraser (Boston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), September 24, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #18477. Both Reid and Kollar contend that Fraser did not visit the Rocky Mountains in 1887. I believe he made the trip westward for several reasons. First, why would Fraser go to the trouble of keeping Van Horne posted as to his every move if he did not wish to continue his association with the C.P.R.? Second, a letter from Fraser to Van Horne dated June 8, 1887, makes reference to preparations already underway for the "summer's campaign" in B.C. Third, by late September Fraser has forwarded Van Horne seven watercolours, all of them new titles (except for Rock Slide) - subjects not previously appearing in the artist's oeuvre. They were sent from Boston. It is dubious that Van Horne would place Fraser on the C.P.R. payroll, let the artist abandon his summer's sketching activities 'in the field,' then purchase studio works (either from 1886 sketches or from photographs - remember the weaknesses of these works) for his personal collection.

L. R. O'Brien proved to be the focal point around which much of this artistic enthusiasm evolved. Though Company economic favours benefitted Fraser most in 1887, it was O'Brien that Van Horne entrusted with matters of aesthetic judgement. On May 2nd Van Horne was in correspondence with O'Brien:

I take the liberty of sending for your opinion in confidence, the enclosed two letters from Misters Thomas M. Martin and Forshaw Day respecting facilities for paying a visit to the Northwest. You know what we desire to accomplish by assisting artists to visit the mountains and you can readily understand that we do not care to do so except in the case of Artists who have attracted the attention of the public in their works.

In sending you the enclosed it is right that I should say that I know nothing whatever of the gentlemen in mention. 167

On May 3rd O'Brien responded:

... Both (Martin and Day) are artists of good reputation and regular contributors to our (R.C.A.) Exhibitions. I think their work will be attractive and quite justify your granting them facilities of travel vu the grounds you mention. Another artist, Mr. Matthews, late secretary of the Academy, would like to go also, and I am anxious that he should. If he does he will be my guest in the mountains and paint with me.

I think you will find his work quite as attractive and useful as that of the artists whose letters you send me. 168

167 W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to L.R. O'Brien (Toronto), May 2, 1887, VHL, Vol.21 (Montreal) p.328,

168 L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 3, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #16669.

The following week O'Brien was once again in contact with Van Horne, this time enquiring about C.P.R. boat trips leaving Victoria for Alaska.<sup>169</sup> He was promptly provided with a promotional brochure published by the Pacific Coast Steam Company.<sup>170</sup> Further correspondence indicates O'Brien was interested in completing a series of sketches in the Mount Baker(Victoria) vicinity, then move northward up the coast combining images of mountains and water.<sup>171</sup> Such work was to be included in the Montreal opening of the R.C.A. exhibition (April 20th 1888) to which Van Horne was extended an invitation.<sup>172</sup> In need of further funds to finance his summer's studies, O'Brien enclosed a memorandum of six drawings which had been sent to Van Horne in March, quoting the prices given Harry Abbott earlier that year.<sup>173</sup> According to the artist's studio journal he received payment from Van Horne in late May, a cheque

<sup>169</sup> L. R. O'Brien(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 12,1887, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal),MS, #16812.

<sup>170</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), May 13,1887, VHL, Vol.21 (Montreal) p.486.

<sup>171</sup> L. R. O'Brien(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 15, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal),MS, #16131.

<sup>172</sup> O'Brien to Van Horne, May 15, 1887, #16131

<sup>173</sup> L. R. O'Brien(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), March 10,1887, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal),MS, #16131.

for two hundred and forty dollars.<sup>174</sup>

By May 28th, O'Brien and his sister Loo were in receipt of their free passes and special instructions had been issued all C.P.R. baggagemen to handle the artist's traps (photographic equipment) with care.<sup>175</sup> Van Horne was advised of O'Brien's proposed itinerary and had agreed to pass on the schedule to his friend J. A. Aitken, so that he might meet O'Brien in the mountains at his earliest possible convenience.<sup>176</sup> O'Brien had engaged a camp assistant by the name of John Simmons<sup>177</sup> for whom a second class reduced fare ticket was issued, Victoria and return, for the sum of thirty dollars.<sup>178</sup> Obviously O'Brien intended to make his summer's expedition as comfortable and as productive as possible; his personal needs tended to by servant and sister, his sketching activities intellectually stimulated by the

<sup>174</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.410.

<sup>175</sup> A. Piers(Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), May 27,1887, VHL, Vol.21 (Montreal) p.706.

<sup>176</sup> L. R. O'Brien(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 28,1887, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal),MS, #16812.

<sup>177</sup> L. R. O'Brien(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 29,1887, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal),MS, #16812. This is the Johnny referred to in Dennis Reid's Country Canada p.410.

<sup>178</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), May 28,1887, VHL, Vol.26 (Montreal) p.40.

company of Misters Aitken, Matthews, Bell-Smith, Forbes, and Notman, and his leisure time spent taking photographs on a cruise up British Columbia's coastline.

O'Brien and party left Toronto on June 8th and landed by steamer at Port Arthur June 10th.<sup>179</sup> By June 13th, they were in the small village of Banff, on the Bow River just below the Kicking Horse Pass.<sup>180</sup> Watercolours executed in and around Banff that summer varied considerably from the previous summer's work. Two large pieces now simply titled View of the Rockies<sup>181</sup> are characteristic of that years painting. Mountains have been painted in greater breadth and the misty atmospheric effects of the 1886 works have, by in large, been replaced by crisp, clear renderings of the mountains. Most 1887 compositions contain a human element in the form of people or trains. Overall there is a sense of serenity not evident in the previous summer's painting. It may well be that Van Horne suggested O'Brien paint the more 'civilized' aspects of the Northwest frontier feeling it would be better suited to promotional interests.

<sup>179</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.410.

<sup>180</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.410.

<sup>181</sup> View of the Rockies, 1887, two watercolours on paper, 47.8x70.4cm. and 54.0x75.3cm., both in the collection of the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

By early August, O'Brien's party had moved camp up to Laggan at the head of the Kicking Horse Pass.<sup>182</sup> Here it is believed that O'Brien met and painted with French artist Gaston Roullet, a gentleman who was commissioned by the Marine Department of France to paint the scenery of French and other colonies. In a letter of introduction dated July 29th 1887, Van Horne requested that O'Brien greet Roullet and provide him with some helpful hints about painting the Canadian Rockies.<sup>183</sup> Roullet departed Montreal on July 30th. It is assumed that he caught up with O'Brien in early August.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>182</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.413. In a letter published in the Toronto Globe August 27th stated his fascination for the region surrounding Laggan "on account of its convenience of position at the head of the passes ... six miles to the west begins the descent of the Kicking Horse Pass (rising) in a mountain lake and (rushing) down a precipitous gorge in a foaming torrent ... the railway (clings) to the slopes in a serpentine path ... Mount Stephen and Cathedral Mountain rising seven thousand feet above the track ..."

<sup>183</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Laggan), July 29, 1887, VHL, Vol.22 (Montreal) p.558.

<sup>184</sup> In the fall of 1887 Gaston Roullet gave a modest exhibition of his work at the A.A.M. An examination of the catalogue titled L'exposition des oeuvres de M. Gaston Roullet reveals the majority of his watercolours and oils were of European (ie. French) scenes. No mention of Rocky Mountain views was made. There were however a number of drawings and photographs presented without titles. These may have been the result of his western excursion that summer.

By the middle of August O'Brien and his party were moving westward, sketching in the area south of Kamloops and along the banks of the Fraser River. By mid-September they had reached Victoria. Here O'Brien made a sale to a British naval officer, one Captain Acland and on the return trip through Vancouver he sold another, again to an Englishman, the Earl of Lathorn.<sup>185</sup> Dennis Reid assumes the artist would have roughed in large watercolours on location, then with the aid of pencil sketches and their colour notes he would complete the works in his studio.<sup>186</sup> O'Brien's correspondence with C.P.R. officials indicates he also made extensive use of monochromatic watercolour drawings while in the mountains. Many sketches must have been well advanced in the field in order to interest buyers. O'Brien's Toronto studio journal notes that the Earl and the Captain were sent their works on December 27th 1887 - a Kicking Horse Pass for the former and a Kicking Horse Pass and a Mount Sir Donald for the latter.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>185</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.417.

<sup>186</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.417.

<sup>187</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.417.

A letter from O'Brien to Van Horne dated January 17th 1888, confirms the artist's use of 'detailed' preliminary field studies:

I send you a black and white sketch of the Kicking Horse Pass which I hope you will accept as a memento of a very interesting summer spent in the mountains.

It does not pretend to be literal but as an endeavour to convey the impression made by the scene upon the artist. I used it as a study for a large drawing I have sent to the Dudley gallery watercolour exhibition in Picadilly, which opens at the end of the month.

I call it Through the Rocky Mountains, A Pass on the Canadian Highway. The watercolour of the same place, which you saw in my camp, I sold to Lord Lathorn. In that the point of view was from above the track and it did not so well give the ascending grade. 188

Returning to Toronto from Vancouver, via Roger's Pass, by mid-October, O'Brien was prompt in executing commissions. He also began preparation for his winter and spring exhibitions. March 1st through 3rd 1888, he held a showing of his Rocky Mountain and Pacific coast landscapes at the A.A.M. The critic for The Week praised O'Brien's efforts:

188 L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 17, 1888, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #19481.

If literature and politics have so far failed to awaken in Canadians any lively national spirit, surely the pictures of all that glorious land, a veritable promised land, that is ours, must send the blood tingling through our veins with wild enthusiasm and wilder hopes. Patriotism in all its depth and beauty and passion ... 189

The perception of O'Brien's watercolours as 'nationalistic' in spirit doubtlessly much pleased both Van Horne and Sir George Stephen for it was precisely the 'image' that the C.P.R. sought to project. Of the seven works at this showing, Van Horne purchased one and Sir George two.<sup>190</sup> At the annual spring exhibition of the A.A.M. which opened in April, O'Brien exhibited seven more Rocky Mountain views,<sup>191</sup> selling three. Again Sir George Stephen acquired two.<sup>192</sup> At the combined R.C.A./O.S.A. exhibition the following month in Toronto, O'Brien showed fifteen more Northwestern scenes. Once more he sold three.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>189</sup> "Rev. of A.A.M. Exhibition," The Week, Vol.V (Montreal: March 8, 1888) p.233.

<sup>190</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.419.

<sup>191</sup> "A.A.M. Exhibition Catalogue," April 1888. The seven watercolours exhibited were Yale, B.C., Railroad and River in the Fraser Canyon, On the Caribou Road, The Gate of the Canon, Fraser River, The National Park, Vancouver Harbour and An October Day on the Lower Fraser. Reid states that O'Brien exhibited eight pieces.

<sup>192</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.419.

<sup>193</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.419.

The pass privileges offered by the C.P.R. in the summer of 1887 proved to be the opportunity of a lifetime for one recently elected Academician. For Frederic Marlett Bell-Smith an excursion to the Rocky Mountains was the turning point of his career as an artist. After dedicating twenty years to art related activities in Canada such as teaching, colouring photographs, doing illustration for Canadian Illustrated News and occasionally exhibiting with the O.S.A. and the R.C.A., Bell-Smith had failed to gain a reputation as a painter.<sup>194</sup> His admission into the Royal Canadian Academy in June of 1887<sup>195</sup> was little more than a polite nod of recognition. He was desperately in need of a fresh approach and new subject matter in his work. A field trip to the Northwest to sketch the Rocky Mountains was the stimulus that finally set him on the road to success.

<sup>194</sup> William Holgate, "Artist Records City Events," Spectator (Hamilton: July 15, 1946)

John E. Staley, "The Premier Painter of the Rockies," MacLeans, Vol. XXV, no. 2 (Toronto: December 2, 1912)

J. R. Harper, Early Painters, pp. 26-7. Bell-Smith was employed by James Inglis (Montreal) 1867-71; L. Eckerson (Hamilton) 1872-74 and 1879-81; and Cunningham and Bell-Smith (Toronto) 1874 - all photographic firms.

Roger Boulet, Frederic Marlett Bell-Smith (Victoria: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1977)

<sup>195</sup> White Head, Portland, Maine, 1887, oil on canvas, 87.6x152.4cm., National Gallery of Canada, Accession #139 was Bell-Smith's diploma piece for entry into the R.C.A.

On May 16th 1887, Bell-Smith was in correspondence with Van Horne requesting free transportation to the mountains and return. Two days later he was issued a round trip ticket to Calgary and a station to station pass between Calgary and the Pacific, valid until October 31st.<sup>196</sup> The trip was the fulfillment of a long-time dream for Bell-Smith. In his own words:

One of the dreams of my early manhood was to visit and paint the Rockies, about whose magnificence all travellers raved. I dreamed this over and over again until the vision took the form in finding myself, very early one summer's morning, at 'The Gap.' Never was a mountain peep-show more appropriately named. Right across an iridescent reach of the Bow River - gold-shotted by the reflections of the mirror sky - stood out boldly the vanguard sentinels of the mountain host. Displaying the glint of their glacier accoutrements, they beckoned the enraptured pilgrim to explore their mysteries and their shrines. <sup>197</sup>

Bell-Smith left Toronto in late June and by the second week of July he was in the Rockies. So awed was he by this first encounter with the mountains that he later wrote about his experience in the Canadian Alpine Journal, published in 1918:

<sup>196</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to F. M. Bell-Smith (Toronto), May 18, 1887, VHL, Vol. 21 (Montreal) p. 608.

<sup>197</sup> F. M. Bell-Smith, in Staley's "Premier Painter of the Rockies," MacLeans, n.p.

... the first impression lives with me today. I had arrived in Banff in cloudy weather with no mountains visible, but while sketching a bit of the Bow River the clouds lifted, and Cascade Mountain with its crags and gullies white with fresh snow appeared as I have never again seen it, and my sketch provoked the remark from L. R. O'Brien, president of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, that it was the first time that he had seen 'Cascade' looking interesting. 198

It is impossible to recount with any degree of accuracy the events of Bell-Smith's sketching tour. He did not keep a travel journal as did O'Brien and very few of his drawings appear to have survived. It is known that much of the season Bell-Smith painted in the company of O'Brien and the photographer William McFarlane Notman. Bell-Smith boasted that he brought back enough studies to keep himself busy in the studio for the next two or three years. Tourists who viewed his sketches in the field had given him orders for in excess of three thousand dollars worth of pictures.<sup>199</sup> Like O'Brien, Bell-Smith's sketches must have been well advanced on location to solicit such an enthusiast buyer response.

<sup>198</sup> F. M. Bell-Smith, "An Artist's Reminiscences," Canadian Alpine Journal (1918) n.p.

<sup>199</sup> "Mountain Sketches," Manitoba Free Press (Winnipeg: October 18, 1887) reprinted in Boulet's Bell-Smith, pp.19-21.

During the months of November, December and January, Bell-Smith kept long, strictly scheduled studio hours. The result of his labours was a series of exhibitions in the early months of 1888. In a show opening February 27th in the Art Rooms of A. J. Pell, Beaver Hall, Montreal, Bell-Smith displayed thirty-five watercolours of splendid Rocky Mountain scenery. The exhibition catalogue entitled Scenes on the Canadian Pacific Railway and Mountain Wonders and Glaciers of British Columbia divided the watercolours under three headings; The National Park, The Kicking Horse Pass, and The Selkirks.<sup>200</sup> One can assume by such categories that Bell-Smith thought these areas of study would prove most commercially rewarding. No coastal views of the Vancouver-Victoria vicinity were included indicating his stay on the coast was brief and largely uneventful.

Bell-Smith's major exhibition in the Art Rooms of A. J. Pell perhaps best illustrates the influence of the C.P.R. on the Canadian art market at the time. Bell-Smith, like Fraser, O'Brien, Matthews, Martin and Forbes, was a Toronto based artist (in fact Bell-Smith's studio was in London, Ontario but Toronto was the exhibition centre for his work) yet he chose to hold his most important show of

<sup>200</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p.21.

the year, perhaps even of his career, in Montreal. The reasons for this are many. First, it would be naive to believe that Bell-Smith did not intend to impress his C.P.R. patrons. The artist was dependent upon Van Horne's approval and generosity for another season's free passes to the mountains. More importantly, Montreal offered better opportunities for the sale of his paintings. By this date Montreal had replaced Toronto as the art centre of Canada. Toronto and Montreal were approximately equal in population though slightly more than one half of Montreal's populace was French Canadian, known to be not particularly interested in the commercial promotion of art. Yet, Montreal was able to support two successful sale galleries, A. J. Pell's and William Scott's, as well as the Art Association of Montreal. Toronto could barely finance the Ontario Society of Artists (whose exhibitions almost always ran at a deficit) let alone patronize a single commercial show room.<sup>201</sup>

Montreal prospered as an art centre due largely to the C.P.R.'s stimulation of the art market. Previously mentioned

<sup>201</sup> Jimmie Rembrandt, "Notes on Art in Toronto," TSN, Vol.1, no.1 (Toronto: December 3, 1887) p.10. "The O.S.A. could not generate enough interest to justify paying freight and insurance fees (approx. \$300.00) to bring Jules Breton's The Communicants (in the collection of Sir Donald Smith) from Montreal to Toronto for exhibition. Rembrandt also noted that Toronto's last commercial gallery was obliged to close its doors only a few days earlier due to lack of support and no 'educated' clientele.

Company officials and their business associates<sup>202</sup> were among the foremost art collectors in North America, their purchases not only included the work of European masters but paintings by many Canadian artists. C.P.R. officials involved in the A.A.M., the R.C.A., and the A.A.C. promoted the development of a uniquely Canadian art based upon the Northwest landscape. R. B. Angus and Donald A. Smith, who sat as board members of the A.A.M., were influential in drawing attention to C.P.R. sponsored artists and were mostly responsible for the dominance of Rocky Mountain subject matter at that spring's exhibition. By 1888 the Northwest landscape had become synonymous with the 'Railroad' and 'Canada.'

Bell-Smith exhibited six watercolours at the A.A.M. in April 1888 and ten more watercolours and two oil paintings at the combined R.C.A./O.S.A. held in Toronto that May.<sup>203</sup> On both occasions all subject matter was taken from the heart of the Rocky Mountains, though those paintings shown

<sup>202</sup> Other prominent Montreal art collectors/businessmen included J. C. Abbott, George Drummond, E. Greenshields, J. Law, J. W. Tempest and John Thomas Wilson. All profited from the presence of the C.P.R.'s head office in Montreal.

<sup>203</sup> The two oil paintings were titled Sunset in the Selkirks and Ross Peak, Valley of the Glacier, B.C.. Neither have been located for study.

in Toronto were less imposing in scale and execution and they commanded considerably lower prices than those selected for Montreal. The artist's emphasis on Montreal as an exhibition centre reflects both the influence of the C.P.R. in that city and the sorry state of the Toronto art market.

