

# The London and Middlesex

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# HISTORIAN

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The London and Middlesex Historical Society

# TO-DAY LONDON CELEBRATES CANADA'S 60<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY!

CAN YOU FIND THE FATHER OF CONFEDERATION ON THE GROUNDS



See if you can find the Father of Confederation.

He is a well-known London citizen. If you can, you win a number of valuable prizes donated by London merchants. When you think you have found him, address him in the following manner: "Pardon me, you are the Father of Confederation," and, at the same time, present a copy of the program. If you are correct, he will present you with a card, replying, "Yes, and I hope you are a true son (or daughter) of mine."

## OFFICIAL PROGRAM LONDON'S CELEBRATION OF CONFEDERATION AT SPRINGBANK PARK

10:30 a.m.—Girls' Soft Ball Games

Bromwich Tournament.

Children's Events as follows:

1. Girls under 6—25 yards
2. Boys " 6—25 "
3. Girls " 6—35 "
4. Boys " 6—35 "
5. Girls " 11—50 "
6. Boys " 11—50 "
7. Girls " 14—60 "
8. Boys " 14—75 "
9. Girls " 16—75 "
10. Boys " 16—100 "
11. Boys' Sack Race
12. Girls' Sack Race
13. Mixed Three-Legged Race (girl and boy)
14. Boys' Tilling the Baskets
15. Girls' Ball Throwing
16. Mixed Wheelbarrow Race (girl and boy)
17. Mixed Hoop and Shoe Race
18. Flag Race (boys)
19. Flag Race (girls)
20. Catch the Greasy Pig

PATRIOTIC HOUR—SPRINGBANK PARK

1:45 p.m.—Selections by the Royal Canadian Regiment Band—of which every Londoner has reason to be proud.

Lieut. I. K. Harrison, Director.  
Community Singing—"O Canada."  
Chairman's Address—Arthur E. Ford,  
President of the Canadian Club.  
Address—His Worship the Mayor—Acting Mayor Edwin Smith.  
Address—Chairman of the Board of Education, Rev. Roy D. Moss.  
Community Singing—"The Maple Leaf."  
Address—Major Bruce Connor, ex-M.P.  
God Save the King.  
Royal Salute—4th Field Battery.  
Major G. H. Ellis in command.

The Royal Canadian Regiment Band and the Salvation Army Band Will Render Musical Selections During the Afternoon

2:45 p.m.—Finals Girls' Soft Ball.

2:45 p.m.—Tag-of-War.

2:45 p.m.—Bromwich Tournament.

3:15 p.m.—Relay Races.

Industrial Girls—440 yards. Four girls to a team. Each girl runs 110 yards.

Industrial Men—440 yards. Four men to a team. Each man runs 110 yards.

Office Girls' Relay—440 yards as above.

Office Men's Relay—440 yards as above.

Relay—440 yards, open to Policemen, Street Railway Men, Postmen and Firemen only.

Four men to a team. Each man runs 110 yards.

Tilling the Baskets—Two men to a team.

4:15 p.m.—Finals Tag-of-War.

4:30 p.m.—Finals Bromwich Tournament.

4:30 p.m.—Finals Girls' Soft Ball Tournament.

Note—Only officials permitted inside the ropes.

Protest to operate in this matter in order that events may be run off smoothly.

All times given are approximate.

No special shoes allowed.

Standard tournament rules govern Bromwich Tournament.

There are first, second and third prizes for Children's Events, Bromwich Tournament and Tag-of-War. First and second prizes for other events.

Prizes to be distributed will be lodged with officials in charge, whose decision will be final.

## NATIONAL THANKSGIVING

By the people of London

July 3, 1927

### Divine Service VICTORIA PARK

3 P. M.

Addressed by

DR. D. C. MacGREGOR and ARCHDEACON SAGE

Salvation Army Band

No. 1 Corps, under Capt. Wood, in attendance

EDWIN SMITH, Acting Mayor, Chairman.

