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Editorial

Roxanne Lutz, our longstanding volunteer editor of the *Historian*, recently moved to Montreal and will no longer be serving in that capacity. Over the years, Roxanne has made an invaluable contribution to the Society by editing, collating, and preparing all of the material for the journal. Needless to say, without her assistance it would have been impossible for us to have reissued this journal which sat idle for over 20 years. We want to express our sincerest gratitude to her for all of her excellent editorial work, her devotion to the Society, and to extend our best wishes to her in all of her future endeavours.

With Roxanne's departure we arrived at a crossroads. Until we are able to enlist the aid of a new volunteer editor, several board members agreed to take over her responsibilities. We hope you enjoy our selection of the following articles.

The first article by Dan Brock contains the most comprehensive inventory that has ever been compiled on the passengers and crew that perished on the day of the Victoria disaster, May 24, 1881. For those who may have had relatives on the Victoria at the time, Dan's article not only provides the names of those who perished, but also other valuable information such as their ages, addresses, occupations, and burial sites. Dan's article is a truly wonderful source of information for those who may wish to compile a family genealogy. As an interesting aside, his article also contains previously unknown information on two individuals who helped in the rescue operation but were neither passengers nor crew. Instead they were "skinning dipping" in the same place and at the time that the disaster took place. Unfortunately, both perished as the result of exhaustion.

The next article by Marvin Simner reviews a number of highly contentious factors that dominated the daily concerns of London's residents during the early years of the 20th century. Among these were the need for the Federal Square Project, a new city hall, and the debate over public ownership vs free enterprise in converting London into a thriving port city via an electric rail connection to Post Stanley. The importance of this rail connection to London is illustrated on the back cover of the present volume. If it appears to you that a number of the issues debated today by members of city council are often highly divisive, you will find that many of the issues that dominated the headlines in the past were no less troublesome.

The focus of the final article by Mike Rice is on a little known but extremely important farming industry in Middlesex County. Mike has compiled a series of photographs that illustrate all the steps that were involved in the growing and harvesting of sugar beets in the 1950s.