

## Reading Camps and Travelling Libraries in New Ontario, 1900–1905

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### ABSTRACT

In 1900, the Ontario Department of Education and Alfred Fitzpatrick engaged in an experiment to supply books to reading camps for lumber, mining, and railway workers in Northern Ontario. The center-periphery interplay between education officials and Fitzpatrick gave birth to two important adult education agencies: Frontier College and Ontario's travelling library system. Although the Department partially accepted Fitzpatrick's original plan for library extension, he garnered enough public support and employer endorsements to leverage government action on key issues related to a systematic book supply, the reduction of illiteracy, and non-formal adult learning techniques. This paper uses primary sources to examine the differing objectives held by Fitzpatrick and the Department during their initial joint venture prior to the Ontario election of 1905. The study highlights why travelling libraries became a provincial responsibility; as well, it shows Fitzpatrick reshaped his original plans by practical interactions with resource workers that led to new approaches for adult learning at the outset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### RÉSUMÉ

En 1900, le Département de l'éducation de l'Ontario et Alfred Fitzpatrick se lancent dans une expérience : celle d'approvisionner en livres les camps des travailleurs forestiers, des mines et des chemins de fer dans le Nord ontarien. Cette interaction « centre-périphérie », des fonctionnaires et de Fitzpatrick, a donné naissance à deux agences importantes d'éducation aux adultes : le Frontier College et le système ontarien de bibliothèques ambulantes. Bien que le Département ait accepté partiellement le plan originel de Fitzpatrick pour l'expansion du système de bibliothèques, ce dernier a pu compter sur un soutien suffisant de la part du public et des employeurs pour motiver le gouvernement à agir sur des questions clés comme l'approvisionnement en livres, la diminution de l'analphabétisme et l'application de techniques d'apprentissage non-formelles pour les adultes. Cet article s'appuie sur des sources primaires afin d'examiner les objectifs divergents de Fitzpatrick et du Département au début de leur entreprise commune, et ce, avant l'élection provinciale de 1905. L'auteur expose pourquoi les bibliothèques ambulantes sont passées sous la responsabilité provinciale. Il montre également que Fitzpatrick a adapté ses plans originaux à la suite d'interactions avec des travailleurs-ressources qui menèrent à de nouvelles approches en éducation aux adultes au début du vingtième siècle.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, New Ontario was a vast region stretching from Muskoka to the Albany River-Keewatin forests that was inhabited by about 100,000 people. To spur development, the Ontario government under Liberal Premier George Ross adopted a number of measures. In 1898, provincial legislation required pine timber cut on crown lands to be sawn into lumber in Canada, a “manufacturing condition” subsequently extended to other forestry and mining resources. In 1900, the government began an extensive system of surveys to encourage permanent settlement. Three years later, construction commenced on the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway, a government financed plan to open the northeastern region. All these initiatives made business ventures more attractive and hastened population growth. Outside urban communities, as many as 35,000–50,000 off-season farm hands, miners, and loggers toiled in hazardous conditions in lumber, mining, and railway camps. During the winter, woodsmen lived in remote camps with spartan sleeping quarters, crowded dining rooms, and grounds with a few small buildings which typically housed a clerk, a foreman, and supplies. Miners sometimes enjoyed better housing in adjacent communities, such as Copper Cliff, but hazardous fumes, lack of worker training, and the absence of schools for children were acknowledged problems.<sup>1</sup> Railway construction crews lived a peripatetic existence along rail lines. The popular image of rugged frontier life was well earned. Accordingly, health and working conditions were a growing concern for both employers and politicians.

Social reformers, too, were beginning to agitate for improvements to lumbering and mining operations and, consequently, their activities began to intersect more frequently with the emergent concerns of the provincial government. Their progressive attitudes towards educational needs, community organization, cultural and societal improvement complemented economic development of Ontario's hinterland. The increased activity of government at Queen's Park in relation to New Ontario exhibited some aspects of the center-periphery model whereby a melding of ideas and actions flowed from both poles. The relationship between a less developed peripheral region and a dominant metropolitan center has been a familiar theme in Canadian history for more than a half century.<sup>2</sup> A generalized model offers the perspective of decisions made at “the center” where power is concentrated in relation to variable degrees of representation provided by “peripheral agents.” Toronto was the centre of English language publishing and political power in a growing province, a place where the supply of policies, ideas, and publications existed in contrast with the demand of cultural resources in the north where camp men laboured. As applied to Canadian library development, reading and adult education, the Education Depository (1850–81) established by Egerton Ryerson for his township and school libraries is an oft-studied instance where central and local relationships unfolded.<sup>3</sup> My analysis in this study will consider a number of core-peripheral interactions between Fitzpatrick and the Education officials in Toronto: the conjunction of political views, attitudes to literacy development, adult education as a state responsibility, the force of human agency and religious beliefs, as well as citizenship rights. Within a half decade, these exchanges gave birth to two educational agencies: Ontario's travelling library system, a provincial service for adults that would continue for six decades, and the Canadian

Reading Camp Association which became Frontier College, a remarkable Canadian literacy organization founded by Alfred Fitzpatrick (figure 1).