## LONDON CELEBRATES CANADA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

Dan Brock

The First World War left little time to pause and celebrate 50 years of Confederation in the Dominion of Canada. Instead, the country awaited Canada's diamond anniversary which occurred on July 1, 1927.

The "Forest City" in 1927 had a population of 66,000 people. Since the year of Confederation, the city had expanded beyond the two branches of the Thames River on the south and west, Huron Street on the north and Adelaide Street on the east to include the town of London East (1885), the suburb of London South (1890), the village of London West (1898), the suburbs of Pottersburg, Ealing, Knollwood from London Township and Chelsea Green from Westminster Township (1913).<sup>1</sup> At that time, London included 10 square miles or 6,424 acres. It was known for having the head offices of two large insurance companies, the fourth largest banking centre and second largest wholesale distribution centre in Ontario as well as the largest mail distribution centre in Canada.<sup>2</sup>

January 1927 witnessed the destruction at Queen's Park of the city's second Crystal Palace. It was replaced later in the year by the red-brick Confederation Building. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, two days before Dominion Day, St. Joseph's Hospital's new four-storey Nurses' Residence was opened. This was followed, a month later with the opening of the Hotel London on what had been known as Federal Square at the intersection of Dundas and Wellington streets. Across from Hotel London, on the north side of Dundas work was progressing on the new City Hall.

Meanwhile, the airplane and what it could do was drawing the attention of Londoners. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, Alex Beemer and Mildred Kathleen Chantler would become the first London couple to use an airplane for a honeymoon. The air flight portion of their trip was short being only from the Lambeth airfield to east of London where they continued by motor vehicle. The previous May, 25-year-old Charles Lindbergh had made the first successful non-stop transatlantic flight from New York to Paris in his *Spirit of St. Louis*. This led, later in June, to Carling Breweries putting up a \$25,000 prize for a flight from London, Ontario to London, England including providing the plane.

**WANTED**  
**Canadian Aviator**  
TO FLY FROM  
**LONDON, Ont. to LONDON, Eng.**

Wright, Bellanca, Fokker, Ryan or other, fully approved one or two-man machine, (preferably Canadian or British built, if available), to be supplied by us to pilot.

Man selected must be approved by Canada's highest aviation authorities, and fully qualified to discharge this trust with credit to Canada.

**\$25,000 In Cash**

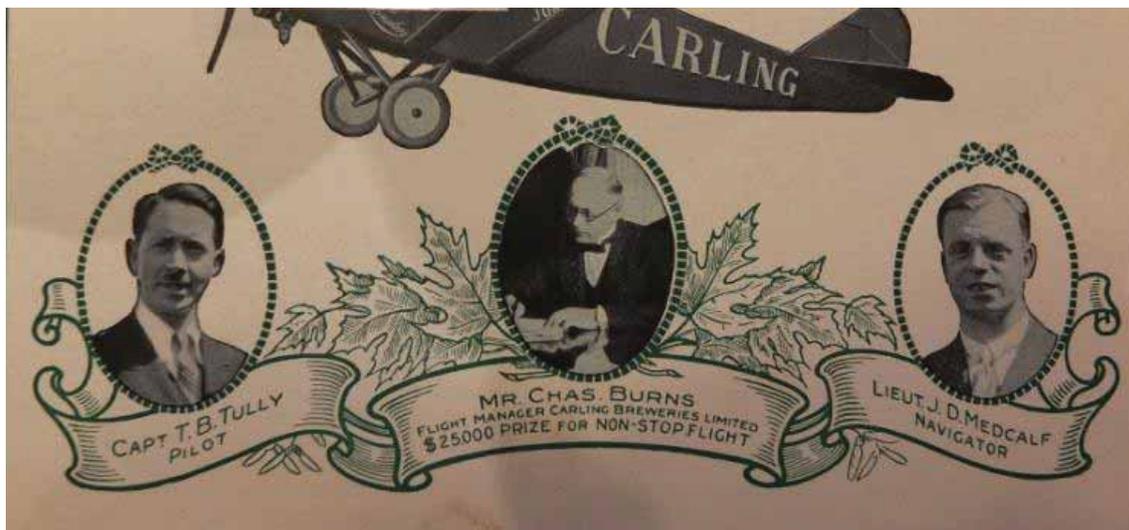
has been posted by us with Ray Lawson, London, Ont., who has been nominated for this trusteeship by John M. Moore, mayor of London, Ont., and Dr. A. J. Grant, president of London Chamber of Commerce.