Four Bell-Smith landscapes, located by Roger Boulet for his comprehensive Bell-Smith exhibition catalogue, show influences of the artist's choice of travelling companions that summer of 1887. A watercolour of Albert Canyon<sup>204</sup> is a direct interpretation of a Charles Macmunn photograph.<sup>205</sup>

Having worked with photographer William M. Notman in the mountains, Bell-Smith was aware of the shortcomings in utilizing a photographic source and was thus able to avoid the pitfalls, creating a fresh and naturalistic view of Albert Canyon.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>204</sup> Albert Canyon, n.d., watercolour on paper, 48.3x33.7cm., Art Gallery of Ontario, Accession #2842, has been attributed to Bell-Smith's 1887 tour of the Rockies.

<sup>205</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, pp. 38-9 and 66. C.P.R. business correspondence indicates Macmunn sold photographs to the Company. Whether or not Bell-Smith acquired this view of Albert Canyon through Van Horne or through personal contact with the photographer is not known.

<sup>206</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p.66. Boulet found Albert Canyon so naturalistic in colouring that he found it hard to believe that it was in fact a studio composition. Bell-Smith's colour notes must have been extremely detailed and accurate to attain such studio results.

Two watercolours, Fall, 1887-90, and Vermillion Lake, and an oil painting entitled Cave of the Great Glacier, B.C., 1888, show an influence of Lucius O'Brien's presence upon Bell-Smith's work during the 1887 sketching season.<sup>207</sup> The closeness of the lush vegetation to the viewer and the lack of a discernable background (except for the thick tangle of foliage in Fall renders much the same claustrophobic atmosphere as in O'Brien's masterful A British Columbian Forest completed in 1888.<sup>208</sup> The narrow confines of the composition and the lack of thrust into depth was unique to Bell-Smith's oeuvre. The shattered tree stump in the near-ground of Fall is conspicuously absent in all other documented Bell-Smith paintings from this period. It was a compositional device more characteristic of O'Brien and can be found in nearly all his Northwest landscapes dating from the summers of 1886 and 1887. Subject matter and framing were not the only

<sup>207</sup> Fall, 1887-90, watercolour on paper, 25.4x16.5cm., Collection of Mrs. Margaret Bell-Smith, Toronto.

Vermillion Lake, 1887, watercolour on paper, 35.0x50.0 cm. (sight), Glenbow-Alberta Institute.

Cave of the Great Glacier, B.C., 1888, oil on canvas, 75.0x100.0cm., Collection of Mr. Pelham Bell-Smith, Toronto.

<sup>208</sup> A British Columbian Forest, 1888, watercolour on paper, 54.1x76.4cm., National Gallery of Canada, Accession #159.

elements borrowed from O'Brien. Bell-Smith's Vermillion Lake is so much like an O'Brien sketch in technique and colouring that one is invited to attribute the painting to O'Brien at first glance. Vermillion Lake bears an uncanny resemblance to O'Brien's two View(s) of the Rockies, also of 1887.<sup>209</sup> Cave of the Great Glacier completed in Bell-Smith's London, Ontario studio in the early months of 1888 is one of the rare instances where people appear in his landscapes. The inclusion of a human element was a scaling device most often employed by O'Brien throughout the summer of 1887.

Bell-Smith's precise sources of inspiration may never be known. It is, however, a certainty, that though highly impressionable, the artist did manage to turn his summer's efforts into an artistic success. He was so taken with the landscape surrounding the Banff area that he purchased a lot and gave out a contract to build a studio.<sup>210</sup> He was to return to the Rockies to paint on many more occasions as we will see later.

<sup>209</sup> Considering the fact that Vermillion Lake is one of the nearest scenic attractions to Banff, and it is known that O'Brien's View(s) of the Rockies were sketched near that resort, it can be speculated that the two artists worked sitting side by side and possibly drawing from the same palette.

<sup>210</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p. 20.

Marmaduke Matthews was less fortunate. His C.P.R. pass good for stopovers between Canmore and Vancouver was issued on the 28th of June, 1887.<sup>211</sup> By early July he had arrived in the mountains and sketched for a time in the company of O'Brien. He appears to have had some difficulty in applying his painting skills to mountain subject matter. Like Fraser, Matthews was better suited to the slower oil paint medium. Unfortunately sketching in oils in the rugged mountain terrain was extremely impractical as the drawings would almost invariably become smudged and he was forced to attempt to adapt to the watercolour technique. The results were something less than satisfactory. He tried in vain to infest his watercolours with as much detail as one could expect to find in an oil painting. Dennis Reid describes one watercolour entitled Hermit Range, Rocky Mountains, 1888,<sup>212</sup> as being brittle in quality and obsessive in detail. It was a weakness that marred the majority of his watercolours dating from 1887.

<sup>211</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to M. Matthews (Toronto), June 28, 1887, VHL, Vol. 22 (Montreal) p. 81.

<sup>212</sup> Reid, A Concise History, p. 71. Hermit Range in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario possesses the same weaknesses (largely technical) as Lake Marian and Roger's Pass both watercolours dating from 1887, in the collection of Trent University, Guelph, Ontario. Trent is also in possession of the Marmaduke Matthews papers, the artist's letter correspondence dating from his earliest involvement with the R.C.A. in 1880.

Matthews did manage to complete three large oil paintings by elaborating on his 1887 field sketches. Regrettably these are unavailable for study. In a letter addressed to Van Horne dated June 4th 1888, the artist made reference to a Park of the Glacier prominently showing Mount Sir Donald (81x54 inches), a Mount Louise near Laggan (40x36 inches), and a View Down Kicking Horse Pass (40x36 inches), all complete, and all ready for sale.<sup>213</sup> He further informed Van Horne that due to an illness that incapacitated him during the spring months, he had been unable to tend to the business of the sale of his work. He was thus prepared to offer Van Horne his three oil paintings, plus several smaller pieces, at much reduced rates from his usual Academy catalogue prices. Matthews hoped that Van Horne would choose to hang his collection in the C.P.R.'s principal offices and hotels (he suggested Banff and Vancouver) to compliment the photographs already on display there.

<sup>213</sup> M. Matthews (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 4, 1888, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #20644. Matthews' three, above mentioned, major canvases of the 1887-8 season corresponded exactly with Bell-Smith's subject divisions for his Scenes on the Canadian Pacific Railway ... exhibition at A. J. Pell's - Mount Sir Donald from "the national park", Mount Louise from the "Selkirks" and the valley view from the "Kicking Horse Pass." Perhaps Matthews and Bell-Smith painted together in these regions, agreeing on the best possible vistas to paint. Matthews may have also been aware of the success of Bell-Smith's Montreal exhibition, choosing to present similar themes to Van Horne.

Van Horne declined Matthews' offer, and due to stricter pass regulations for the summer of 1888, was only able to offer the artist reduced fare tickets to the mountains.<sup>214</sup> Apparently the C.P.R. was not inclined to be generous with artists who could not manage their own financial well-being. An impoverished artist who was not selling pictures nor receiving adequate exhibition coverage from the press, seemingly did not warrant Company sponsorship in the interest of railway promotion. Matthews was in grave financial difficulty. He was forced to give up his King Street West studio at the end of June and was unable to raise sufficient funds to pay for even a reduced fare ticket.<sup>215</sup> In another letter to Van Horne dated July 18th 1889, Matthews referred to his 1887 Rocky Mountain tour as "an unprofitable commercial venture."<sup>216</sup> The collection he had offered to Van Horne was sold elsewhere at extremely low prices.

<sup>214</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to M. Matthews (Toronto), June 12, 1888, VHL, Vol. 26 (Montreal) p. 245

<sup>215</sup> M. Matthews (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 4, 1888, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #20644.

<sup>216</sup> M. Matthews (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), July 18, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #24994. Matthews showed Evening on the Pipestone River at Laggan and Eight Thousand Feet Above the Sea, Rocky Mountains at the A.A.M. in the spring of 1889. Both pieces dated from his 1887 tour of the Northwest.

Little is known about Thomas Mower Martin's 1887 trip to the Rockies as he kept no known studio or travel journal and most of his paintings are undated. Furthermore, he appears to have corresponded with Van Horne through his residence because the C.P.R. Archives has a record of many more outgoing queries from Van Horne than incoming responses from Martin. Martin, unlike Matthews, was apparently better organized for the exhibition and sale of his work and therefore did not suffer the financial difficulties of his brother Academician.

In A Concise History of Canadian Painting Dennis Reid referred to Martin as an artist who "constantly sought to reach the art buying public."<sup>217</sup> A fine example of this self-promotion was his A.A.M. showing in April of 1888. Of five paintings exhibited three bore the names of top C.P.R. executives. The most ambitious of these were two oil paintings entitled Mount Sir Donald from Glacier Road, and Mount Stephen from the Kicking Horse Pass. The three other works were watercolours, titled The Van Horne Range, Glaciers of the Selkirks and Mount Field, B.C.. The present location of all of these paintings is unknown. Martin's flattery of C.P.R. officials proved advantageous.

<sup>217</sup> Reid, A Concise History, p.70.

Over the next twenty years he was the recipient of no fewer than ten free passes to the west coast and return. After F. M. Bell-Smith, Martin became the most prolific of all C.P.R. sponsored artists.

Forshaw Day's involvement with the C.P.R. was shorter and quantitatively less fruitful. He was first in contact with Van Horne on May 28th 1885, enquiring about Company pass privileges. On this occasion he was offered only reimbursement of funds spent on railway transportation should his art ventures prove beneficial to the C.P.R. In Van Horne's own words:

With the opening of our line and the easy access furnished to a vast extent of country of extraordinary attractions, but hitherto unknown to artists, you may fancy that we are overwhelmed with applications from artists and others for special facilities in consideration of their services in illustrating the line and making it known. So numerous have these offers been that we have been obliged to say to all alike that in such cases where we find the material collected - be it in the shape of paintings, photographs or literary work - is likely to be of some practical use and benefit to the Company we will be glad to refund any railway fares paid on our line in connection with the collection and make satisfactory arrangements for the use of the particular article. 218

Day was unwilling to travel westward under such restricting

218 W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to F. Day  
(Kingston), June 9, 1885, VHL, Vol. 11 (Montreal) p. 857.

conditions and consequently declined Van Horne's offer. Instead he sketched in and around Kingston, Ontario that summer.

By 1887 C.P.R. pass restrictions had been relaxed and following Van Horne's consultation with O'Brien, Day's reapplication for Company assistance was approved. On May 25th, Van Horne granted the artist free transportation to Calgary and return, and station to station passes between Calgary and Vancouver.<sup>219</sup> A permit authorizing baggagemen to handle the artist's luggage up to two hundred pounds was also despatched.

Prior to his departure Day was advised as to the best locations to sketch by Van Horne's secretary, A. Piers:

On your way West you may look for fine effects on the North Shore of Lake Superior between Heron Bay and Port Arthur where we skirt the Lake.

In the Mountains the entire Valley of the Bow River, Banff, Devil's Lake (9 miles from Banff), the Beaverfoot Range near Lesashone(?) and Mount Stephen should be born in mind in the Rockies.

In the Selkirks Mount Carroll, the Hermit and Syndicate Peaks and Mount Ross will attract you. Further west the Schuswap Lakes and Fraser Cañon from the North end of Yale are worth spending some time on. <sup>220</sup>

<sup>219</sup> A. Piers (Montreal), Letter to F. Day (Kingston), May 25, 1887, VHL, Vol. 21 (Montreal) pp. 661-2.

<sup>220</sup> Piers to Day, May 25, 1887, VHL, Vol. 21, pp. 661-2.

Clearly C.P.R. officials had in mind a formula for presenting Northwestern scenery that would prove commercially most practical to the Company. Their recommendations to artist newcomers corresponded closely with the routes and vistas already explored by earlier parties such as Fraser and O'Brien, or photographers like Notman and Henderson. The C.P.R. sought artists who would continue to express established and critically accepted subject matter.

It can only be assumed that Forshaw Day followed Piers' proposed itinerary as no Northwest scenes executed by Day<sup>221</sup> are presently available for study. Upon his return from the west, Day was not extended the patronage of Sir George Stephen whose collection of paintings by Company sponsored artists rivalled all others.<sup>222</sup> Day's sketches were favourably received by Piers who recommended their inclusion in a soon to be published C.P.R. guide book.<sup>223</sup> Regrettably no C.P.R. guide books dating from 1887 are known to exist. It is therefore extremely difficult to access the artist's contribution to the C.P.R.'s campaign.

<sup>221</sup> J. R. Harper, Early Painters, p.86. Day was professor of freehand drawing at Kingston's Royal Military College from 1879-97. He was formerly an art teacher in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He represented Eastern Canada when he was nominated to the R.C.A. in 1880.

<sup>222</sup> A. Piers(Montreal), Letter to F. Day(Kingston), November 24,1887, VHL, Vol.24 (Montreal) p.79.

<sup>223</sup> Piers to Day, November 24,1887, VHL, Vol.24, p.79.

Day did exhibit one small oil and three watercolour paintings at the April 1888 exhibition of the A.A.M. The oil sketch entitled Junction of the Bow and Spry Rivers, N.W.T. must have been very small judging from the modest asking price of fifty dollars. The watercolours, Lake at Laggan, Mount Deville Range, and Falls at Leancoile, Rockies, were more ambitious as they commanded higher prices. He showed Mount Cheops, Glacier Mountains, Hermit Glacier, and Rainy Weather at the R.C.A. in May.

In anticipation of the need for another season's passes, Day sought to stay in Van Horne's 'good graces' by forwarding him a sepia drawing entitled Cathedral Mountain,<sup>224</sup> 1887 (location unknown). The ploy was not entirely successful. On April 24th 1888, Day was informed that due to Van Horne's difficulty in "drawing the line between those who really are artists and those who would be," he would not be granted a free pass for that season.<sup>225</sup> He and his wife were offered reduced fares of seventy-five dollars each for pass privileges similar to those received free of charge in 1887.<sup>226</sup> Somewhat insulted by Van Horne's high-handed

<sup>224</sup> A. Piers (Montreal), Letter to F. Day (Kingston), January 25, 1888, VHL, Vol. 24 (Montreal) p. 606.

<sup>225</sup> A. Piers (Montreal), Letter to F. Day (Kingston), April 24, 1888, VHL, Vol. 25 (Montreal) p. 619.

<sup>226</sup> A. Piers (Montreal), Letter to F. Day (Kingston), June 12, 1888, VHL, Vol. 26 (Montreal) p. 245 1/2.

manner and lack of appreciation for a gift, Day failed to take advantage of the offer.

Day travelled throughout Great Britain in the summer months of 1888 then returned to his Kingston studio in the fall and worked his 1887 Rocky Mountain sketches into a series of large oil paintings. One study taken from the foot of the great glacier with the torrent of the Illecillewaet in the foreground, was used to complete the oil entitled Ranges of the Selkirks, 1889.<sup>227</sup> It was offered to Van Horne at no cost if he chose to place it in a C.P.R. hotel, such as that at Banff.<sup>228</sup> The painting had already been exhibited in public galleries in Kingston and Ottawa, where according to the artist it had received favourable reviews from the press.<sup>229</sup> The result of Day's generous offer is not known and there is no record of Ranges of the Selkirks in any western C.P.R. hotels today.<sup>230</sup> Nor is there a record of Day exhibiting Rocky Mountain subject matter at the A.A.M., the O.S.A., or the R.C.A. about this

<sup>227</sup> F. Day (Kingston), letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 22, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #24067.

<sup>228</sup> Day to Van Horne, April 22, 1889, #24067.

<sup>229</sup> Day to Van Horne, April 22, 1889, #24067.

<sup>230</sup> This is not to say that Day's painting is not in the C.P.R. collection. For unspecified reasons the C.P.R. does not want an inventory of its art holdings made.

time. Living and working in Kingston, Day had isolated himself from the mainstream of Canadian art activities.

English artist/illustrator, Edward Roper, also took advantage of free pass privileges to visit and sketch the Canadian Northwest in the summer of 1887. In a letter dated March 4th 1888 he informed A. Piers that four Rocky Mountain views (among them a watercolour of Mount Sir Donald, 71x53cm., location unknown) were complete and had been sent to Scott's in Montreal for Van Horne's appraisal.<sup>231</sup> He further advised Piers that he was engaged in his studio in completing an "ambitious" piece of Northwest scenery, presumably an oil painting, also for exhibition and sale. The precise titles, the utilization, and the location of these works remain unknown.

1887 is also significant as the year the famous American artist, Albert Bierstadt, first expressed an interest in visiting the Canadian Rockies. In a letter dated June 13th, the artist introduced himself to Van Horne, referring to one General Sherman who had often spoken about the beautiful scenery along the Canadian Pacific line.<sup>232</sup>

<sup>231</sup> E. Roper (Sutton, England), Letter to A. Piers (Montreal), March 4, 1888, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #20331.

<sup>232</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 13, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #17240.

Bierstadt requested maps and photographs of the Northwest so that he might begin preparation for a proposed tour commencing sometime in August. Van Horne was delighted and responded:

I will take pleasure in providing you with the necessary transportation and with letters of introduction to our officers in the west which will secure to you opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach.

I may add that you will have no hardships to endure as there are very comfortable hotels in the most interesting parts of the Rockies, the Selkirks and in the Fraser Cañon and I think we will be able to make it pleasant wherever you may wish to stop between these hotels. 233

While most artists were offered only free transportation in the 1887 sketching season, Van Horne was prepared to be more generous with the widely acclaimed Bierstadt. Van Horne's determination that Bierstadt should paint the Northwest is best exemplified by the subsequent exchange of correspondence between these two gentlemen. On July 29th, Bierstadt informed Van Horne that a group of friends (an unspecified number) had arrived from Europe and they, along with Mrs. Bierstadt and a maid, wished to accompany

233 W.C., Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to A. Bierstadt (New York), June 24, 1887, VHL, Vol. 22 (Montreal) p. 12.

him on his western excursion.<sup>234</sup> In an unprecedented act of generosity, Van Horne offered all members of the party free transportation and accommodation. He was anxious that Bierstadt make the trip regardless of expense to the Company.

All did not go as planned. On August 2nd, Bierstadt wrote to Van Horne stating his wife would be unable to make the journey and he would be accompanied by only one friend.<sup>235</sup> Somehow this plan also failed to produce results because by August 24th, Bierstadt was in Lucerne, Switzerland, suggesting to Van Horne by post that the C.P.R. should build a branch line to the centre of the Alaskan goldrush. Studying the maps and charts he had received from Van Horne, Bierstadt advised:

A road over the mountains near where the horse trail is could be constructed by the first of June. This could be done in the winter as well as in the summer as an abundance of timber is there and small steamers could be made and sent over by this rail ... A variety of cars and engines used here (Switzerland) could ... be sent around Cape Horn. I am sure your road would do a big business next summer with this branch road

<sup>234</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), July 29, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #17586.