Flight to be undertaken as soon as necessary arrangements can be made.

Address All Correspondence to Trans-Atlantic Flight Manager,  
**Carling Breweries, Limited**  
LONDON, ONTARIO.



Captain Terry Tully and his wife Anne in front of the ill-fated *Sir John Carling*.



Ultimately, Capt. Terry Tully and Lieut. James Medcalf were the pilots chosen for the flight and the plane was named the *Sir John Carling*. The attempted flight started out early in September, but perished somewhere over the Atlantic along with most of the special air mail stamps the Canadian government issued for the occasion, printed by Lawson & Jones, Ltd. of London.<sup>3</sup>



Copy of rare proof of London to London air mail

To celebrate the *London Advertiser* put out a Diamond Jubilee edition the Saturday prior to Dominion Day (July 1<sup>st</sup>). There were articles and photographs pertaining to the upcoming Jubilee and from 1867. There were also reminiscences going back 60 years by “*old timers*.” Of course, many businesses had advertisements relating to the impending event. The *London Free Press* waited until Friday, July 1<sup>st</sup> to release its anniversary edition.

In Victoria Park, a Confederation flower bed was created by E.E. Graham, superintendent of City parks. The flower bed was placed in the same position as that celebrating London’s centennial the previous year. It was approximately 54 x 14 feet and raised about two feet at the back for better viewing. The bed formed a large Union Jack, some 15 x 8 feet, flanked by two large maple leaves and the years “1867” and “1927” in the centre of the leaves. The red of the Union Jack consisted of begonias, the white of santolinas and the blue of double lobelias. Unfortunately, inclement weather delayed planting until the previous week and the flower bed wasn’t at its best until mid-July.<sup>4</sup>

On June 11<sup>th</sup> City Council unanimously passed a proclamation for a three-day Diamond Jubilee Celebration to be held on Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, Friday, July 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The first event was the official visit of Viscount Willingdon, Canada’s Governor General, and his wife. While in London on June 21<sup>st</sup>, they visited St. Peter’s Seminary, the University of Western Ontario, the London Hunt and Country Club, the Highland Golf Club, Springbank Park, Byron Sanatorium and Victoria Park.<sup>5</sup>

For the second and main day of celebration, Dominion Day in London promised to be a hot one in more ways than one. The weather started off hot and the thermometer kept on climbing until it reached a maximum of 97 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade at 3:00 p.m. daylight savings time. This was a record in London thus far for 1927! While there were no cases of heat exhaustion reported, thousands of Londoners used the bathing facilities at Thames Park, Dexters and other spots provided by the Public Utilities in or near the city and, of course, at Port Stanley.<sup>6</sup> But there were planned activities for the day as well.

Fred Landon, chief librarian at the University of Western Ontario, was chairman of the local committee for the celebrations. Varied sports programs involving Londoners and others, such as golf, lawn bowling, cricket, softball and baseball and horseshoes, were held at Springbank Park, Thames Park, Queens Park, Elmwood Bowling Club, London Rowing Club, the Huron College Grounds, the London Hunt and Country Club, the Highland Golf Club and by the London Rowing Club, as well as in Port Stanley and St. Thomas, were held. The main centre of attraction, however was Springbank Park. Gerald N. Goodman, chief supervisor of the civic playgrounds, was in charge of the day’s program.

**You'll Find Everybody**  
AT  
**SPRINGBANK**  
**Amusement Park**  
**Dominion**  
**Day (July 1)**  
**Fireworks**  
*and* **Dancing**  
AT LONDON'S PLAYGROUND

You will be thrilled by the scintillating display of fireworks, the best we have prepared in years. Rockets, bombs, illuminators, thousands of gold and silver stars—the fireworks event of the season.

Ferris Wheel, Roller Coaster, Box-ball, Trip to Mars, Fun House, Merry-Go-Round, Mystery House, Shooting Gallery, Refreshment Booths. Ample free auto parking space.

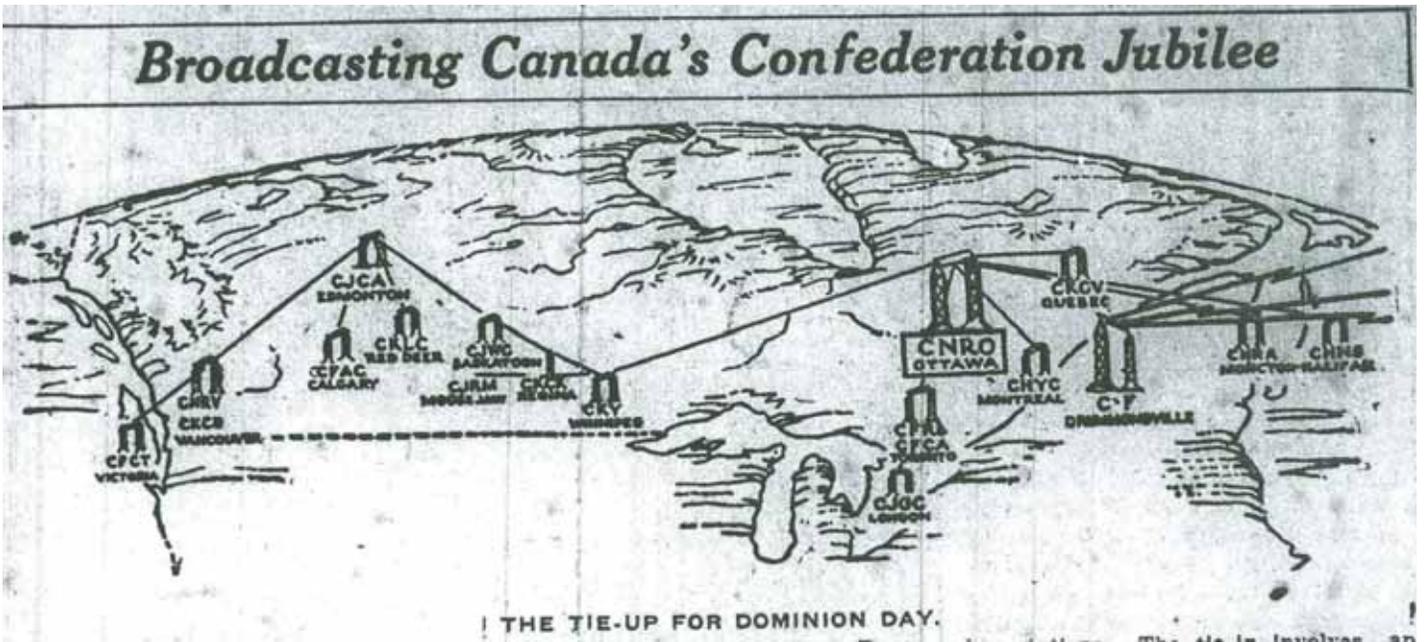
Fun and frolic for young and old from dawn till dark.

**CANADA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION**  
***SPRINGBANK PARK, JULY 1***

Fast and Frequent car service to and from Canada's Beautiful National Park.  
Sports start at 10.30 a.m. and continue throughout the day.  
Something doing all the time.