<sup>235</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), August 2, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #17586.

which would pay for itself in one season. 236

In his own mind, Bierstadt could justify his audacious behaviour for he considered himself an expert on anything to do with mountains. Afterall, his study of mountains had made him one of the wealthiest and most important painters of mid-nineteenth century America. On several occasions he had been involved with American railroads, such as the famous 1859 Pacific Coast Railway Survey during which he completed the studies for his large master-work simply titled The Rocky Mountains, 1863,<sup>237</sup> hailed today as a landmark in American landscape painting.<sup>238</sup> Everywhere Bierstadt travelled he was entertained by the 'well-placed' and the rich. Among his social contacts in Canada he had been invited to Ottawa in 1876 and 1878 by Governor-General Dufferin and to Quebec City in 1880 to meet Canada's succeeding Governor-General, the Marquis de Lorne and his wife, Princess Louise. He revisited the Lorne's in Ottawa in September of 1882 and May of 1883

<sup>236</sup> A. Bierstadt (Lucerne), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), August 24, 1887, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #83201.

<sup>237</sup> Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock, "Stereoscopic Photography and the Western Paintings of Albert Bierstadt," Art Quarterly, Vol.33, no.4 (Winter 1970) p.363. The Rocky Mountains is presently in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>238</sup> Gordon Hendricks, Albert Bierstadt (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1972) p.16.

and sketched in the company of Princess Louise.<sup>239</sup>

Although by the 1880's, Bierstadt's huge canvases of the American West had begun to lose favour with the sophisticated American art critics in the East, these same paintings held a strong appeal for wealthy and powerful industrialists who viewed the grandiose images as representative of an ever-expanding and prospering Empire. For this reason Van Horne was not disquieted by Bierstadt's bold business advice and his casual postponement of the C.P.R. tour. Bierstadt's suggestions on the subject of C.P.R. business served as an assurance to Van Horne that the Canadian Rockies would receive the undivided attention of the artist in the very near future.

<sup>239</sup> Reid, Country Canada, pp. 290-1.

1888 and Beyond: A Sudden Decline in the Popularity of  
Northwest Landscape Painting

Mountain landscape painting that highlighted American art throughout the 1860's and 1870's finally gained critical acceptance in Canada in the 1880's and had reached its height of popularity by 1887. In the spring of 1888, reviewers of the joint R.C.A./O.S.A. exhibition began to voice their objections and impatience with mountain landscape subject matter. One critic wrote:

In the watercolour section the mountaineers monopolize the wall. The admissibility of the mountains as a pictorial element, is associated with art in its infancy. New York has outgrown Bierstadt, as Paris has long since outgrown Calame. The pictures before us however 'striking' the scenic effects may be, have all the faults of mountain pictures. They contain too much and insist on the most maplike composition. There are over fifty pictures of mountains, and, excepting that Mr. Bell-Smith displays the most facility and does by far the better work in the scenic line, they are all pretty much alike, the same rocky formation, the same trees, and all possessing the peculiarity of that 'mounting' described by Artemus Ward 'the highest part of it is the top' as Sam Weller's pie-man, to suit the taste of his customers, could convert a 'weal' into a 'lam' or a 'lam' into a kidney or all into a mutton, when really they were all cats. There is as much variety in the peaks and gorges of the Rocky Mountains named and designated to suit the inordinate vanity of the directors and projectors of the C.P.R. 240

240 "Rev. of the Spring 1888 Exhibition of the R.C.A./  
O.S.A.," The Week, Vol.24 (Toronto: May 24, 1888) p.417.

It is remarkable how accurately the critic's comments reflected the turn of events for landscape painting in Canada. Rocky Mountain views at the height of their popular appeal in 1887 fell sharply into disfavour in 1888. The critic's disdain played only a small part in the changes that were to occur. Dominion landscape painters were observant enough to acknowledge 'too much of a good thing' - they could not all economically survive in an art market choked with Rocky Mountain subjects. Most turned their attention to other projects and only occasionally exhibited Northwest subject matter during the remainder of their careers. Other economic factors also influenced many painters' decisions to abandon the C.P.R. 'campaign.' In 1888, Van Horne was promoted to the Presidency of the C.P.R. which was by this date the leading transportation system in the world, managing large shipping fleets in both the Atlantic and the Pacific as well as several mining and smelting operations across the country. It was a time of near crisis for the C.P.R. The Company had spread itself far and thin. Every possible dollar was invested in corporate projects. Van Horne found himself under considerable pressure, especially because of the growing rumours of a western wheat strike and fears of another nationwide depression. He was obliged to cut back on all unnecessary expenditures. Though his artist free pass

program taxed the corporate giant to an insignificant degree, Van Horne placed severe restrictions on the extent of C.P.R. 'hospitality' offered to painters, largely as a 'gesture' to emphasize the need for austerity. In the future the C.P.R. would offer reduced fare privileges to a select few artists. Free passes would be extremely rare.

John Arthur Fraser, who at one time had thrown himself whole-heartedly into the C.P.R. project, saw that it was time to withdraw. He painted in England and Scotland in 1888, and was never again to return to the Canadian Northwest. He did correspond from time to time with Van Horne and was engaged in a few other minor C.P.R. commissions.<sup>241</sup> Fraser rarely painted or exhibited Rocky Mountain subjects after 1887. Even though his Northwest landscapes were less technically accomplished than his earlier 'academic' oils or some of his later European subjects, they represent an important phase in the development of a uniquely Canadian statement in painting. As such, they might be considered the highlight of this Canadian painter's career.

<sup>241</sup> J. A. Fraser(London), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 26, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #23354. In this letter Fraser thanks Van Horne for the fifty dollar cheque in payment for the sketch of "the pool."

Archer Baker(London), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #24431. Van Horne authorized Baker to undertake the publication of a French language pamphlet with illustrations by Fraser.

L. R. O'Brien's activities as an artist paralleled those of Fraser. His paintings leading up to his involvement with the C.P.R. were formally structured and refined in execution and detail. Paintings completed after the crest of the C.P.R. campaign were predominately of English subject matter following an 1889 visit to Great Britain. Unlike Fraser, O'Brien made one last voyage westward under the reduced fare system. He responded to the growing discontent with mountain vistas by altering his travel routine. In the second week of June 1888, the artist and his sister left Toronto,<sup>242</sup> and travelled straight through to Vancouver on the Pacific coastline. They did not stop to sketch in the Rockies. Instead they passed the better part of the summer working and sailing in the general vicinity of Howe Sound, just north of Vancouver.

In the late summer a letter he wrote to Toronto's The Mail was published recounting his season's activities:

Ever since my first visit to the mountains I have had an increasing desire to see something of the fiords and inlets of the Pacific coast. So this summer, resisting all the fascinations

<sup>242</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), May 24, 1888, VHL, Vol. 26 (Montreal) pp. 30 and 40. O'Brien and his sister were issued reduced fare passes at the cost of \$30.00 each.

of unexplored places by the way, we came straight to Vancouver by rail, and engaging a Chinook canoe and two Indians went up the coast wherever sail or paddle would take us. They might easily have taken us much further than we had gone, but as my object was to paint, and subjects of interest abound, we find ourselves lingering weeks instead of days at each successive camping. 243

O'Brien found the climate more tolerable than in the heart of the Rockies and praised the Cascade Range which ran along the edge of the ocean as even more beautiful than the Rockies or the Selkirks.<sup>244</sup> He returned to Toronto in early September with a large collection of sketches. These works demonstrated that O'Brien was returning to a more simplified style of composition similar to that used by Frederick Verner in earlier decades.<sup>245</sup> The serene quality and 'dreamy' atmosphere of A Nook in the West Coast, Howe Sound, B.C., 1888,<sup>246</sup> is more reminiscent of

243 L. R. O'Brien, Letter to Toronto's The Mail published August 16, 1888.

244 Reid, Country Canada, p.419.

245 A common compositional trait often found in Verner's paintings throughout the 1870's was the linking of tranquil sheets of water in the foreground to heavily treed rolling hills in the background by a human element, usually canoeists, in the mid-ground.

246 A Nook on the West Coast, Howe Sound, B.C., 1888, watercolour on paper, 27.9x22.9cm., Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Accession # pdp 2154.

his own 1874 Fishing Party Returning Home<sup>247</sup> than any of his other Northwest landscapes dating from previous summers. Clearly O'Brien was attempting to break with what the critics had come to view as the 'monotonous' and conventional Northwest landscapes by returning to past proven formulas of composition.

O'Brien's search for a different approach to Northwest subject matter is well illustrated by his masterfully executed watercolour entitled A British Columbian Forest, 1888.<sup>248</sup> Here the artist has eliminated the distant vista so common in other British Columbian landscapes, and concentrated all his efforts in producing a claustrophobic and intense view of the lush vegetation on the interior of a rain forest. He sought to depict a New Eden, an exotic symbol of paradise that would evoke a much stronger viewer response than previous scenes of cold, inorganic masses of rock.

It should be pointed out that the critical acceptance of O'Brien's A British Columbian Forest in 1888 had much to do with the political climate and the activities of the

<sup>247</sup> Fishing Party Returning Home, 1874, watercolour on paper, 24.1x45.7cm., Private Collection, Toronto.

<sup>248</sup> A British Columbian Forest, 1888, watercolour on paper, 54.1x76.4cm., National Gallery of Canada, Accession #159 (Purchased 1889)

C.P.R. O'Brien's fellow Academician, Allan Edson(1846-88) had exhibited forest scenes very similar to A British Columbian Forest throughout the 1870's. Edson's Autumn Forest I and Autumn Forest II, both circa 1874, and his<sup>249</sup> R.C.A. diploma piece, Trout Stream in the Forest, c.1875, are in fact superior to O'Brien's work, in the depiction of the vibrant forest environment. Nonetheless, Edson's paintings passed largely unnoticed by the art critics and buying public. Subjectivity and technical competence were, therefore, not the prime contributing factors to the success of O'Brien's A British Columbian Forest. The completion of the C.P.R. transcontinental line and the enthusiastic entry of British Columbia into Confederation created a nationwide mood of optimism that resulted in western landscapes being interpreted as symbolic of the young Dominion's potential. The C.P.R. had set the stage for the applause of O'Brien's painting. It was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 1889.

<sup>249</sup> Autumn Forest I, c.1874, watercolour on paper, 37.9x30.7cm., McCord Museum, Montreal, Accession # M971.161.1

Autumn Forest II, c.1874, watercolour on paper, 38.5x27.6cm., McCord Museum, Montreal, Accession # M971.161.2.

Trout Stream in the Forest, c.1875, oil on canvas, 59.7x46.4cm., National Gallery of Canada, Accession # 131. (R.C.A. Diploma Piece deposited 1880)

In the fall of 1888 the C.P.R. commissioned O'Brien to furnish Toronto's Globe with a black and white illustration of the Vancouver vicinity. He was paid sixty dollars for the drawing.<sup>250</sup> Two other sketches of the trees in Stanley Park, Vancouver were sent to Van Horne for his approval and disposal.<sup>251</sup> These may have been a personal commission from Van Horne as there is no record of Company payment for them.

O'Brien exhibited the bulk of his 1888 Western pictures in a special exhibition by Canadian artists celebrating Montreal's Winter Carnival. The show opening February 4th 1889, at the A.A.M. galleries prominently displayed twenty-one watercolours by the artist. All but two of these works were subjects taken from in or around Vancouver. O'Brien had the catalogue especially appended to

<sup>250</sup> L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), October 22, 1888, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #22038.

W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), October 26, 1888, VHL, Vol. 27 (Montreal) p. 676.

L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 21, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #23220. When the illustration appeared in the Globe in January 1889 its interpretation by the engraver very much displeased O'Brien who noted the foreground was "especially spoiled."

<sup>251</sup> L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 21, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #23220.

indicate the proximity of his views to that city.<sup>252</sup> That April O'Brien exhibited three more Northwest watercolours at the spring exhibition of the A.A.M. These included a rather large Mountains of the Coast Range, 1888, The Lagoon, 1888, and Nook on the Coast Range, 1888 (all locations unknown).

On April 17th 1889, Carter H. Harrison, a Victorian author/adventurer, published the accounts of his world tour in a five hundred and sixty-nine page volume entitled A Race with the Sun, featuring two wood-engravings of Northwest landscapes after L. R. O'Brien - Mount Hermit, Summit of the Selkirks and Great Glacier from the Road.<sup>253</sup> Both drawings were supplied to G. P. Putnam's Sons Publishers by Van Horne and the four hundred dollar charge for their interpretation as woodcuts was paid by the C.P.R.<sup>254</sup> The latter sketch had the distinction of

<sup>252</sup> L. R. O'Brien(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 21, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #23220.

<sup>253</sup> G. P. Putnam(New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 22, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #23760.

<sup>254</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to G. P. Putnam (New York), June 1889, VHL, Vol.30 (Montreal) pp.108-110.

being selected as the frontpiece. Originally O'Brien's Gréat Glacier and Glacier House had been intended for use as the introductory illustration but it was switched at the last moment because it had already been published in a C.P.R. 'Tourist Guide Book' (circa 1886).<sup>255</sup> Van Horne did all that he could to facilitate the sale of Harrison's book in Canada as it contained one complete chapter on the Canadian Pacific route through the mountains which admirably suited the promotional needs of the Company.<sup>256</sup>

Urged by Van Horne,<sup>257</sup> and encouraged by the acceptance of his 1887 watercolour In the Canadian Rockies: Footprints of an Avalanche (location unknown) at the British Royal Academy,<sup>258</sup> O'Brien decided to hold a major

<sup>255</sup> G. P. Putnam (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 17, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #23760.

<sup>256</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to Carter H. Harrison (Chicago), August 9, 1889, VHL, Vol. 31 (Montreal) p. 209. The C.P.R. section of the book included four photos by Notman and Son (Montreal); one photograph by Boone and May, landscape photographers (Calgary); and one photograph by C.S. Barley (Winnipeg). All photographs were selected by Van Horne and the half-tint process to prepare them for publication was paid for by the C.P.R.

<sup>257</sup> L. R. O'Brien (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), February 12, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #23220.

<sup>258</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p. 423. O'Brien's In the Canadian Rockies: Footprints of an Avalanche was exhibited at the B.R.A. in November 1888.

exhibition of his Northwest landscapes in England. His showing consisting of twenty-seven Rocky Mountain and West Coast scenes opened at the McLean's Gallery, Haymarket, on June 22nd 1889.<sup>259</sup> Like the Fraser Picadilly show two years earlier, all aspects of the project smacked of C.P.R. promotion. Again the guest list was most impressive. Distinguished dignitaries attending the opening included the Marquis de Lorne, Princess Louise, Sir Charles and Lady Tupper, and Sir Donald Smith,<sup>260</sup> all involved with the C.P.R. during some stage of its publicity campaign.

The news of O'Brien's good fortune in Great Britain reached Canada. Journals such as the Montreal Daily Witness (August 13th), the Toronto Saturday Night (August 17th), and the Vancouver Daily World (August 27th) all carried flattering reviews. The Vancouver readers were particularly enthusiastic because of the 'hometown' subject matter of most of the pictures.<sup>261</sup> This was the last major effort by O'Brien on behalf of the C.P.R. He

<sup>259</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.423.

<sup>260</sup> "Rev. of O'Brien's Haymarket Exhibition," TSN, Vol.2, no.36 (Toronto: August 17, 1889) p.6. Of thirteen paintings sold during this exhibition two were acquired by the Colonial Secretary and his wife, Lord and Lady Knutsford, and Indian Summer, 1888, was presented to Princess Louise as a wedding gift.

<sup>261</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.423.

returned to Canada from Great Britain in November of 1889 to face radically changing views of Canadian art. Young Paris-trained painters like Paul Peel, Robert Harris, and George Reid were returning home with themes based almost entirely on the study of the human figure.<sup>262</sup> O'Brien reacted by ceasing to paint Northwest landscapes. The artist's last known public showing of a C.P.R. related work was his Kicking Horse Pass - Second Crossing, 1887. It was loaned by Sir George Stephen to the British Royal Academy in 1892.<sup>263</sup>

Curiously the one artist today whose name is synonymous with Northwest subject matter was a relative late-comer to the C.P.R. program. Frederic Marlett Bell-Smith's first public exhibition of Rocky Mountain scenery was that poorly received R.C.A./O.S.A. show in the spring of 1888. The negative reviews of the exhibition marking the beginning of the end of Northwest landscape painting for 'seasoned' artists like Fraser and O'Brien (their work was referred to as 'repetitive' and 'passé') in fact signalled the commencement of Bell-Smith's mature and 'inspired'

<sup>262</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.424.

<sup>263</sup> Van, "Art and Artists," TSN, Vol.6, no.13 (Toronto: February 18, 1893) p.15.

period of work. His masterful rendering of mountain vistas allowed him to over-ride the growing public preference for Paris-inspired figurative painting.

On April 23rd 1888, Bell-Smith wrote to Van Horne requesting his second annual pass over the transcontinental line:

The President to whom I wrote asking for the use of a private car, has referred me to you. My proposition was to pay for the privilege in pictures of the mountains.

If you can entertain the idea, and will name the cost of such for say two or three months from July 8th and will state the style and number of pictures which you would expect as an equivalent, I will sign an agreement or contract in accordance with the same.

If, however, you cannot think of it, still will you grant me a pass similar to that with which I was favoured last year?

The favor of an early reply will oblige as I am leaving for a short trip to England in a few days. 264

Bell-Smith's voyage to England was undertaken primarily to attend the May 1888 opening of the British Royal Academy. Bell-Smith had been granted the rare distinction and privilege of exhibiting his 1887 Otter-Tail Valley, Rocky Mountains (location unknown). The President of the Royal

264 F. M. Bell-Smith (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 23, 1888, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #20209.

Canadian Academy, L. R. O'Brien, was not so honoured until six months later when he also was invited to show a Northwest scene. Clearly this early critical attention suggested that Bell-Smith was destined to 'outshine' his Canadian colleagues in painting Rocky Mountain subjects.

Due to the severe restrictions placed on Company spending for the 1888 season, Van Horne was unable to provide Bell-Smith with a private coach. The artist was, however, granted a free pass over the line.<sup>265</sup> The C.P.R.'s faith in Bell-Smith must have been considerable; remember, even O'Brien was obliged to pay partial transportation fees that summer. On June 8th, the passes and the usual letters of introduction to Company representatives in the Northwest were issued.<sup>266</sup> They were waiting for Bell-Smith at his London, Ontario studio when he returned from England on the 28th of June.<sup>267</sup> He departed for the Northwest shortly thereafter.

While little is known of Bell-Smith's activities in the mountains, his hectic exhibition schedule throughout

<sup>265</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to F. M. Bell-Smith (London), May 3, 1888, VHL, Vol. 25 (Montreal) p. 678.

<sup>266</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to F. M. Bell-Smith (London), June 8, 1888, VHL, Vol. 26 (Montreal) p. 226.

<sup>267</sup> F. M. Bell-Smith (London), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 28, 1888, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #20209.

the winter and spring of 1889 indicates he had a profitable summer's study. He exhibited eighteen Rocky Mountain watercolours (only three less than O'Brien) at the special Montreal Winter Carnival/A.A.M. exhibition which opened on February 4th. He showed Canyon of the Fraser River (location unknown) at the A.A.M. in April, and twenty-one more Northwest scenes at the seventeenth exhibition of the U.S.A. later that spring. At the R.C.A. show held that year in Ottawa, he exhibited eight western vistas.