**NO DELAY**                      **CARS EVERY FEW MINUTES**

**LONDON STREET RAILWAY COMPANY**



Map of coast to coast broadcast

At 10:30 a.m., the girls' softball games, horseshoe tournament and races for boys and girls commenced. The races for both children and adults consisted of regular races, relays, sack races and mixed three-legged, wheelbarrow and boot and shoe races. The Royal Canadian Regiment Band held its patriotic hour, beginning at 1:45 p.m., while the Salvation Army Band rendered musical selections throughout the afternoon. At 2:00, speeches were to commence from the stand constructed on the baseball grounds in front of the pavilion. At 2:45 there were the semi-finals of the girls' softball, tug of war contests and the continuation of the horseshoe tournament. The tug of war was the only event not held as there were no entries. On the other hand, *"no single event on the sports program aroused more sustained interest than did the horseshoe tournament which was held on ten pitches within the miniature railway ring."*<sup>7</sup> In all there were 31 starters in the event, which was begun in the morning and continued until late in the afternoon on the elimination basis." The winner was 15-year-old William Strothers of Sarnia. Another "sport," like tug of war and horseshoes, harking back to 1867 was the greasy pig event. The attempts to catch a 130-pound pig, *"liberally splashed with lard,"* proved to be *"a mirth-provoking event."* The tilting of the bucket, by both boys and men, *"provoked much merriment, as the contestants fell short in their skill to pass the pole through the small hole and escape a ducking."* On the other hand, *"the shower bath"* was no doubt appreciated on such a hot, sweltering day.

The relay races commenced at 3:15. At 4:30 the finals of the horseshoe tournament and the girls' softball began. There was also an opportunity to *"win a number of valuable prizes"* by spotting the *"Father of Confederation"* on the grounds. He was *"a well-known London citizen."* When one thought he/she had found him, one was to address him in the following manner: *"Pardon me, you are the*

*Father of Confederation," and at the same time present him with a copy of the official program. If correct, he would present the person with a card and reply, "Yes, and I hope you are a true son (or daughter) of mine."* The one to discover the "Father of Confederation," Acting Mayor Edwin Smith, and approach him *"with the question couched in the proper terms and carrying a program in his hand"* was 11-year-old Leonard Clements of 659 Princess Avenue.

Throughout the day there was *"Ample free auto parking space"* and the London Street Railway Company ran cars *"every few minutes"* from the corner of Dundas and Richmond streets. One could even view the park from above in the seaplane *Big Eli*.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, the Springbank Amusement Park, *"across the street from Springbank"* and dating from 1914, was in full operation on this day. Officials and workers of its operators, the Victor Amusement Company, spent the week before getting everything ready. With *"Ample free auto parking space,"* the Park featured a rollercoaster, Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, shooting gallery, mystery house, fun house, Trip to Mars and, at the south end of the Amusement Park, one could play boxball. Refreshment booths were also nearby. Hassan's had a booth west of the gate and another north of the dance hall. Kenney's was just south of the dance hall. At for the dance hall itself, with springs beneath the floor boards, it was promoted as the *"bounciest dance floor in Canada."* In the evening, with *"thousands of lights"* aglow in the Park, Ronnie Hart's Orchestra provided the dance music. The Victor Amusement Company also furnished a *"scintillating display of fireworks."*<sup>9</sup>

The third day officially set aside for the Diamond Jubilee Celebration was Sunday, July 3. This was the day on which the clergy of the *"different denominations throughout*

the City [were] to hold special thanksgiving services in their respective churches” and to render “selected music suitable for the occasion....” The Salvation Army complied by holding “Special jubilee services” at all its citadels.<sup>10</sup>

The Dominion Government also had its impact on the city. A Commemorative copper token was minted and distributed throughout the country. Six special brightly coloured jubilee stamps, one being a special delivery stamp, were designed and first made available to the public on Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>. London’s allotment of 400,000 stamps arrived on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup> and proved to be “extremely popular” on the first day of sale.<sup>11</sup>



Obverse and reverse sides of the commemorative copper token.



Commemorative stamps, including 20-cent special delivery stamp.

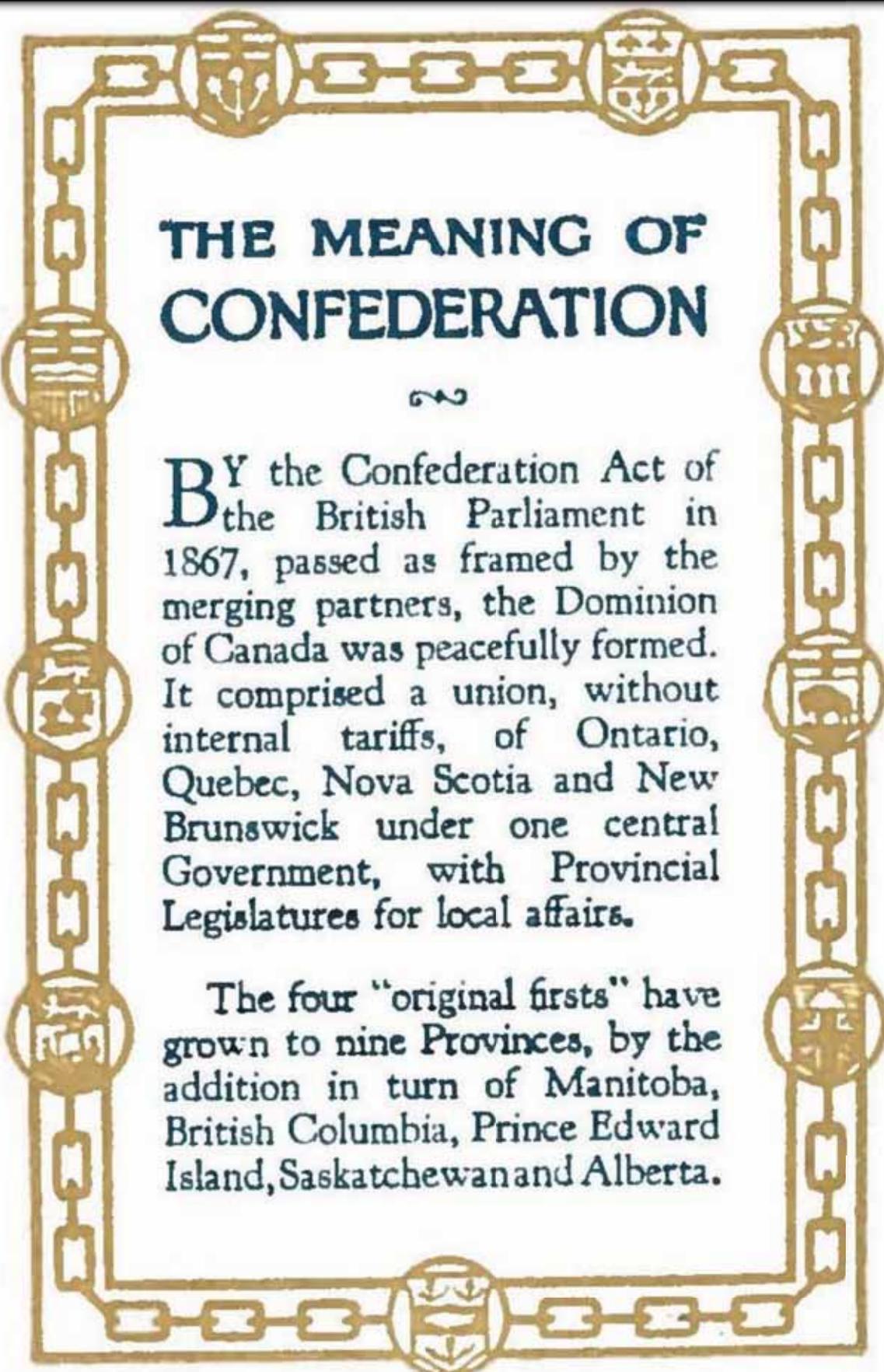
The most ambitious undertaking, however, appears to have been “the most extensive tie-in of radio stations ever attempted in Canada and possibly in the world.” At this time, the radio was still in its infancy. The linking of stations from coast to coast, 19 in all, included London’s CJGC, CNRO from Ottawa as the key station and Marconi beam station CF at Drummondville, Quebec. The latter in turn rebroadcast the program, on short wave-lengths, from Ottawa to Australia and to England, using two transmitters. England, in turn, broadcast to European receiving stations. The Canadian tie-in involved approximately \$3 million worth of equipment, including 21,650 miles of telegraph and telephone wire and 53 repeaters to amplify the sound at approximately 200-mile distances. The initiative required 159 personnel. A test run was made on Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup> and reception was “remarkably clear, not only from the local station but also from Toronto and Ottawa.<sup>12</sup> The broadcast program started at 10:30 a.m., eastern standard time, with music. Later, there were gun salutes, addresses from such dignitaries as the Governor General and Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, choir, bands and a string orchestra. The program ended at about midnight with the playing of “God Save the King.”<sup>12</sup>