Of all these works, only a few are available for study in contemporary Canadian public collections. Three small watercolours titled Indian Fishing Place by a Rocky Mountain Stream, 1888, Fraser Canyon, B.C., 1888, and Rainy Day in Fraser Canyon, 1889,<sup>268</sup> indicate his brush strokes were tighter and more precise, and greater attention was paid to detail than in his previous year's sketches. Some critics found this new approach disagreeable. A reporter for Toronto Saturday Night referred to the artist's hand as:

<sup>268</sup> Indian Fishing Place by a Rocky Mountain Stream, 1888, watercolour on paper, 24.2x33.7cm., Confederation Centre, Charlottetown. Accession #69.3.2.

Fraser Canyon, B.C., 1888, watercolour on paper, 34.3x26.0cm., London (Ontario) Art Gallery. Accession #74.A.11.

Rainy Day in Fraser Canyon, 1889, watercolour on paper, 29.2x45.6cm., Art Gallery of Windsor.

... not vigorous enough to bring out the strong character of scenes which must be stupendous in their grandeur, rather than merely pretty as we see them in many of Mr. Bell-Smith's pictures. 269

Apparently the art buying public as well, was unprepared to support Bell-Smith's efforts. Despite the prolific number of paintings exhibited, relatively few were sold. A columnist for the Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser reported:

F. M. Bell-Smith, the well-known artist, who has resided in London (Ontario) for the past six years is about to leave for France where he will reside in the future. To this step he has been led by the success his pictures have met in Europe, compared with the lack of patronage and want of appreciation in this country. 270

Undoubtedly the honour bestowed upon Bell-Smith by the British Royal Academy the previous May and the 'rumblings' in Canadian art circles about the excessive quantity of Northwest landscape painting had much to do with his decision to continue his studies abroad. But before his departure, he was determined to make one last trip over

269 "Rev. of O.S.A. 1889 Spring Exhibition," TSN, Vol. 2, no. 79 (Toronto: June 1, 1889) p. 7.

270 "Local News," Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser (Guelph: May 23, 1889) n.p.

the C.P.R. line. In correspondence with Van Horne on June 10th 1889, Bell-Smith stated:

In consequence of the much more ready appreciation of my work in England than it has met in Canada I have decided to leave this country and live and study abroad; but before doing so I would like another opportunity to secure sketches of the scenery of British Columbia with the view of holding an exhibition of watercolour drawings in London, Eng. next winter. ...

I would like to make a series of about fifty sketches illustrative of the scenery over the whole system of your line from Halifax to Vancouver ... and submit the same for your inspection before I publicly exhibit them, which I will not do without your approval.

... it is the opinion of my brother artists and critics generally that I have made great advances in my work and my intended sojourn in France is strongly endorsed by Mr. Woodcock and others who have been there.

I do not know whether you saw the watercolours I exhibited at the Art Gallery in Montreal this spring but I think they were quite in advance of last season's work. 271

While Bell-Smith's 1888-9 studies failed to receive the critical acclaim of his 1887 works, he did not abandon C.P.R. subject matter. Instead he sought out new markets in Great Britain and endeavoured to improve his painting skills by intensifying his studies in England, France and

271 F. M. Bell-Smith (Parkdale), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 10, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal); MS, #24571.

Holland. By such a strategy he laid the base for his future success as a landscape painter.

On June 20th, Bell-Smith informed Van Horne that his proposed London, England exhibition would appear with an illustrated catalogue including a full description of Northwest scenery and prominent mention of the C.P.R.<sup>272</sup> Van Horne could not have organized a better promotional exhibition himself and was impressed by Bell-Smith's determinism. Passes were issued in favour of Bell-Smith<sup>273</sup> on July 1st, and the artist was on his way westward by mid-month. Haplessly his venture was plagued with difficulties from the outset. In the mountains heavy smoke from bush fires made sketching nearly impossible and Bell-Smith noted that he had the unique opportunity of travelling from Montreal to Vancouver without seeing a single mountain.<sup>274</sup> He made the trip back and forth three times in as many weeks,<sup>275</sup> and finally by his third passage (early in the month of August) he was able to continue sketching in the region of Lake Louise.

<sup>272</sup> F. M. Bell-Smith (Parkdale), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 20, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #24571. The location of the show remains unknown.

<sup>273</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to F. M. Bell-Smith (Parkdale), July 1, 1889, VHL, V61.30 (Montreal) p.562.

<sup>274</sup> F. M. Bell-Smith, Alpine Journal (1918) n.p.

<sup>275</sup> F. M. Bell-Smith, Alpine Journal (1918) n.p.

Years later Bell-Smith reminisced:

Some of my pleasantest recollections are of the early days at Lake Louise. My first visit to that charming spot was in 1889, in company with Mr. Albert Bierstadt, of New York, an artist very celebrated in his day. There was no hotel there - not even a trail to the lake, so we carried blankets, etc., and camped on the lake shore at the very spot where the main entrance of the hotel or chateau now is. 276

Two beautiful watercolours of Lake Louise dating from this 1889 tour are available for study today, Lake Louise - Summit of the Rockies and Lake Louise, Early Morning.<sup>277</sup>

The loose handling of pigment in the former piece gives a sense of immediacy found in many of Bell-Smith's best field sketches. The more controlled application of the medium in Lake Louise, Early Morning suggests a studio rendition. The human element conspicuously present in both paintings adds much to the success of the work by providing scale and distracting from the 'untamed' bearing of the rugged landscape vista; the latter a most desirable characteristic in Van Horne's view.

<sup>276</sup> Bell-Smith, Alpine Journal (1918) n.p.

<sup>277</sup> Lake Louise - Summit of the Rockies, c.1889, watercolour on paper, 30.5x49.2cm., Collection of Mr. W. E. Gale, Vancouver.

Lake Louise, Early Morning, c.1889, watercolour on paper, 44.4x59.4cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary. Accession # Bcf.59.34.7.

Bell-Smith also managed to spend some time in the vicinity of Harrison Lake that summer. In a small watercolour entitled Douglas Mountain - Harrison Lake, B.C., 1889,<sup>278</sup> the artist displayed his fascination for the way of life of the Siwash Indians by carefully painting the image of one of their large fishing craft as it was 'dragged' across the surface of the lake. This watercolour was probably used as a study for his small oil painting, Siwash Canoes, Harrison Lake, 1889, (location unknown) which was exhibited at the R.C.A.'s eleventh annual show in Montreal in 1890. Nine other Northwest landscapes were shown at the same time. Bell-Smith displayed fifteen more Northwest scenes with the O.S.A. that spring. They were generally well received from the press. A Toronto Saturday Night critic reported:

Landscape pictures largely dominate as they must in this country for some time to come. The great number of these and the lack of individuality they present to the average onlooker, makes the exhibition seem a series of repetitions to the person who does not take the time to look at the pictures somewhat critically. 279

<sup>278</sup> Douglas Mountain - Harrison Lake, B.C., 1889, watercolour on paper, 15.1x32.0cm., Collection of Mr. W. E. Gale, Vancouver.

<sup>279</sup> "Rev. of the 1890 O.S.A. Spring Exhibition," TSN, Vol. 3, no. 27 (Toronto: May 31, 1890) p. 7.

The same reviewer referred to Bell-Smith's watercolour titled Ross Peak (location unknown) as "a strong bit of mountain scenery," but reserved his highest praise for the Rocky Mountain subjects of Marmaduke Matthews.

Matthews made an extremely competent showing despite his dismal failure in painting Northwest landscapes two seasons before. Somehow he managed to raise sufficient funds to pay for a C.P.R. reduced fare ticket (as offered by Van Horne) and to cover the cost of his food, accommodations and painting supplies for an 1889 tour of the West. The results were surprisingly successful. Bystander's art critic referred to Matthews as a "strong exhibitor" and cited the watercolours In the Fraser Canyon, The Hermit Range of the Selkirks and Head of the Illecillewaet (all locations unknown) as "very admirable."<sup>280</sup> The River's Birth, also a watercolour (location unknown), was hailed as a "masterpiece."<sup>281</sup> Toronto Saturday Night stated:

Shadow Valley, Selkirks ... represents one of the surprises in which the scenery of the Rockies abounds. The colouring is almost startling in

<sup>280</sup> "Exhibition of Ontario Artists," Bystander (Montreal: June 1890) p.301.

<sup>281</sup> "Exhibition of Ontario Artists," Bystander (Montreal: June 1890) p.301.

its transitions and might well be doubted did it come from any other place than where nature's scheme of colour is prepared on the grandest and most majestic scale. ... Source of the Illecillewaet, though somewhat wooly, is a strong picture. 282

Be it because of this new-found competition from Matthews or because of the warmer reception afforded his own work, Bell-Smith postponed his proposed visit to Europe. In the summer of 1890 he was once more drawn to the Rocky Mountains, receiving the same free pass privileges as in the previous two years. Mist, Rocky Mountains,<sup>283</sup> a water-colour dating from the summer of 1890, is an early example of Bell-Smith's interest in the ever-changing light and atmospheric effects caused by mist, low-lying clouds and sudden thunder showers.<sup>284</sup> It was a preoccupation that would occupy his time more and more in the later years of his career.

During this same sketching season Bell-Smith seems to have started a move away from providing detailed accounts of the actual location of his studies. Titles of his

<sup>282</sup> "Rev. of the 1890 O.S.A. Spring Exhibition," TSN, Vol. 3, no. 27 (Toronto: May 31, 1890) p. 7.

<sup>283</sup> Mist, Rocky Mountains, 1890, watercolour on paper, 32.0x47.1cm., Hart House, University of Toronto.

<sup>284</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p. 70.

paintings tended to become less specific as to the precise landmark observed by the artist. Mist, Rocky Mountains, Cascade near Glacier, Glacier Stream, Selkirks, B.C., and A Snow Clad Monarch of the Rockies, all dating from his 1890 tour are examples of this typical vagueness.<sup>285</sup> This thus indicates Bell-Smith was becoming less concerned with the illustrative, informative quality of his drawings. He began to complete intense, detailed studies of landscape phenomenon and its surrounding atmospheric conditions. Bell-Smith sought to capture the image of a mountain or a stream. His changing attitude was not a total transition from perceptual to conceptual, but rather somewhere in between the two. He strove to perceive as naturalistically as possible the landscape laid before his senses, but the painted image was intended to represent the universal and monumental 'concept' of a mountain landscape. It was this approach, for the most part 'borrowed' from Albert Bierstadt, but unique among Canadian Northwest painters, that allowed Bell-Smith to commercially survive when nearly all other mountainscape artists were fading.

<sup>285</sup> Cascade Near Glacier, 1890, watercolour on paper, 48.3x66.0cm., National Gallery of Canada. Accession #161.

Glacier Stream, Selkirks, B.C., 1890, oil on canvas, 38.1x54.0cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute. Accession #63.77.

A Snow Clad Monarch of the Rockies, 1890, watercolour on paper, Collection of Frederick R. Hume, Toronto.

On December 17th, 18th and 19th Bell-Smith held a large exhibition and sale of his British Columbia subjects in the art rooms of M. Hicks and Company, Montreal.<sup>286</sup> The invitations informing perspective viewers that this was one of the artist's last Canadian shows before he departed for Europe proved somewhat of an understatement. At the spring exhibition of the A.A.M. in 1891 Bell-Smith showed five of his largest Rocky Mountain watercolours as well as a smaller work.<sup>287</sup> Again it should be noted that the showing of more ambitious paintings in Montreal had much to do with flattering his C.P.R. patrons, especially when they sat on the board of the Art Association. In 1891 Sir Donald Smith served as President of the Society. R. B. Angus remained an active member of the Advisory Council, and Robert Reford and W.C. Van Horne joined the Gallery Committee.

<sup>286</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p.23.

<sup>287</sup> Bell-Smith showed, A Snow Clad Monarch of the Rockies, Gorge of the Illicilliewaet, Mount MacDonald, Roger's Pass, In the Fraser Canyon, A Rocky Mountain Valley, and A Valley in Gloom. The largest Northwest landscapes exhibited by Bell-Smith to this date were images of mountains named after top C.P.R. officials. Mount Sir Donald and the Great Glacier of the Selkirks was exhibited at the O.S.A. in 1889, and Mount Stephen at the institution the year after. They were priced for sale at two hundred and fifty dollars each, the highest price ever asked by the artist for a watercolour.

Bell-Smith was also an important contributor to 1891's O.S.A., R.C.A., and Toronto Industrial exhibitions. All paintings shown were Northwest scenes. Most were the result of his 1890 summer sojourn to the Rockies. A reviewer of the O.S.A. exhibition cited Bell-Smith's On the Fraser River, B.C., a large watercolour (location unknown) as "a fine picture," and went on to state that "its only serious fault was its monotonous body tone."<sup>288</sup> Two smaller watercolours, Wharf, Murray Bay (location unknown) and On the Bow River, Banff (location unknown) were described as "well painted."

Once more Marmaduke Matthews managed to down-stage Bell-Smith. The same art critic summarized the show as follows:

There are some fine watercolours here, however the principal being no.214, by Matthews entitled Looking Down Goat Pass. It is to be sold for the benefit of the building fund and should bring much more than the catalogue price of \$150. ... On the Ottertail, by the same artist, is also a fine picture. <sup>289</sup>

There were also negative comments for Matthews' paintings,

<sup>288</sup> Chad, "Rev. of the 1891 O.S.A. Exhibition," TSN, Vol.4, no.28 (Toronto: June 6,1891) p.7.

<sup>289</sup> Chad, "O.S.A.," TSN, Vol.4, no.28, p.7.

criticisms that would follow him throughout the remainder of his career. The artist was either unwilling or unable to give the surface appearance of his works a polished or finished presence. During previous years the term 'wooly' had been used to describe the 'complexion' of his paintings. In 1891 his pictures were said to be "mamed by a roughness of texture,"<sup>290</sup> and in 1893 his best efforts "seemed to require even more care than they already had received before they could be thoroughly satisfactory."<sup>291</sup> Matthews continued to show Rocky Mountain landscapes at the O.S.A. until well into the twentieth century but he was never again to surpass Bell-Smith in praise from the critics. After 1892<sup>292</sup> there is no record of any further correspondence between Matthews and Van Horne. The artist's last showing of any particular interest to Van Horne or the C.P.R. was his contribution of three oil paintings to the Chicago Worlds Fair in 1893. Three was the maximum number of paintings allowed by any contributor and all of

<sup>290</sup> Chad, "O.S.A.," TSN, Vol.4, no.28, p.7.

<sup>291</sup> "Art in Toronto," Arcadia, Vol.1, no.20 (Montreal: February 15, 1893) p.430.

<sup>292</sup> M. Matthews (Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 29, 1892, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #71894.

Matthews' were Northwest scenes.<sup>293</sup>

In the summer of 1891 Bell-Smith did not return to the Northwest. Instead he sketched along the banks of the Saguenay River,<sup>294</sup> then departed for Europe sometime in late September after the close of the Toronto Industrial Exhibition. Little is known of his activities abroad. As earlier proposed he did study for a time in London, Paris and Holland. It is believed he met and painted with American artist Thomas Alexander Harrison<sup>295</sup> and he may have been exposed to more progressive movements in painting such as Impressionism. For unknown reasons his planned sojourn of several years was shortened to one year, as he was back in Toronto by November 1892 preparing for a series of 1893 exhibitions including the O.S.A., the R.C.A., the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and a major "retrospective" show held at the Toronto Industrial Exhibition that September. The latter project entitled the 'Bell-Smith Collection' consisted of one hundred and twelve watercolours and oil paintings, representative of his career as an artist - landscapes from the White

<sup>293</sup> "Chicago Worlds Fair Selection," TSN, Vol.6, no.8 (Toronto: January 14, 1893) p.14. Matthews showed Glaciers of the Selkirks, Mount Begbie at Revelstoke, and Lifting Mists, Kicking Horse River, all in oil (locations unknown).

<sup>294</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p.23.

<sup>295</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p.23.

Mountains, the Maritimes, and the Rockies, as well as recent subjects from England, France and Holland.<sup>296</sup> It served as a vehicle of self-evaluation for Bell-Smith, which resulted in a sudden and dramatic change of subject matter. Commencing the following year Bell-Smith largely abandoned landscape painting and began a long series of grand-scaled documentary oil paintings which included Lights of a City Street, 1894;<sup>297</sup> a portrait of Queen Victoria in 1895; numerous works commemorating Queen Victoria's Tribute to Canada, and the Death of Sir John Thompson, both in 1896; and in 1897, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in England.

The importance of these paintings is more historical than artistic, and even though Bell-Smith considered these works to be among his best achievements, they did not display his talents as eloquently as many of his smaller watercolours and oils,<sup>298</sup> particularly those painted in the Canadian Rockies. Bell-Smith's large historical pieces sadly lacked the vivacity and freshness of colour, the

<sup>296</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p.23.

<sup>297</sup> Lights of a City Street, 1894, oil on canvas, 132.7x200.0cm., Collection of Simpsons, Toronto.

<sup>298</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p.29.

freedom and spontaneity of brushstroke and the beautiful renderings of depth and atmosphere found in his best Northwest vistas.

When Bell-Smith finally returned to landscape painting, it was 1898 and he was at the height of his career. He returned to the Canadian Rockies and from this point in time forward, a westerly excursion over the C.P.R. line became almost an annual event for the artist.<sup>299</sup>

Between 1898 and 1921 he made at least twelve trips to the Northwest, painting prolifically and exhibiting these 'souvenirs' of his travels at every opportunity with the R.C.A., the A.A.M., the O.S.A., and at the Toronto Industrial Exhibition.

In 1904 Bell-Smith was elected President of the O.S.A., and in this capacity wrote a letter the following year welcoming Canada's new Governor-General (Earl Grey) to the Dominion. In this letter Bell-Smith spoke of the development of a distinctly Canadian art based upon the landscape - a national art. Bell-Smith:

<sup>299</sup> Boulet, Bell-Smith, p.29.

Our Land ... supplies the sculptor and painter with unlimited material for the exercise of their artistic skill, and our Country is ripe for the development of a distinctly Canadian art, which if intelligently recognized should result in master works comparable with those of older lands. 300

In this same letter Bell-Smith went on to emphasize the inspirational beauty of Canada's "wooded slopes, mountain heights, shining glaciers, inland seas and mighty streams." Nowhere was this 'national vision' better epitomized than in the Rocky Mountain landscapes of Bell-Smith himself. When the C.P.R. sponsored drive to promote the Northwest landscape as 'National' in character faltered in the late 1880's Bell-Smith took over as the principal instigator of the movement. He went on to be hailed as "The Premier Painter of the Rockies."<sup>301</sup>

As previously mentioned, the only other Canadian artist to make a career-long commitment to painting Northwest subjects was Thomas Mower Martin. His approach was slightly more 'commercially' oriented and as such he failed to attract much in the way of critical attention

<sup>300</sup> F. M. Bell-Smith (Toronto), Letter to Earl Grey (Ottawa), 1905, Correspondence File, Ontario Society of Artists, Department of Public Records and Archives, Toronto. Boulet, Bell-Smith, p. 31

<sup>301</sup> John E. Staley, "The Premier Painter of the Rockies," Maclean's, Vol. XXV, no. 2 (December 1912) n.p.

during his lifetime. To this day Martin remains one of nineteenth century Canada's most underrated landscape painters.