The provincial government played a role as well. The Ontario Department of Education sponsored a Confederation essay contest with silver and gold medals presented at Springbank Park, on the afternoon of July 1<sup>st</sup>, to the local prize-winners.<sup>13</sup>

The preceding is but a snapshot of London in 1927 and how it observed Canada’s Diamond Jubilee.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Daniel J. Brock, *Fragments from the Forks: London Ontario's Legacy* (London, ON: The London & Middlesex Historical Society, 2011), 399-401
- <sup>2</sup> "Facts About London," *The London Free Press (LFP)*, July 1, 1927, Sec. 3, 15:8
- <sup>3</sup> "Offer \$25,000 Prize For Flight From City To London, England," *London Evening Advertiser (Lon. Adv.)*, July 29, 1927, 2:1-2; Brock, *Fragments*, 216-19
- <sup>4</sup> "Confederation Flower Bed Will Be at Its Best July 15," *Lon. Adv.*, June 27, 1927, 1:5-6; "Jubilee Flower Bed At Victoria Park Is Real Gardener's Work of Art," *LFP*, June 27, 1927, 1:6-7
- <sup>5</sup> *Lon. Adv.*, June 21, 1927, 1:1-2; 3:7
- <sup>6</sup> "Dominion Day Hottest of Year," *LFP*, July 2, 1927, 2:8
- <sup>7</sup> The oval track, a little more than a half mile in length, dated back to 1919, its engineer until 1965 being James Kennedy.  
Kenneth McTaggart, *Remember When?* (Ken D. McTaggart: London, 2011), 7
- <sup>8</sup> "To-Day London Celebrates Canada's 60<sup>TH</sup> Birthday," *LFP*, Section 3, 9, bottom; "Sports At Springbank Celebration Feature," *Lon. Adv.*, July 2, 1927, 15:5-7
- <sup>9</sup> McTaggart, *Remember When?*, 7; *Lon. Adv.*, July 29, 1927, 7, various advertisements; "Jubilee Celebration At Springbank To Eclipse Anything Yet Held At Great Amusement Centre," and various advertisements, *LFP*, June 30, 1927, 5.
- <sup>10</sup> "Proclamation Diamond Jubilee Celebration," *Lon. Adv.*, June 15, 1927, section 1, 21:7-8. As Saturday had been declared an official holiday, the *Free Press* only put out one edition on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- <sup>11</sup> *Lon. Adv.*, June 28, 1927, c. 7; "Confederation Jubilee Stamps Issued To-Day and "Jubilee Stamps In Good Demand," *LFP*, June 29, 1927, 2:2-6
- <sup>12</sup> "Broadcasting Canada's Confederation Jubilee" and "Jubilee Radio Plan Gets Fans Excited," *Lon. Adv.*, June 27, 1927, 1:5-7
- <sup>13</sup> "Broadcast Program For Dominion Day," *LFP*, June 30, 1927, 1:4-5



## THE MEANING OF CONFEDERATION



BY the Confederation Act of the British Parliament in 1867, passed as framed by the merging partners, the Dominion of Canada was peacefully formed. It comprised a union, without internal tariffs, of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick under one central Government, with Provincial Legislatures for local affairs.

The four "original firsts" have grown to nine Provinces, by the addition in turn of Manitoba, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Alberta.