Martin's ten<sup>302</sup> (or more) C.P.R. sponsored tours of the Canadian Northwest resulted in the production of a large body of competently executed watercolours and oil paintings presenting a wide range of subject matter. Unlike other artists who confined their studies to one or two aspects of the Northwest, Martin attempted to paint a comprehensive 'picture.' He created several series of small-scaled watercolour drawings showing the 'traditional' landscape vistas along the C.P.R. line (eg. Illecillewaet Glacier, Lake Louise, Rogers Pass, the Selkirk Range, Fraser and Bow Rivers etc.), the life style and mythology of the Northwest Indians, Vancouver harbour scenes, Rocky Mountain wildlife (eg. 'big horn' sheep, mountain goats, buffalo etc.) and flora. Few of these watercolours are to be found in public collections today largely due to the lack of significance placed upon Martin's work by art critics and historians in the past.

One way to at least partially retrace Martin's activities during his C.P.R. sponsored western tours would be

<sup>302</sup> Harper, Early Painters, p.217.

to analyse his writings. In September and October of 1889 the artist published his early impressions of the Rocky Mountains in a series of letters titled "Artist's Letters from the Rockies" published in Toronto's Week magazine.<sup>303</sup> These published letters would have certainly assisted Martin in the sale of his work. He also sought to reach further perspective patrons by lecturing on his landscape painting activities at O.S.A. meetings,<sup>304</sup> and at bi-weekly gatherings of the Versatile Club, a private 'gentlemen's' club, held in his studios throughout 1893.<sup>305</sup> He assembled his Versatile Club lectures into one volume, entitled Canada from an Artist's View which was published in 1895. He also illustrated Wilfred Campbell's Canada in 1907.

In Canada, thirty-six Northwest watercolour drawings by Martin have been photomechanically reproduced in colour. 'Leafing' through the book is a simple method of forming a preliminary evaluation of Martin's contribution to early Canadian landscape painting. The

<sup>303</sup> T. M. Martin(Toronto), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), December 10, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #24994. Martin offers Van Horne Illecillewaet Gorge, near Revelstoke, a watercolour sketch.

<sup>304</sup> "Northwest and Rocky Mountain Scenery," TSN, Vol. 6, no.19 (Toronto: April 1, 1893) p.12.

<sup>305</sup> "Versatile Club," TSN, Vol.6, no.9 (Toronto: January 21, 1893) p.14.

colouring of the reproductions is fairly consistent with original sketches that have been viewed. The illustrations cover a wide variety of interests as already stated, and presumably date from several trips over the C.P.R. line. Martin rarely dated his works. Illustrations such as Great Illecillewaet Glacier, Source of the Beaver, The Valley of Rogers Pass, Mount Sir Donald in the Selkirks, From the Foot of Eagle Peak, Ross Peak, and Mount Cheops in the Hermit Range (all in Canada) can be considered characteristic of Martin's Northwest landscape compositions. Forest and grasslands reach out to embrace and compliment the gigantic mountain masses. A harmonious meeting of organic and inorganic creates a strong sense of serenity surpassing even that found in the best of O'Brien's 'dreamy' 1888 west coast watercolours.

Other Martin watercolour drawings in Canada such as Pacific Coast near Nelson's Island, Coast near Sechart, North of Howe Sound, Olympic Mountains from Coast near Victoria, Siwash Village - Pacific Coast, and Burial Grounds of Siwash Indians testify to the artist's keen interest in the life style of the Indians. In these works the colouring and decorative motifs of housing structures, totems, watercraft and customs are accurate in detail and faithful to native symbolism. As such they provide a valuable pictorial record of almost forgotten Indian

cultures. Some of these watercolours were employed as preliminary studies for a series of large oil paintings which date from the mid-1890's. West Coast Indians Returning from the Hunt, n.d., can be considered the<sup>306</sup> culmination of his Siwash Indian studies. It probably belonged to the same series of oil paintings as Blood Indians Moving Camp, and Blood Indians Returning to Camp,<sup>307</sup> both undated. All three paintings are horizontal in orientation and identical in size. Both Blood Indians as well as a slightly larger oil painting entitled Indians Returning from a Raid, c.1895,<sup>308</sup> are bathed in the clear sunlight of high altitudes characteristic of Martin's mountain watercolour sketches from the Rockies and the Selkirks.

Another large oil painting titled Train in the Mountains, n.d.<sup>309</sup> is one of the rare instances where the

<sup>306</sup> West Coast Indians Returning from the Hunt, n.d., oil on canvas, 88.9x170.2cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute. Accession # 56.27.8.

<sup>307</sup> Blood Indians Moving Camp, n.d., oil on canvas, 88.9x170.2cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute. Accession #56.27.5.  
Blood Indians Returning to Camp, n.d., oil on canvas, 88.9x170.2cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute. Accession #56.27.6.

<sup>308</sup> Indians Returning from a Raid, c.1895, oil on canvas, 165.1x127.0cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute. Accession #55.23.

<sup>309</sup> Train in the Mountains, n.d., oil on canvas, 35.6x55.9cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute. Accession #62.3.

image of a train has been successfully incorporated into a mountain landscape. Throughout the 1890's and the early years of the twentieth century several Canadian artists were commissioned by the C.P.R. to paint 'trainscapes.' Most of these efforts were failures as works of art because too much emphasis was placed on the image of the train itself. Martin's Train was more subtle; like in O'Brien's Kicking Horse Pass - Second Crossing, the presence of the locomotive adds drama to the composition. Martin's Train was probably a Company commission.

Several other large Rocky Mountain oil paintings which have been located in private and public collections indicate that Martin was the most prolific C.P.R. sponsored artist working in the medium.<sup>310</sup> Combining his large production of watercolours, and his time consuming work in oils, Martin would have rivalled even Bell-Smith in the total number of hours devoted to C.P.R./Northwest subjects. Suffice it to say his contribution to Canadian landscape painting remains largely understated and unexplored.<sup>311</sup>

<sup>310</sup> The Great Glaciers, 1905, oil on canvas, 134.6x91.4cm., Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Accession #937.660.  
Coastal Range with Indians in Canoe, n.d., oil on canvas, 91.4x152.4cm. (sight), Dominion Gallery, Montreal.  
Mountain Landscape, n.d., oil on canvas, 182.8x152.4cm. (sight), Private Collection, Gananoque, Ontario.

<sup>311</sup> Martin was the first Canadian painter to return from the Northwest with an extensive collection of fauna studies - a topic for research in itself.

Another Royal Canadian Academician whose work warrants further study is Forshaw Day. Very little is known of his involvement with the C.P.R. after his initial trip westward in 1887. He was offered reduced fare passes for the summer seasons of 1889, 1890, 1892, 1893, and 1895.<sup>312</sup> There is no evidence that indicates he completed tours in all of these years. The C.P.R. Archives microfilm index to the Van Horne Letterbooks suggests the existence of a series of large oil paintings completed by Day sometime after 1892.<sup>313</sup> Unfortunately most of these letters have been lost. One letter, extant, refers to Day's proposed project:

As a member of the Council of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts I am desirous of having a series of paintings in oil and watercolours of points and incidents of interest along the route of the Canadian Pacific Ry. for exhibition at the Worlds Fair Chicago ... At the Paris Exhibition Art Galleries I was disappointed in not finding anything illustrating the beautiful scenery of the Rockies, and it was only in another department that I found a few photographs. There was also nothing of the flora which I am anxious to collect and paint. ... I would on my return (from the Rockies) submit my entire work to your critical acumen. 314

<sup>312</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letters to F. Day (Kingston), May 12, 1889, May 13, 1890, April 5, 1892, June 17, 1893, June 12, 1895, VHL, Vol. 30, p. 176, Vol. 34, p. 507, Vol. 40, p. 302, Vol. 44, p. 1 and Vol. 49, p. 201 respectively.

<sup>313</sup> see Appendix #1

<sup>314</sup> F. Day (Kingston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 15, 1892, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #71166.

It is most probable that Day made this 1892 trip as other letters exist referring to the preparations. On May 22nd he requested to carry his tent and camping equipment free of charge.<sup>315</sup> May 30th Day wrote that he intended to travel all the way to the coast (Victoria) collecting drawings, papers and photographs of the flora for submission to the Botanical Societies of England and Ireland and to a certain Professor Lawson, an eminent botanist of the Royal Society of Canada.<sup>316</sup> He added that no accurately recorded collection of the flora of British Columbia was then in existence.<sup>317</sup> On June 22nd the artist informed Van Horne that he planned to take Mr. Arthur Shaubenzee, the son of the Adjutant General of Kingston's Royal Military College, with him as an assistant for collecting the samples of flora.<sup>318</sup> Their planned departure was set for July 5th.<sup>319</sup>

<sup>315</sup> F. Day (Kingston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 22, 1892, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #71166.

<sup>316</sup> F. Day (Kingston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 30, 1892, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #71166.

<sup>317</sup> F. Day to Van Horne, May 30, 1892, #71166.

<sup>318</sup> F. Day (Kingston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 22, 1892, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #71166.

<sup>319</sup> F. Day (Kingston), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 9, 1892, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #71166.

The results of Forshaw Day's 1892-3 work will most probably be found in the botanical journals of Great Britain and Canada. Flora studies would not have been well received at the R.C.A., the O.S.A., or the A.A.M. Throughout the 1890's, Day's paintings drew him closer to science than to 'fine' art affairs. As such his contribution to Canadian art institutions was minimal during this period. The C.P.R.'s partial sponsorship of Day apparently served science better than art.

A Forshaw Day oil painting entitled simply The Selkirks, n.d. (location unknown), was exhibited at the Dominion of Canada Industrial Exhibition, in Toronto, on August 27th through September 12th, 1903. Day had died only a few months before. The selection committee, under the management of the O.S.A., must have deemed The Selkirks of significant importance in the artist's career to favour its inclusion as representative of their demised colleague's talents. At the time The Selkirks was owned by the O.S.A., quite possibly a bequest by the artist.

In the spring of 1889 Albert Bierstadt's dramatic masterpiece The Last of the Buffalo, 1888-9, was rejected by an American selection committee for the annual Paris Exposition.<sup>320</sup> The humiliation enshrouded him, his

<sup>320</sup> Hendricks, Bierstadt, p.37. The Last of the Buffalo, 1888-9, oil on canvas, 181x303cm., Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

paintings were no longer selling in the United States or Europe. Feeling abandoned by his countrymen and his affluent patrons, he turned his full attention to the Canadian Rockies, hoping that the change of 'scene' would attract new buyers and regain the momentum of his career.

By late summer Bierstadt was at last in the Canadian Northwest painting in the regions of Banff and Glacier House with substantial C.P.R. 'support.' Other than free pass privileges and letters of introduction to C.P.R. western representatives, the artist was also provided with first class reservations at the Company's Banff, Glacier and Vancouver Hotels, exclusive use of a caboose car to use as a studio, a hand car for short excursions along the line, and unrestricted train 'stopping' authority.<sup>321</sup> In a letter dated November 12th, the artist informed Van Horne that he was still on the Canadian Pacific "finding the grand old mountains full of interesting study."<sup>322</sup> He was anxiously awaiting the arrival of Van Horne for his appraisal of a large oil painting entitled Mount Sir

<sup>321</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to A. Bierstadt (New York), July 30, 1889, VHL, Vol. 31 (Montreal) pp. 20-2, and 33-7.

<sup>322</sup> A. Bierstadt (N.W.T.), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), November 12, 1889, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS #26035.

Donald,<sup>323</sup> then very near completion. In the artist's own words it was one of his "finest pictures." Van Horne was delayed by business and was unable to make the trip westward to meet Bierstadt.

In January 1890, Bierstadt forwarded a bundle of his Rocky Mountain engravings to the C.P.R.'s Vancouver superintendent requesting he place them in various Company hotels.<sup>324</sup> The artist received no payment for these works. They were intended as a form of self-promotion, attempting to familiarize Canadians with his activities in the hopes of attracting commissions. No Canadian requests were immediately forthcoming but word of his renewed enthusiasm for painting panoramic mountain vistas reached New York. In a letter dated February 27th 1890, Bierstadt referred to the recent sale of several of his mountain subjects.<sup>325</sup> With these profits he was venturing to invest in New York state country property and in stocks in the C.P.R. In this same letter he reminded Van Horne of the completion of Mount Sir Donald, which he again praised as the best

<sup>323</sup> Mount Sir Donald, 1889, oil on canvas, 146x212cm., New Bedford Public Library, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

<sup>324</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 30, 1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #26521.

<sup>325</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), February 27, 1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #26035.

piece of mountain scenery he had ever executed. Bierstadt was holding the canvas in New York for Sir Donald Smith's personal viewing.

By April of 1890, Sir Donald Smith had not yet seen his namesake (the painting). In another letter to Van Horne, Bierstadt spoke of the opportunity to sell Mount Sir Donald but was delaying the transaction hoping Sir Donald would want to purchase the canvas himself.<sup>326</sup> Lake Louise<sup>327</sup> of approximately the same size had just been completed and was also for sale. There was no response from either Van Horne or Sir Donald Smith as both gentlemen were apparently out of Montreal on business trips.

On April 26th, Bierstadt readdressed Van Horne suggesting Lake Louise, Mount Sir Donald, and his most recently completed Northwest scene, Sunrise from Glacier Station,<sup>328</sup> be exhibited at the Art Association of Montreal. A tone of impatience is evident in this letter. Bierstadt was becoming annoyed with the lack of response to his

<sup>326</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 7, 1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #26035. Mount Sir Donald was offered for purchase at the price of ten thousand dollars.

<sup>327</sup> Lake Louise, 1890, oil on canvas, 95.3x149.9cm., Haussner's Restaurant, Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>328</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 26, 1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Mtl.), MS, #26035.

Canadian Rocky Mountain subjects:

I do not wish to bore you or your friends with my pictures. I can dispose of them here, but the exhibition of them is of some importance to me and especially if they were sent to Europe.

329

No immediate arrangements for the exhibition of Bierstadt's paintings were made.

On May 20th, Bierstadt reoffered the same three paintings for exhibition and sale. He had learned that Sir George Stephen was to entertain Princess Louise (the artist's former sketching companion) during her Montreal visit and suggested that the exhibition of his Canadian landscapes would be appropriate for the occasion.<sup>330</sup> He hinted that Van Horne should use his influence to secure him an invitation to exhibit at the A.A.M. This prompted an immediate response from the C.P.R.'s head office. Two days later Sir George Stephen was in New York visiting Bierstadt's Broadway Avenue studio. He was very much impressed by Sunrise from Glacier Station and managed to charm the artist into giving it to him, free of charge.

<sup>329</sup> A. Bierstadt(New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), April 26,1890, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #26035.

<sup>330</sup> A. Bierstadt(New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 20,1890, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #26035.

Bierstadt referred to his being under some obligation to Sir George Stephen for his repeated invitations to travel the C.P.R. line, hence the gift of Sunrise.<sup>331</sup> A tentative agreement was also reached for the display of Mount Sir Donald and Lake Louise during the Royal tour.<sup>332</sup>

Upon his return to Montreal, Sir George Stephen praised Bierstadt's rendition of Mount Sir Donald and pressed the original Sir Donald to purchase it.<sup>333</sup> He also commissioned Bierstadt to paint him another Northwest landscape.<sup>334</sup> On June 11th, Bierstadt informed Van Horne that Sir Donald Smith had failed to find the time

<sup>331</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), May 22, 1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #26035. Sunrise from Glacier Station, 1890, oil on canvas, 75x105cm., Mount Stephen Club, Montreal. Sunrise from Glacier Station is the painting referred to by Dennis Reid as Sunset with Railroad (Country Canada, p.436.) It was not a commission as stated therein. Sir George Stephen's earliest commission given Bierstadt was Mount Baker in 1890 (completed in 1891). Sunrise was crated and shipped out of New York on May 23, 1890. It arrived in Montreal the following day and was promptly installed in Stephen's Drummond Street residence (presently the Mount Stephen Club).

<sup>332</sup> This agreement was cancelled by Van Horne when Sir George Stephen returned to Montreal. Van Horne wrote to Bierstadt on May 25th stating that Mr. R. B. Angus would consider the matter (VHL, Vol.34, p.548.). The subject did not come up again.

<sup>333</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to A. Bierstadt (New York), May 25, 1890, VHL, Vol.34 (Montreal) p.548.

<sup>334</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 11, 1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #26035.

to view Mount Sir Donald before departing from New York for Great Britain that same day.<sup>335</sup> The artist reluctantly concluded that Sir Donald was not interested in buying his namesake and therefore offered both Mount Sir Donald and Lake Louise to Sir George Stephen.<sup>336</sup> Sir George could not make use of Mount Sir Donald owing to its size and he did not fancy Lake Louise. Neither work was acquired.

Bierstadt then offered Mount Sir Donald to the C.P.R. in exchange for stock in the railroad. In the artist's own words he would have liked "to be part owner of some of the finest scenery on the continent."<sup>337</sup> Again no deal was struck. Bierstadt was becoming desperate. On July 21st he suggested to Van Horne that the title of his Mount Sir Donald painting could be changed to A View in the Selkirk Range, "as Sir Donald seemed reluctant in calling to see his namesake."<sup>338</sup> Van Horne responded that Sir

<sup>335</sup> A. Bierstadt(New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 11,1890, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #26035.

<sup>336</sup> Bierstadt to Van Horne, June 11,1890, #26035.

<sup>337</sup> Bierstadt to Van Horne, June 11,1890, #26035.

<sup>338</sup> A. Bierstadt(New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), July 21,1890, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Montreal), MS, #26035.

Donald would probably take offense by such an action.<sup>339</sup>

The title remained temporarily unchanged.<sup>340</sup> ✓

In late August, Bierstadt was again seeking Van Horne's advise, this time concerning the subject of his commission for Sir George Stephen. A photograph and a series of colour studies of Mount Stephen as viewed from the edge of the lake at its base were forwarded to Montreal for Van Horne's appraisal.<sup>341</sup> Again Bierstadt sought to flatter a C.P.R. official by painting his namesake. On this occasion Van Horne was opposed to the idea and was very specific in suggesting an alternate topic:

The photograph you enclosed would be open to one of the objections Sir George made to Lake Louise. There is too much water in it and besides it is somewhat lacking in interest, the particular mountains shown being comparatively unimportant. If you come back by the Canadian Pacific and paint Mount Baker from the first little bridge west of our Stone River bridge I am very sure that Sir George would like that, - so sure that you might feel entirely safe in stopping there to paint it. ... under favourable conditions the view is so magnificent that I am sure it would be well worth your while. I think it the finest natural composition I have ever seen. The point indicated is the nearest one on our line

<sup>339</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to A. Bierstadt (New York), August 30,1890, VHL, Vol.35 (Montreal) p.406.

<sup>340</sup> The Smithsonian Institute's Inventory of American Paintings currently lists Mount Sir Donald as Rocky Mountains in the Selkirk Range near the Canadian Border. Who changed the title and when it was done remains unknown.

<sup>341</sup> A. Bierstadt(New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), August 22,1890, C.P.R.A.C.F.(Mtl.),MS, #26035.

from which a good view of Mount Baker can be had. The Fraser River, very broad here, stretches away toward it, the centre cone of Mount Baker rises apparently directly from the river and is frequently reflected in it with great distinctness. The bridge I refer to is, I think, number 118, ... if you can find no suitable accomodation at Mission nearby, (we) will probably be able to provide some kind of car for you in which you will be comfortable.

Would it not be best for you to use our line in going to California, stopping to paint this picture on your way out. The rainy season sometimes sets in by the end of September and the mountains may then be hidden for weeks at a time. 342

Bierstadt acknowledged Van Horne's recommendations as "good" and arranged to depart for the Northwest, via Montreal, sometime during the second week of September.<sup>343</sup> Predictably, he was delayed by numerous 'business engagements' and did not manage to leave New York until the 15th of October.<sup>344</sup> He visited briefly with Van Horne on the 16th and was on his way westward later that same day.

Bierstadt was fortunate enough to capture the image of Mount Baker on a clear November morning. His field sketches were utilized in the execution of a large Mount Baker

<sup>342</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to A. Bierstadt (New York), August 23, 1890, VHL, Vol. 33 (Montreal) p. 343.

<sup>343</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), August 28, 1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #29725.

<sup>344</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Telegraph to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), October 15, 1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #29725.

oil painting which was "well under way" in his New York studio by January of the following year.<sup>345</sup> On January 21st, Van Horne requested that Bierstadt inform him of the completion of Mount Baker. Sir George Stephen had especially asked Van Horne to approve the composition before it was shipped to him in London, England.<sup>346</sup> This is a fine example of Van Horne's control over a C.P.R. related commission. Not only did Van Horne arrange the commission on the behalf of his colleague, but he instructed the artist as to the precise topic and vantage point, he scheduled the artist's trip, arranged for free transportation and accommodation, and ultimately judged the result, allowing or disallowing the transaction. All this despite the fact that Albert Bierstadt was the most reputable of all Rocky Mountain landscape painters and Sir George, was himself, a connoisseur and patron of fine art.

On January 27th, Van Horne visited the Bierstadt studio.<sup>347</sup> Mount Baker, for the most part complete, must have met with his approval as it was shipped via steamer

<sup>345</sup> A. Bierstadt(New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 6,1891, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #29725.

<sup>346</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to A. Bierstadt (New York), January 21,1891, VHL, Vol.36 (Montreal) p.533.

<sup>347</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), Letter to A. Bierstadt (New York), January 20,1891, VHL, Vol.36 (Montreal) p.583.

from New York to London not later than February 21st.<sup>348</sup> Sir George Stephen was once more impressed by Bierstadt's efforts. Shortly after the arrival of Mount Baker at his London residence he commissioned a companion picture.<sup>349</sup> Further correspondence does not reveal the subject of this second painting though it may have had something to do with buffalo. The C.P.R. Archives had provided Bierstadt with photographs of buffalo skulls that January. Bierstadt referred to these images as truly "the last of the buffalo" and incorporated them into a large oil painting entitled The Buffalo Hunt, 1891.<sup>350</sup> In October the artist forwarded steel engravings after the 'completed' Buffalo Hunt to Van Horne and Sir Donald Smith in Montreal.<sup>351</sup>

<sup>348</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), February 15, 1891, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #29725.

<sup>349</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), n.d., C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #29725.

<sup>350</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 6, 1891, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #29725. The Glenbow-Alberta Institute presently owns three small undated buffalo studies in oil. They appear to have no relation to his Last of the Buffalo, 1888-9 or to earlier known works. They may have served as preparatory sketches for The Buffalo Hunt, 1891. Buffalo Studies, n.d., oil paintings, 33x66cm., 36x48cm., and 36x48cm., Accession #62.43. 13, 12 and 11.

<sup>351</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to A. Bierstadt (New York), October 12, 1891, VHL, Vol. 38 (Montreal) p. 696.

There are numerous small scaled Albert Bierstadt oil paintings of Northwest subjects dating from his 1889-91 involvement with the C.P.R. available for study in public collections across Canada and the United States. A few of these works such as Indian Boats on the Northwest Coast, View of the Rocky Mountains, Canadian Rockies, The Willamette River at its Junction with the Columbia River, Lake Louise, Canada, Mount Baker, Washington from the Frazier(sic) River, and Mount Sir Donald - Asulkan Glacier, served as studies for larger canvases, the latter three for Bierstadt's 'C.P.R.' compositions.<sup>352</sup> All of these paintings have a loose sketch-like quality suggesting they were utilized more as colour studies than as topographical notes.

<sup>352</sup> Indian Boats on the Northwest Coast, n.d., oil, 34.3x49.5cm., Kennedy Galleries, N.Y., N.Y.

View of the Rocky Mountains, n.d., oil on cardboard, 7.7x12.3cm., National Gallery of Canada.

Canadian Rockies formerly titled Rocky Mountains, Colorado, n.d., oil on paper, 36x48cm., Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The Willamette River at its Junction with the Columbia River, n.d., oil on paper, 36x48cm., Clark University, Worcester, Mass.

Lake Louise, Canada, n.d., oil on paper, 35.6x48.3cm., Wickersham Galleries, N.Y., N.Y.

Mount Baker, Washington from the Frazier(sic) Fraser River, n.d., oil on canvas, 36.2x49.9cm., Brooklyn Museum, N.Y.

Mount Sir Donald - Asulkan Glacier, n.d., oil on canvas, 69.5x49.5cm., Pioneer Museum and Haggin Gallery, Stockton, California.

Other Northwest canvases by Bierstadt such as Park at Vancouver, Victoria Glacier at Lake Louise, Rocky Mountain Sheep on a Hill, Bow River Valley, Canadian Rockies, and The Island,<sup>353</sup> are executed in the highly 'finished', meticulous manner characteristic of the artist's early Dusseldorf training. The Island, formerly titled Island in Princess Louisa Inlet, though modest in size, is the most detailed and dramatic of all Bierstadt Northwest landscapes. Completed in the fall of 1889, it is the highlight of Bierstadt's art activities in Canada.

Despite the success of many of these smaller canvases Bierstadt could not attract any further Canadian commissions. His sales in the United States and Europe were scarce. Sir Donald Smith never did purchase Mount Sir Donald. The artist went deeper and deeper into debt

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Park at Vancouver, 1889, oil on canvas, 48.3x33.0cm., Kennedy Galleries, N.Y., N.Y.

Victoria Glacier at Lake Louise, 1889, oil on canvas, 40.6x53.3cm., Adams, Davidson Galleries, Washington, D.C.

Rocky Mountain Sheep on a Hill, c.1889, oil on canvas, 36x48cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute. Accession #62.43.14.

Bow River Valley, Canadian Rockies, 1889, oil on canvas, 48.3x68.6cm., Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati.

The Island (Princess Louisa Inlet, B.C.), 1889, oil on canvas, 73.6x111.1cm., Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. In a letter dated December 29th, 1983, Milo Naeve, Curator of American Arts at the Art Institute of Chicago, informed me that past efforts to associate The Island with Princess Louisa Inlet have proven unfounded. He states that the painting actually combines coastal topography and vegetation between southern B.C. and Alaska. He has therefore dropped the phrase "Princess Louisa Inlet" from the title of the painting. I disagree with his views.

trying to maintain his high standard of living until he was finally forced to declare personal bankruptcy in 1895.<sup>354</sup>

By this date Bierstadt was in poor health and had given up active public exhibition and sale. He remained in correspondence with Van Horne until as late as 1897, consulting with him on matters of financial investment and discussing a railway car he was building in his New York studio.<sup>355</sup>

It is not probable that he painted any other Northwest landscapes during his last years. He died in New York in 1902.

The C.P.R. had provided hospitality to Bierstadt in the hopes of rekindling some of that old Bierstadt popularity among those of pioneering spirit, romanticists who would see a new beginning and a prosperous future in the glorified landscapes he painted. Unfortunately, Albert Bierstadt, once hailed as the foremost painter in North America, failed to solicit much response from any quarter. C.P.R. 'sponsorship' however, resulted in an impressive series of landscape compositions - the last efforts of a great American painter.

<sup>354</sup> Larry Curry, "Albert Bierstadt: The American Wilderness," American Artist, Vol.40 (January 1976) p.102.

<sup>355</sup> A. Bierstadt (New York), Letters to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), January 9, 1894, February 7, 1895, and December 19, 1896, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), #76430, 78782, and 82199.

In the summers of 1890 and 1891 another New York based artist, Canadian born (Bosquet, Ontario) wildlife sculptor Alexander Phimister Proctor (1862-1950) was awarded C.P.R. pass privileges under the pretense of wishing to make "sketches of the scenery along the line."<sup>356</sup> He was introduced to Van Horne through their mutual art dealer/ friend, N. E. Montross, in the spring of 1890.<sup>357</sup> It was during this meeting that Proctor was convinced to travel to the Northwest and was promised a station-to-station pass between Quebec City and Vancouver. His definition of "scenery" proved to be animal studies which were utilized in the creation of life-size sculptures in bronze and wood. Proctor's Mountain Lions, Bison, Moose, and Elk all won medals when they were exhibited at the Chicago Worlds Fair in 1893. Proctor was granted free C.P.R. passes on several occasions in the years that followed. His last known excursion over the C.P.R. line was in the spring of 1911 when he completed some landscape studies.<sup>358</sup> Proctor is hailed as "the greatest American sculptor of western

<sup>356</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to H. Abbott (B.C.), June 5, 1891, VHL, Vol. 37 (Montreal) p. 746.

<sup>357</sup> A. P. Proctor, Alexander Phimister Proctor: Sculptor in Buckskin (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma, 1971) p. 110.

<sup>358</sup> Byron Harmon, Great Days in the Rockies (Toronto: Oxford Press, 1978) plate, n.p.

wildlife."<sup>359</sup>

~~Starting in the early 1890's, it was more common for~~  
the C.P.R. to commission artists to travel westward and paint specific topics for use in advertising or exhibition in Company Hotels. Except for Bell-Smith and Martin, very few Canadian artists received the annual station-to-station pass so popular throughout the 1880's. Painters selected for commission were increasingly of the 'new' Paris school. In these changing attitudes Van Horne played a significant role.

In the spring of 1892 the C.P.R. seemed to be running relatively efficiently and the corporate pressures of the Presidency had declined dramatically. Van Horne found more leisure time to pursue his own interests in painting and became a founding member of the Pen and Palette Club, centred in Montreal. During the spring and summer of that year (and for several years to follow) Van Horne directed his train engineers to shuttle private railway cars to picturesque sidings in the Montreal-Quebec City region. These cars were used as sketching shelters for club members which included, among others, Homer Watson, Horatio Walker, Frank Darling, Maurice Cullen and William Brymner. From these distinguished artists, especially the two latter,

<sup>359</sup> Vivian A. Paladin, Proctor, introduction p.XV.

Van Horne learned about the progressive (Paris) views on art. From this point in time forward his choice of Company commissioned artists often reflected his association with the club.

After his 1886 involvement with the C.P.R., William Brymner was predictably one of the first painters awarded a commission by Van Horne. On May 30th 1892, the Montreal Gazette reported:

The Canadian Pacific Railway has sent Mr. William Brymner RCA, the well-known artist of this city, to the Rockies for the purpose of painting several large pictures of the beautiful scenery through which the road runs. It is the intention of the Company to send these pictures to the Art Exhibition of the Worlds Fair (Chicago 1893) where they will, besides being good testimony to the progress of art in Canada, give hundreds of thousands of visitors to the fair an idea of the wonderful scenery to be found in the Canadian Rockies ... Mr. Brymner will be absent about three months. 360

Brymner, in the company of John Hammond, A.R.C.A. (1843-1939), departed Montreal in late May.<sup>361</sup> They were well advanced in their studies by the end of August. A letter addressed to Van Horne by Brymner sheds some light on their

<sup>360</sup> "An Important Commission," Montreal Gazette (May 30, 1892) n.p.

<sup>361</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to W. Brymner (Montreal), May 21, 1892, VHL, Vol. 40 (Montreal) p. 625.

appointed activities. Dated August 31st, from The Chalet (Fishing and Hunting at the Summit of the Rockies), Lake Louise, Laggan, Alberta, the note read:

I have not so far reported to you as there seemed nothing in particular to write about. I will be able from the materials I have to paint, beginning at the west - Mount Baker from the Stone River. (A View at Sunset with the moon rising at the same time.) One of Yale. 2 different effects from Bridge 291 above Yale. Ross Peak at the Glacier which I have done on a large scale. 60x42. Three or four different pictures at Field - one 60x42 at Lake Louise and one the same size at Lake Agnes. Besides I have materials for other subjects with the help of Photographs. This afternoon Hammond and I found a view of Mount Lefroy from a place about three miles east of this. The intention is to go on from there to Castle Mountain ... from near Stephen Station. If there is anything that you would suggest that should be done I will be glad to know. I need not tell you what a very bad summer we have had for rain and mosquitoes. Hammond has about as much work as I have. What had we better do? Return now and work up our material? This place is as fine as can be. I have never seen anything much more beautiful in my life or difficult to paint. I hope what we have done will prove satisfactory although I must say I have been very blue about it often. 362

Again it is evident that Van Horne was supervising every phase of the 'commissions.' Apparently he advised Brymner

362 W. Brymner (Laggan), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), August 31, 1892, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #72583.

and Hammond to remain in the mountains a little longer as the two artists did not return to Montreal until sometime after September 14th.<sup>363</sup> They both immediately set to work in their studios to finish their large canvases. In November an art critic for Arcadia magazine published an introduction of what was to be expected from these two artists in the months that followed:

Mr. Brymner and Mr. Hammond's trip through the Rocky Mountains has borne much fruit, which, as their work is, we believe, destined for the Chicago exhibition, 'for all the world to see' may be of patriotic as well as artistic importance; giving a suggestion of magnificence and grandeur of scenery upon the great C.P.R. route which can hardly be surpassed. <sup>364</sup>

The list of Brymner paintings exhibited at the A.A.M., the R.C.A., and the Chicago Worlds Fair in 1893 is long and the present ownership of a very few is known.<sup>365</sup>

Mount Baker at Sunset, 1892, (location unknown) a large oil painting, was purchased by Van Horne in March 1893 following the close of the annual A.A.M. exhibition.<sup>366</sup> It was

<sup>363</sup> A. R. G. Heward (Montreal), Letter to W. Brymner (Banff), September 14, 1892, VHL, Vol.41 (Montreal) p.689.

<sup>364</sup> "Art at Home," Arcadia, Vol.1, no.14 (Montreal: November 15, 1892) p.281.

<sup>365</sup> Braide, Brymner, p.39.

<sup>366</sup> Braide, Brymner, p.39.

the identical view Van Horne encouraged Albert Bierstadt to paint in 1890, the vista Van Horne praised as "the finest natural composition" he had ever seen.<sup>367</sup> Notman and Company purchased Brymner's Lake Louise, 1892, from the same A.A.M. show (location unknown).<sup>368</sup> Toronto Saturday Night art critic described the composition as:

A broad and powerful painting of an early morning effect of one of the most impressive views in the Rocky Mountains, the deep tone of the sky and the gloom of the shadow below giving intense brilliancy to the sun lighted slope of the Glaciers. <sup>369</sup>

The artist also exhibited Lake Agnes, 1892, (location unknown) which was said to possess a "bold, clean cut style."<sup>370</sup> Lake Agnes was reproduced as a black and white etching in a C.P.R. portfolio of mountain scenes entitled Glimpses Along the Line, 1894-5. The artist's Mount Baker was also illustrated in this publication.

In the summer of 1893 Brymner returned to the Rockies, this time with fellow artist, Edmond Dyonnet, a close

<sup>367</sup> The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts presently owns an oil study for Van Horne's Mount Baker, 1892, oil on bevelled panel, 15x23cm., Accession #943.822.

<sup>368</sup> Braide, Brymner, p.70.

<sup>369</sup> Van, "Rev. of 1893 A.A.M. Exhibition," TSN, Vol.6, no.16 (Toronto: March 11,1893) p.15.

<sup>370</sup> "Royal Canadian Academy," Arcadia, Vol.1, no.21 (Montreal: March 1,1893) p.449.

friend of Van Horne. They sketched together at Field, Glacier and Gleichen.<sup>371</sup> After their return to Montreal, Dyonnet exhibited two small oil paintings entitled Yale, B.C., 1893, (location unknown) and The Pacific Coast at Victoria, 1893, (location unknown) at the A.A.M. spring show of 1894. He next exhibited a Northwest subject at the R.C.A. in March 1896. The small oil painting, In Caribou Road, B.C., n.d., (location unknown) was described in Toronto Saturday Night as having "some beautiful effects of sunlight on the whitish cliffs ... but as a whole the picture is not interesting."<sup>372</sup> Dyonnet is not known to have exhibited Rocky Mountain subjects at any other time during his career. He was principally a portrait painter.

Like Dyonnet, Brymner also showed two minor oil paintings at the A.A.M. in 1894. These were Hell Gate, Rocky Mountains and Illicillewaet Glacier at Sunset, both undated (locations unknown). It may well be that some of Brymner's best Northwest landscapes were purchased by Van Horne directly after the artist's return from the Rockies,

<sup>371</sup> Braide, Brymner, p.39.

<sup>372</sup> Lynn C. Doyle, "Rev. of the 1896 R.C.A. Exhibition," TSN, Vol.9, no.19 (Toronto: March 28, 1896) p.9.

leaving him little to publically exhibit. Van Horne is known to have acquired Wood Interior Near Emerald Lake and The Black Canyon,<sup>373</sup> presumably both oils and dating from Brymner's 1893 tour. Brymner's last known involvement with the C.P.R. was his large 1901 commission titled Kicking Horse Pass.<sup>374</sup> Regretably the loose, almost careless handling of the oil paint and the emphasis on the train track in the near foreground gives the overall impression of a hastily painted advertising poster.

Other than Van Horne, C.P.R. associates James Ross and R. B. Angus were long time friends and patrons of Brymner. Their generous sponsorship assisted the artist on numerous occasions throughout his art career. In return Brymner's paintings served the promotional interests of the Company well. The C.P.R. and William Brymner were indebted to one another.

John Hammond, Brymner's sketching companion for the 1892 commissions, had long been involved with C.P.R. related activities. In 1870 he had crossed Canada on the first successful survey party, mapping out the proposed route of

<sup>373</sup> Braide, Brymner, p.70. The location of both paintings remains unknown.

<sup>374</sup> Kicking Horse Pass, 1901, oil on canvas, 137.2x 266.8cm., Corporation of the City of Toronto.

the transcontinental railway through the Rocky Mountains.<sup>375</sup>  
At this time he was employed as a photographer working  
with Benjamin Baltzly.<sup>376</sup> He also worked on the Union  
and Central Pacific Railroad surveys in the United States  
during the 1870's.<sup>377</sup> In 1871 he was employed by Notman  
and Son Photographers as a painter over photographs,<sup>378</sup>  
and would probably have worked on Northwest subjects. He  
held that position until 1882.<sup>379</sup>

In 1885 John Hammond left Canada to study with  
Charles Storm de Gravesend and J. M. Whistler in Holland,  
and with Jean-François Millet the Younger in the Barbizon  
district of France.<sup>380</sup> He was perhaps the first Canadian  
artist not only to come in contact with the 'Butterfly'  
but at the same time, be sympathetic to his approach.<sup>381</sup>  
Hammond exhibited at the Paris Salon and the British Royal  
Academy in 1886, and at the National Gallery of the United

<sup>375</sup> Harper, Early Painters, p.246.

<sup>376</sup> Thomas, Canadian Painting and Photography, p.94.

<sup>377</sup> F. A. Nesbitt, John Hammond RCA: A Short Bio-  
graphy of Canada's Oldest Artist (Montreal, Ogilvy's Ltd.,  
1929) n.p.

<sup>378</sup> Harper, Early Painters, p.144.

<sup>379</sup> Harper, Early Painters, p.144.

<sup>380</sup> Harper, Early Painters, p.144.

<sup>381</sup> Harper, Painting in Canada, p.247.

States in 1887.<sup>382</sup> He returned to Canada in 1887 but remained preoccupied with Whistler's teachings on oriental art, Japanese prints in particular. Between 1889 and 1901 he travelled extensively in the far East, participating in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion and painting in Japan.<sup>383</sup> Several of his trips to Japan were sponsored by Van Horne as promotion for the new C.P.R. steamship connections from Vancouver to the Orient. He was the only artist so sponsored.

In 1892, when Hammond took up the position of Director of the Owen's Art Institution, Saint John, New Brunswick, he was relatively unknown in Canadian art circles despite his nomination as Associate of the R.C.A. two years earlier. Painting canvases that were purely studies of subtle variations in tone and colour (like the style of Whistler), he was easily the most "revolutionary" artist working in this country.

John Hammond's 1892 excursion to the Northwest was the first occasion on which he seriously attempted to paint a large series of canvases dealing with a Canadian subject.

<sup>382</sup> Nesbitt, John Hammond, n.p.

<sup>383</sup> Harper, Early Painters, p.144.

His Rocky Mountain works proved both artistically and commercially successful. Van Horne was so impressed by Hammond's Rocky Mountain oil paintings that he purchased seventeen scenes on behalf of the C.P.R. and arranged for their exhibition at the 1893 Chicago Worlds Fair.<sup>384</sup> This was the largest single purchase of paintings by any one artist, at any one time, in the history of the Company. It also represented the largest collection of paintings exhibited by a Canadian artist in Chicago. Other painters sponsored by the R.C.A. were permitted to submit a maximum of three works.<sup>385</sup> R

The Hammond collection was dispersed for installation in various C.P.R. hotels after the close of the Worlds Fair. The present whereabouts of these paintings is unknown. Above the Clouds, Lake Louise, 1892,<sup>386</sup> did hang in the lobby of the Royal Alexandra Hotel until its demolition in the 1960's.<sup>387</sup> Above the Clouds and his

<sup>384</sup> "John Hammond," artist file, C.P.R. Archives, (Montreal) n.p.

<sup>385</sup> "Chicago Worlds Fair Selection," TSN, Vol. 6, no. 8. (Toronto: January 14, 1893) p. 14.

<sup>386</sup> Above the Clouds, Lake Louise, 1892, oil on canvas, 282x216cm., location unknown.

<sup>387</sup> "John Hammond," artist file, C.P.R. Archives (Montreal) n.p.

The Three Sisters, also an oil painting dating from 1892 (location unknown), were reproduced in the afore mentioned C.P.R. mountain scene portfolio, Glimpses Along the Line, 1894-5. These prints reveal that Hammond's approach to subject was simple and his handling of pigment was broad and vigorous. His prime concern was with the effects of light and the reflection of mountains in bodies of water.

Critics were surprisingly sympathetic to Hammond's approach to painting, considering its revolutionary sense in an extremely conservative art market. The reporter for Toronto Saturday Night at the 1893 R.C.A./A.A.M. exhibition noted that Hammond's large oil painting The Great Illicilliwaet Glacier (location unknown) possessed "quite a different spirit," it was "a gray, poetic rendering of a scene not less remarkable, and in it and others ... he gives evidence of a power hardly suggested in his previous work."<sup>388</sup> It was considered the highlight of the show. Arcadia reported that despite the enormous influence of Mr. Ruskin (truth to nature), Mr. Whistler (and his followers) were finally beginning to take their proper rank.<sup>389</sup>

<sup>388</sup> Van, "Rev. of 1893 R.C.A./A.A.M. Exhibition," TSN, Vol.6, no.16 (Toronto: March 11, 1893) p.15.

<sup>389</sup> "Art in Toronto," Arcadia, Vol.1, no.5 (Montreal: July 1, 1892) p.97.

Hammond's C.P.R. Station in the Rockies, 1901,<sup>390</sup> was also a C.P.R. commission, this time based upon a photographic image.<sup>391</sup> Its straight forward, illustrative quality, varying distinctly from his characteristic 'atmospheric' works, suggests the painting was completed following strict instructions as to composition and style. The poor framing and the over-emphasis of the railway track is the result of the artistically restricting guidelines enforced on C.P.R. commissions after 1899 when Thomas Shaughnessy took over the Presidency of the Company. Its 'promotion poster-like' format and its near identical size to William Brymner's Kicking Horse Pass of the same year suggests it was intended as a companion piece for installation in a C.P.R. hotel dining room or lobby.

Hammond exhibited only a few very small oil paintings of Northwest scenes at the A.A.M. during Shaughnessy's directorship, and these coincided with the addition of C.P.R. associates to the Council of that art institution. Hammond displayed Blackfeet Encampment, n.d. (location unknown), and Mount McKay, n.d. (location unknown), in

<sup>390</sup> C.P.R. Station in the Rockies, 1901, oil on canvas, 152.4x243.8cm., Winnipeg Art Gallery.

<sup>391</sup> Thomas, Canadian Painting and Photography, p.94 and Plate #62.

1901, the year in which James Ross first appears on the Council role; and Mount Baker, Oak Bay, B.C., n.d. (location unknown), in 1903, the season during which Charles Hosmer joins the Advisory committee.<sup>392</sup>

The Canadian Pacific Railroad helped put 'bread and butter' on the table of John Hammond for more than a quarter of a century. The Company's contribution to his survival and development as an artist should not be underestimated. The fact that Hammond was able to earn a living as a painter despite the stringent art market situation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada is a credit to his devotion and talent as an artist and to the generous patronage of the C.P.R.

<sup>392</sup> The addition of Hosmer and Ross to the A.A.M. Council rekindled the hopes of a C.P.R. commission for Marmaduke Matthews who also sought to flatter his C.P.R. patrons by the exhibition of Looking Down the Goat Pass, Main Range of the Selkirks and Evening, Marion Lake, all in 1901. He showed Flats of the Kicking Horse and Bow River Pass, during the next year. These exhibitions were the first occasions on which Matthews had offered his paintings for sale in Montreal in nine years.

Hammond's flattery of C.P.R. officials 'paid off.' In 1905 he was commissioned to execute six large murals for the Canadian Pacific Building at Trafalgar Square, London. They were completed and installed in 1906 ("John Hammond," artist file, C.P.R. Archives, Montreal). Their present whereabouts is unknown.

There is no record of Matthews receiving any commission.

The C.P.R.'s previously mentioned portfolio, Glimpses Along the Line contained twelve Rocky Mountain views, all photo-engraved reproductions of Company commissioned paintings. Aside from Brymner and Hammond, the work of only one other artist can be identified, that of George Horne Russell (1861-1933). His contribution to the publication is easily the most impressive.

As early as 1889 George Horne Russell was colouring photographs for William Notman and Son, in Montreal.<sup>393</sup> In Early Painters, Russell Harper notes that Van Horne was somehow influential in persuading Russell to emigrate from England to take the position in that year.<sup>394</sup> Russell passed many long hours labouring over C.P.R. commissioned photographs in the Notman studio. Certainly by the summer of 1892 or 1893 (possibly both) when he finally gained the opportunity to view the magnificent Rocky Mountain scenery first hand, he would have been well acquainted with the images that Van Horne preferred. He was commissioned by Van Horne to travel westward and sketch in the region of the Selkirk Range. His field

<sup>393</sup> Thomas, Canadian Painting and Photography, Plate #65., p. 94. Mammoth Spruce Tree, Stanley Park, 1887 Notman photograph coloured by Russell in 1889.

<sup>394</sup> Harper, Early Painters, p. 276.

studies were then worked into large compositions for installation in Company owned institutions. Beaver Valley, Selkirk Mountains, c.1893 (location unknown), and The Hermit Range, c.1893 (location unknown), were two such works which were purchased by the C.P.R. and illustrated in Glimpses Along the Line. In both cases, the railway track running in the near right foreground has been cleverly incorporated into the compositions so as not to give the 'gauche' impression of a cheap advertisement poster. Glacier House and Station, Selkirk Range,<sup>395</sup> another large oil painting dating from 1893, was only slightly less successful. The framing and format is identical to the above mentioned landscapes except this time Russell stripped away the trees in the near foreground to better emphasize the image of the train to the left and the hotel to the right. The scattered boulders and the forest debris in the foreground illustrates man's ravage of nature. In 1896, Russell compensated for this harsh rendering of a landscape when he produced another version of The Hermit Range, Selkirk Mountains,<sup>396</sup> again in oils.

<sup>395</sup> Glacier House and Station, Selkirk Range, 1893, oil on canvas, 153.7x214.5cm., Winnipeg Art Gallery.

<sup>396</sup> The Hermit Range, Selkirk Mountains, 1896, oil on canvas, 153x214cm., Concordia Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal.

The actual image of a train has been totally eliminated. Only curls of smoke and steam coming from the steep embankment on the right hand side of the composition ingeniously hint at the presence of a locomotive and the railroad. This too was probably a C.P.R. commission as Russell and Van Horne kept close company throughout the 1890's, sharing the small village of St. Andrews, New Brunswick as their choice of location for summer retreats.

Russell's Kicking Horse Pass, 1900,<sup>397</sup> was his last known commission for the Company and like the 1901 C.P.R. works of Hammond and Brymner, it shows a sharp decline in quality from earlier Rocky Mountain canvases.<sup>398</sup> It possesses many weaknesses already attributed to working from a photographic source as well as nearly non-existent foreshortening.

George Horne Russell's contribution to the development of Canadian art was small. He was neither an

<sup>397</sup> Kicking Horse Pass, 1900, oil on canvas, 97.5x50.5cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute.

<sup>398</sup> The reason for Russell's, Hammond's, and Brymner's poor quality, post-1899, C.P.R. commissions I presume had something to do with Van Horne's departure from the Company and Shaughnessy's appointment to the Presidency in 1899. We know that Van Horne was very demanding of his C.P.R. commissioned artists and that he would not hesitate to refuse a painting if it did not meet his expectations. Perhaps Shaughnessy (not an art connoisseur) offered little money to the artists and demanded emphasis on the image of a train. The artists were willing to sacrifice quality in the interests of a 'quick and small buck.'

innovative nor prolific painter. His C.P.R. commissions of the 1890's were easily the most ambitious and accomplished compositions of his career. They are fine examples of Northwest landscape painting in its maturity. In their grand scale and sense of drama they are not unlike the monumental Rocky Mountain masterpieces of Albert Bierstadt at the height of his powers and popularity.

### Portrait Commissions

By the early 1890's the C.P.R.'s promotional campaign to encourage immigration had begun to produce modest results. The demand for freight and passenger service in the Canadian West increased annually. Company Directors were confident that the railroad would not fail. Feeling a great sense of pride and accomplishment they decided to commission a number of painters to complete their portraits. The task of these artists was not to contribute to the gigantic C.P.R. advertising scheme, but to preserve on canvas, for the sake of posterity, the dignified images of the railway men who helped shape this country.

Robert Harris(1849-1919) was among the first to win a C.P.R. Director's commission.<sup>399</sup> In 1892 he was invited to attend a meeting of the Pen and Palette Club in

<sup>399</sup> Robert Harris had at least one earlier 'deal' with the C.P.R. His 1886 oil painting entitled The Studio Boy's Private View (Confederation Centre, Charlottetown) was a commissioned work for the Hon. George MacKenzie Clarke, Chief Solicitor of the C.P.R. In the background of Private View, there hangs an unidentified mountain landscape which Moncrieff Williamson 'believes' to be a William Brymner, possibly an Eastern Townships subject. Due to the rugged mountain peaks (rather sharp and untreed for Eastern Quebec) seen in the landscape and the fact that Brymner spent the summer sketching in the Northwest, remaining preoccupied with Northwest subjects throughout the 1886-7 studio season, the 'background' mountainscape is more probably a Rocky Mountain vista. Whether or not Van Horne was involved in this commission remains unknown.

Montreal.<sup>400</sup> It was decided at that meeting to celebrate Queen Victoria's Birthday (May 24th) by taking a sketching trip along the Jacques Cartier River using a C.P.R. coach. Here Harris met and painted with Van Horne who arranged for a portrait of Sir Donald Smith, 1892 (location unknown). In 1897, Van Horne was again in contact with Harris, this time commissioning a copy of the artist's 1864 historical piece, The Fathers of Confederation, to be installed in the lobby of the C.P.R.'s MacDonald Hotel in Edmonton (the copy is no longer there).<sup>401</sup>

Another important C.P.R. executive commission was awarded to Wyatt Eaton (1849-1896) who painted a second Sir Donald Smith with Lady Smith (location unknown) and an R. B. Angus (location unknown) in the winter of 1892-3, and a William Cornelius Van Horne in 1894.<sup>402</sup> The life-size, three quarter length portrait of Van Horne presently hangs in the executive offices of the C.P.R.'s Head Office (Montreal) alongside a similar scaled portrait of Lord Mount Stephen, c.1894, by George Agnew Reid (1860-1947).

<sup>400</sup> Williamson, Harris, p.150.

<sup>401</sup> Williamson, Harris, p.188. Harris continued to paint C.P.R. executive portraits well into the twentieth century - Charles Hosmer in 1905, R. B. Angus and another Sir Donald Smith both in 1907.

<sup>402</sup> Harper, Early Painters, p.101.

Two later portraits of Van Horne and George Stephen (both undated) by Robert J. Wickenden(n.d.) and George Horne Russell(1861-1933), respectively, have also been located for study.<sup>403</sup>

C.P.R. business correspondence also hints at portrait commissions awarded to John Wycliffe Lewis Forster (1850-1938), Charles MacDonald Manly(1855-1924), William Albert Sherwood(1855-1959), and Frederick Sprouston Challenger(1869-1959) during the 1890's.<sup>404</sup> Incomplete documentation eliminates the possibility of determining the precise nature of these assignments. In 1891, Forster was granted a free pass over the C.P.R. line as partial payment for his 'commission' and both Manly and Sherwood are known to have painted Rocky Mountain landscapes in watercolour.<sup>405</sup> As part of what appeared to be an ongoing C.P.R. commission, Challenger was awarded a contract to execute eight large murals depicting early western Canadian pioneering scenes for the Alexandra

<sup>403</sup> William Cornelius Van Horne, c.1898, oil on canvas, 58x68cm.(sight), by Robert J. Wickenden. Collection of the Canadian Railway Museum, St. Constant.  
Sir George Stéphen(Mount Stephen), c.1896, oil on canvas, 86x106cm.(sight), by G. H. Russell. Collection of the Canadian Railway Museum, St.Constant, Quebec.

<sup>404</sup> see Appendix #1.

<sup>405</sup> W.C. Van Horne(Montreal), letter to J. W. L. Forster(Toronto), December 4,1890, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #30752.

Hotel during the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>406</sup>

While these C.P.R. commissioned works in portraiture cannot be considered major accomplishments in the history of Canadian art, they were important for the financial benefits awarded the artists. In the late 1880's Robert Harris expressed his frustration in attempting to compete with portrait photography:

The trouble here in portrait painting is one which is (common) in all new countries; they (the art buying public) think pictures are better the more they are like photos, so it is hard to get people to sit. <sup>407</sup>

If anything the competition from photography was even stiffer throughout the 1890's, as its use became more widespread and accepted. C.P.R. commissions gave a small measure of support to portrait painters during a time when it was increasingly unpopular to do so.

<sup>406</sup> Challenger's eight murals were complete and installed in the main dining room of the Alexandra Hotel in 1918. They were presented to the Winnipeg Art Gallery before the demolition of the hotel in 1969. (C.P.R. Passenger Bulletin, #119, December 1, 1918)

<sup>407</sup> Robert Harris quoted in Williamson's Harris, p.78.

### Potboilers and Curiosities

In any popular art movement there are inevitably 'followers' who financially gain by emulating the subjects and styles of the original initiators of the movement. Such is the case with Northwest landscape painting. So very many artists produced Rocky Mountain subjects in the last decade of the nineteenth century that it has become difficult to distinguish between those who were directly involved with the C.P.R.'s 'promotional' campaign and those who chose to paint Northwest scenery for 'commercial' benefits or aesthetic reasons.

Painters, Henry J. de Forrester (1860-1924), William Cruikshank (1848-1922), Percy Franklin Woodcock (1855-1936), Maurice Galbraith Cullen (1866-1934), John Blair (n.d.), Norman Gardtner (n.d.), John Douglas Woodward (1848-1924), Charles Jones Way (1835-1919), and Arthur Phileman Coleman (1852-1939) all made at least one excursion westward before the turn of the century.<sup>408</sup> Their precise association with the C.P.R. (if any) remains unknown. C. J. Way was

<sup>408</sup> Harper, Painting in Canada, pp. 201, and 339.

W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letters to W. Whyte (Winnipeg), H. Abbott (Donald), and Marpole (Donald), June 15, 1888, VHL, Vol. 26, (Montreal) pp. 280-2.

J. Blair (Montreal), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal) August 26, 1891, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #28539.

N. Gardtner (Pengance?), Letter to W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), June 6, 1892, C.P.R.A.C.F. (Montreal), MS, #50747.

a personal friend of Van Horne. In 1898, when he received a free pass to travel the road, he was sixty-three years of age and no longer particularly active as a painter. His trip may therefore have been more of a vacation than a business engagement.<sup>409</sup> A. P. Coleman was an artist/geologist who completed numerous C.P.R. sponsored scientific sojourns to the Rockies commencing in 1888.<sup>410</sup> They resulted in the production of a substantial collection of watercolours of B. C. scenery exhibited at annual O.S.A. shows until as late as 1905.

Still other artists capitalized on Northwest landscape photography made popular by C.P.R. photographers, Notman and Henderson. The abundance of Rocky Mountain photographs appearing in the penny magazines of the 1890's created a demand among the less 'sophisticated' members of the art buying public for small-scaled, inexpensive landscapes. Unlike portrait photography, landscape photography, still in its infancy, was held in suspicion by a majority of the population. Thus, painters such as Thomas Harrison Wilkinson (1847-1929), Farquhar McGillivray Stachan Knowles (1859-1932), and Robert Ford

<sup>409</sup> Heward (Montreal), Letter to G. J. Way (Montreal), September 17, 1898, VHL, Vol. 55 (Montreal) p. 401. Way

<sup>410</sup> W.C. Van Horne (Montreal), Letter to A. P. Coleman (Toronto), June 1888, VHL, Vol. 26 (Montreal) p. 40.

Gagen(1847-1926) found it financially rewarding to paint 'potboilers', singularly uninspired British Columbian landscapes drawn 'loosely' from photographic sources.<sup>411</sup> Even an artist the calibre of Otto Jacobi(1812-1901)<sup>412</sup> became involved in these 'commercial' sidelines of Northwest landscape painting.

Despite the critics' and art connoisseurs' disenchantment with post-1888 Northwest landscape painting, and as artistically insignificant as these 'potboilers and curiosities' may have been, they were fine indicators of the general public's acceptance of western subjects, particularly mountain vistas, as nationalistic in character. They served the promotional interests of the C.P.R. by appearing on street corners and in shop windows reminding the population of the Company's contribution to 'Country', even though the artist's had not been directly involved in the 'campaign.'

<sup>411</sup> Observations from commercial galleries, private collections and art auctions over the past ten years. Few sketches by these artists have found their way into public collections largely because of their very poor quality. Gagen's Evening in the Selkirks, n.d., water-colour on paper, 25x36cm., in the Glenbow-Alberta collection is the exception. It seems the institution would prefer to own a very poor work by one artist than to have no pieces representative of that painter.

<sup>412</sup> The C.P.R. once owned Jacobi's Mountain Landscape, 1894, watercolour on paper, 20x28cm., possibly a gift - certainly not a Van Horne commission.

### Conclusion

The Canadian Pacific Railroad's free pass program and its art commissions and purchases were so successful in attracting painters to the Northwest that by 1887, only two years after the completion of the transcontinental line and the ready accessibility of the mountains to artists, Rocky Mountain landscapes dominated Canadian art. So many artists reserved their best works to flatter their C.P.R. patrons in Montreal that the city displaced Toronto as the Dominion's most important art centre. The C.P.R., Canada's largest and most powerful privately owned corporation, brought substantial economic advantages to Montreal allowing the city's businessmen/art collectors to continue their patronage to a core of 'established' landscape artists while fostering the growth of a new generation of Canadian painters, predominately Paris-trained.

Before the turn of the twentieth century, the C.P.R. issued free passes or reduced fare tickets to not less than thirty-three prominent (ie. regular contributors to R.C.A., O.S.A., A.A.M., R.B.A. exhibitions) artists on

more than one hundred occasions.<sup>413</sup> The Company commissioned and/or purchased at least fifty-six landscape paintings in this same period.<sup>414</sup> Its Directors, Van Horne, Stephen and Smith, acquired a minimum of forty-eight works by C.P.R. pass recipients for their private collections. At least fifty other Canadian artists were awarded C.P.R. executive commissions, began to produce Rocky Mountain 'potboilers' or had become involved in some art related activity with Van Horne. A record of Dominion artists directly or indirectly involved with the C.P.R., therefore, reads like a near complete list of "Who's Who" in late nineteenth century Canadian painting.<sup>415</sup>

<sup>413</sup> These figures do not include free passes awarded to the artists' families, friends and servants, nor do they indicate the number of photographers, journalists, writers, scientists or dignitaries involved in sketching activities.

<sup>414</sup> Fifty-six is the number of documented purchases evaluated at approximately twenty-five thousand dollars, this does not include the cost of framing, transportation, engraving or publication.

<sup>415</sup> The very few artists active between 1885 and 1900 who can be excluded from such a role are omitted, primarily, for one of three reasons - they either chose to live and work outside of this country (eg. Allan Edson, Henry Sandham, F. A. Verner, Paul Peel), they were regionalists/isolationists (eg. Daniel Fowler, Homer Watson, Horatio Walker), or they were young French Canadian artists (eg. Ozias Leduc, Henri Beau, Marie-Joseph-George Delfosse, Joseph-Charles Franchère, Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Côté) neither invited to, nor interested in, painting Northwest landscapes.

Not only did the C.P.R. offer financial incentives for artists to paint uniquely Canadian subjects but it promoted the Northwest landscape as 'national' in character by sponsoring major exhibitions in Europe and the United States. The Company 'backed' one-man shows by Fraser in Piccadilly and New York (both in 1887), by O'Brien at the Dudley Gallery (London) and in Haymarket (in 1887 and 1889, respectively), and by Hammond at the Chicago Worlds Fair (1893). These were the first instances in Canadian art history where Dominion artists featured exclusively Canadian subject matter in solo-exhibitions outside of this country.

The historical (ie. national) importance placed on Rocky Mountain landscapes during their heyday was well illustrated by the British Royal Academy's acceptance of Northwest scenes by Bell-Smith and O'Brien in 1888, and by the dominance of former C.P.R. sponsored artists at the 1903 Dominion of Canada Industrial Exhibition. In this latter show the western works of Fraser, O'Brien, Day, Martin, Matthews, Bell-Smith and Way were highlighted despite the fact that all of these artists, except for Bell-Smith, were either deceased or had ceased to play an active role in the mainstream of Canadian art.

While the C.P.R. 'art patronage' program may have made no significant or direct contribution towards inducing immigration (its original and 'alleged' function) it was extremely effective in bringing about the first "wide-spread acceptance in Canada of myth of the land as a basis for a national art."<sup>416</sup> C.P.R. sponsored Northwest landscapes dominating the A.A.M., the O.S.A., and the R.C.A. exhibitions during the last years of the 1880's must be considered to represent the foundation of the first uniquely Canadian school of painting - a truly 'national vision' which served as a touchstone for future generations of landscape artists in this country.

<sup>416</sup> Reid, Country Canada, p.6.

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This thesis was largely based upon artist/Van Horne correspondence dating from 1881 until 1900 presently in the Canadian Pacific Railroad Archives Correspondence Files and the Van Horne Letterbooks, C.P.R. Archives, Montreal, Quebec. The letters have been cited alphabetically and chronologically by sender. Unless otherwise indicated the origin, destination, and present whereabouts of a letter will be the same as the preceding.

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The following bibliographical references represent Van Horne's outgoing (ie. originating from his C.P.R./ Montreal office) art related correspondence studied in preparation of "Artists of the Canadian Pacific Railroad: 1881-1900." All letters appear in the Van Horne Letterbooks, C.P.R. Archives, Montreal. In Van Horne's absence his personal secretaries, A. Piers or A. R. G. Heward, would respond to enquiries. Letters cited have been arranged alphabetically by recipient.

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Appendix # 1

As letters to Van Horne arrived at his C.P.R./ Montreal office they were indexed according to sender, annotated as to the nature of business, assigned a number, and then filed in the Canadian Pacific Railroad Archives Correspondence File (C.P.R.A.C.F.) after Van Horne was through with them. Unfortunately the storage system was poor. Many letters have been either destroyed or lost, however the index still exists providing only fragments of information concerning the C.P.R.'s art advertising campaign and Van Horne's involvement with Canadian art and artists. A typical entry in the index would appear as follows:

Hammond, J. #72937 Re: Paintings ready for criticism.  
Oct. 24 1891.

The following is a list of artists or persons involved in art related business who wrote to Van Horne and whose files(letters) are either incomplete or missing. Names appear as entered in the index:

Abbott, Harry  
Adam, Edouard  
Ahearn, M.  
Andrews, G. H.  
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Cruikshank  
Cullen, M.  
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Enson(sic) Edson, Allan  
Forbes, J. C.  
Forrest, H.  
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Fowler, Daniel  
Fripp, Charles  
Fraser, John  
Gardtier, N.  
Gastin  
Governor of Belgium  
Hall, Sydney  
Hamel, Theo  
Hammond, J.  
Harris, Robert  
Higham, S.  
Jefferys, C. W.  
Kidd, Benjamin  
Lee  
Lighthall  
Marpole

Appendix # 1 cont.

Martin, Thomas M.

Matthews, M.

McNicol

McTavish

Moody, H.

Nesbitt, Hume

Norberry

O'Brien, Lucius R.

Price, J.

Prior, Melton

Proctor, A. P.

Rogers, Ayder

Roper, Edward

Rouillet

Russell

Sanders

Scott, Sheriff

Smalley

Spragge, E. Molson

Walker, H.

Watson, H.

Way, Charles

Wood, Stanley

Woodcock, P.

Woodville, Richard

Woodward, J. A.

Wright, Henry

Illustrations (Chronologically)

1. John Arthur Fraser, Mount Baker from the Stave River at the Confluence with the Fraser on Line of C.P.R., 1886, oil on canvas, 56.0x76.8cm., Collection of Dr. G. W. Archibald, Woodbridge, Ontario.
2. Lucius Richard O'Brien, Bridge - Kicking Horse Pass - Second Crossing, 1887, watercolour on paper, 103.0x69.2cm., Collection of Mr. and Mrs. F. Scheffer, Toronto, Ontario.
3. Albert Bierstadt, The Island, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.6x111.1cm., Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.

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4. William Brymner, Lake Agnes, 1892, oil on canvas, 152.4x106.7cm., location unknown.
5. John Hammond, Above the Clouds, Lake Louise, 1892, oil on canvas, 282x216cm., location unknown.
6. George Horne Russell, The Hermit Range, c.1893, oil on canvas, no dimensions, location unknown.
7. Thomas Mower Martin, West Coast Indians Returning from Hunt, c.1893-5, oil on canvas, 88.9x170.2cm., Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary.
8. Frederic Marlett Bell-Smith, Mists and Glaciers in the Selkirks, 1911, oil on canvas, 84.1x125.7cm., National Gallery of Canada.

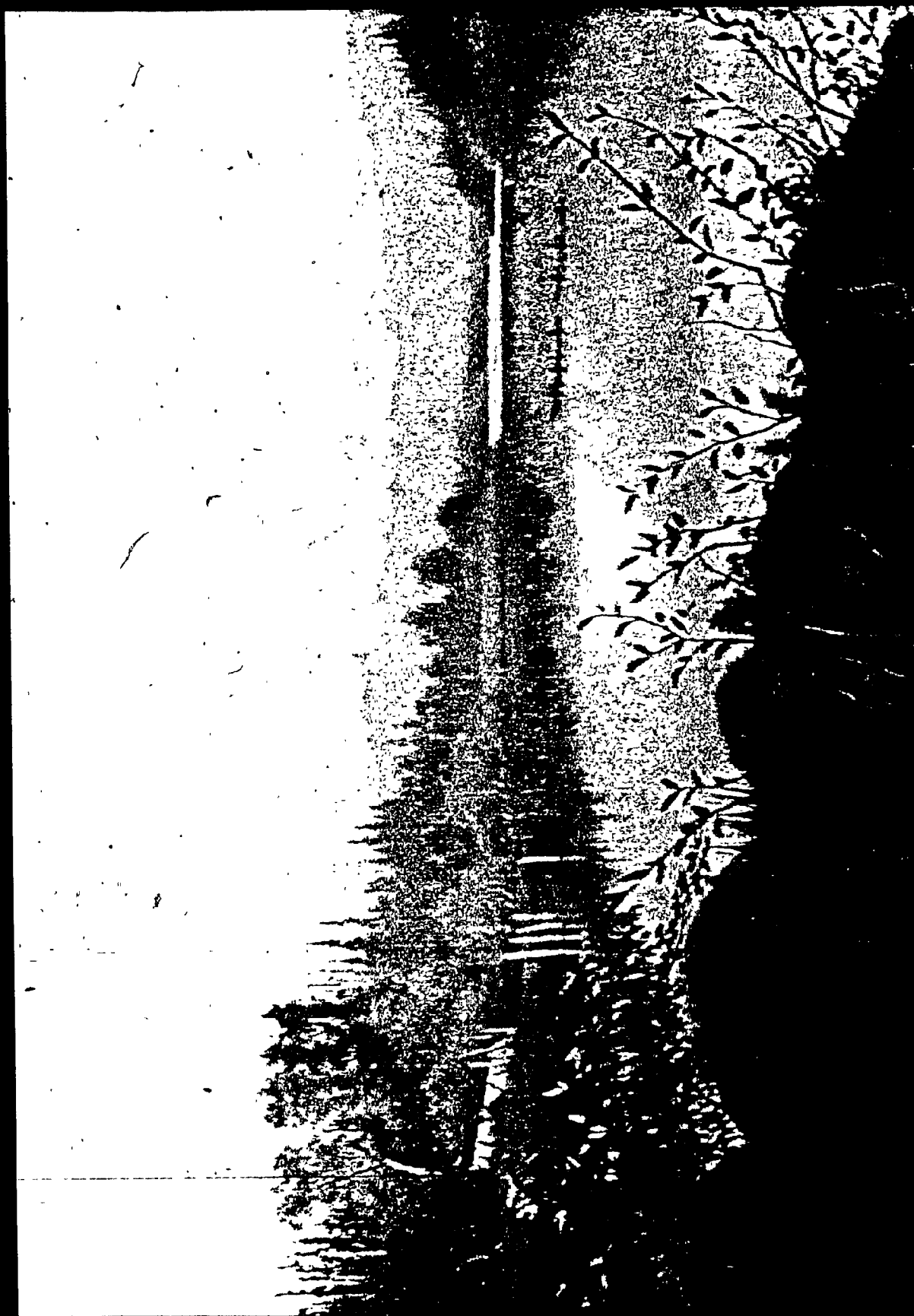


Illustration #1 Fraser.



Illustration #2 O'Brien.



Illustration #3 rierstadt.



Illustration #4 Brymner.

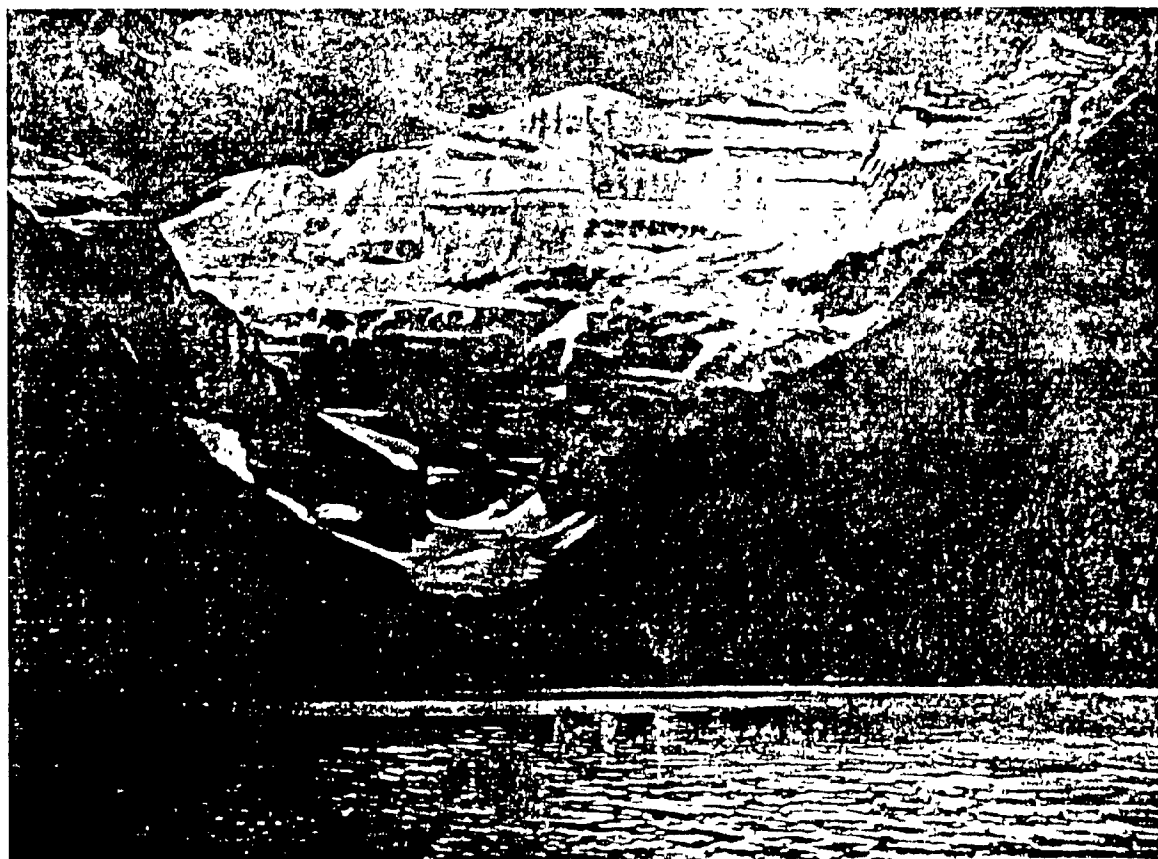


Illustration #5 Hammond.



Illustration #6 Lorne Russell



Illustration #7 Martin.

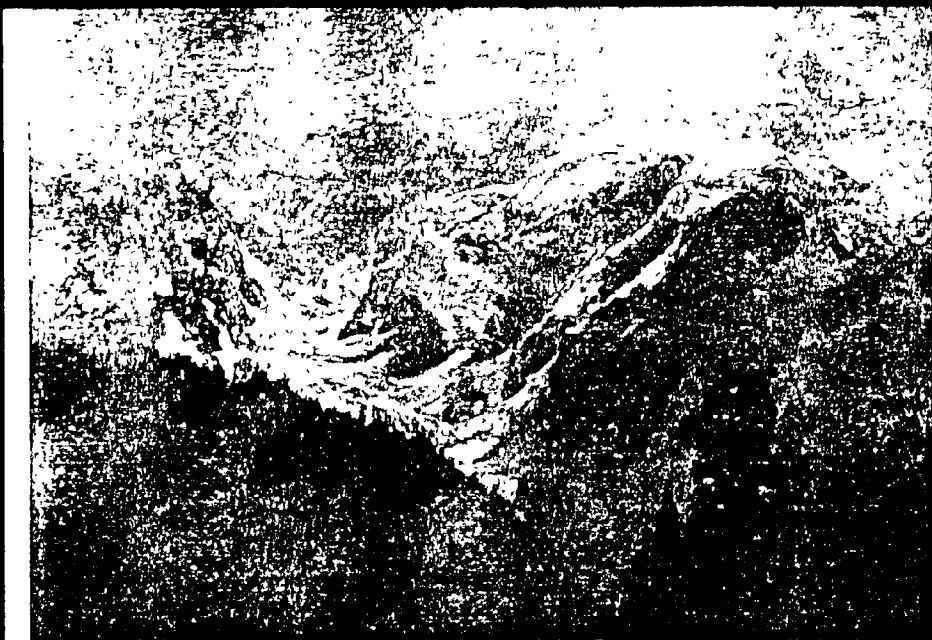


Illustration #8 Bell-Smith.