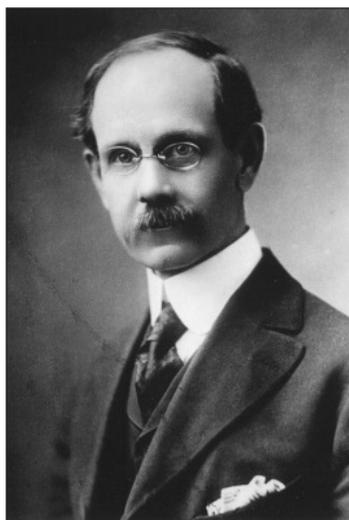


Figure 1: *Alfred Fitzpatrick, undated (Library and Archives Canada C-056817)*

During a half-dozen formative years, 1900–05, Fitzpatrick experimented tirelessly to create an unconventional organization tailored to the needs of male lumber, mining, and railway workers. His efforts to influence provincial government administrators attracted many allies among camp employers, religious and voluntary groups, and social reformers. When Fitzpatrick launched his Canadian Reading Camp Movement in 1899, he sought to demonstrate an educational need for reading materials that would convince the Ontario government, specifically the Education Department, that it bore a responsibility to inform and educate the working class along the frontier through “library extension” which had recently become an identifiable activity in eastern American states. Fitzpatrick adapted current ideas about travelling library extension and progressively evolved plans for extended education by means of after-hours classes and instruction. While the Department assisted his work with limited funding and small book collections, it declined to become involved fully in the experimental work with adults he advocated. From the outset, Fitzpatrick’s capacity to act independently was partly determined by societal structures that limited his choices and opportunities. The initial outcome of this reciprocal interaction was a travelling library service for northern camps and reading rooms where basic learning and recreational activities took place. In subsequent decades, the Department and Fitzpatrick’s successors would improve and expand both services which evolved independently.

### **Travelling Library Schemes for Ontario**

James Bain, Jr., the chief librarian for Toronto Public Library, was the first prominent Canadian spokesperson for travelling library service. In a speech to the Canadian

Institute on 11 December 1897, he concluded, "The travelling libraries offer an unexpectedly cheap, efficient and practicable method of broadening our educational system to include in its beneficent purposes everyone who goes out from the brief course of our common schools, and to enable them to pursue a life-long system of education."<sup>4</sup> The Canadian Institute formed a special committee and issued a circular in January 1899 to promote Bain's ideas for a central reference library and travelling cases for rural areas.<sup>5</sup> Later, in his Presidential address to the Canadian Institute, Bain extended his plan to New Ontario;<sup>6</sup> then, in 1901, at the inaugural meeting of the Ontario Library Association (OLA), he made an appeal for the government to maintain "a number of travelling libraries of 100 or 200 volumes, one [case] of which would be supplied to each [rural] library, say three times a year."<sup>7</sup> Bain and other OLA executive officers would press the government for several years to establish a travelling system under the aegis of an appointed Library Commission; however, the government preferred to retain matters in its own hands. The Education Department was weighing its options. When the Michigan State Library approached the Education Department in July 1898 about "a circulating library system," it replied that it had no current provisions for this type of service.<sup>8</sup> It knew that Bain's colleague, McGill University Librarian Charles Gould, had persuaded the family of Hugh McLennan to provide an endowment for the "McLennan Travelling Library" in 1900, a privately funded project. As well, in British Columbia, a travelling library service had started in 1898 specifically for remote communities; these libraries immediately proved to be popular and were extended to lumber camps within a few years.<sup>9</sup>

The Department's general principle was to respect local autonomy, not to devise and finance undertakings from Toronto unless a pressing need existed. Rural news editors who drew attention to travelling libraries normally emphasized self-help. One editorial on farmers' institutes suggested: "With a few hundred dollars, and supplemented, if need be, by Government assistance, a respectable library might be got together that would prove of great benefit to the members."<sup>10</sup> However, travelling libraries were not a prime consideration with education officials. The Deputy Minister of Education, John Millar, had published an extensive account of New York State's educational system in 1898. He commented on travelling libraries administered by the State Librarian, Melvil Dewey, stating his personal preference for establishment of school libraries as a first priority.<sup>11</sup> His subordinate, Dr. Samuel P. May, Superintendent of Public Libraries, agreed. In a report on American libraries he visited in New York, Philadelphia, and Buffalo, he judged their urbanised travelling library operations to be expensive and was more impressed with their juvenile services.<sup>12</sup> Their opinions would help shape government actions in the initial growth of travelling libraries in New Ontario.

At this point, beginning in early 1900, two university men approached the new Minister of Education, Richard Harcourt, about establishing travelling libraries. The first, Walter J. Brown, a University of Toronto graduate (1894) who had been working in the United States, outlined a sophisticated plan to administer an extensive system of travelling libraries throughout all parts of rural Ontario for a cost of \$75,000 annually. In January 1900, Harcourt, who had served as provincial Treasurer and

entertained moderately progressive ideas, wrote to say the matter was under consideration. In fact, a departmental memo on Brown's proposal clearly supported school libraries as a first priority. The Department did solicit James Bain's advice and he forwarded to the Minister a list of fifty books worth circulating.<sup>13</sup> Over the course of the year, the Deputy Minister repeatedly discouraged Brown's queries. In his annual report for 1900, Harcourt urged rural school trustees to establish libraries so students could leave school with "a taste for good reading" and judged that travelling libraries were suited more for "adults in remote districts."<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, in 1902, his department instituted regulations for \$10 book grants along with a printed catalogue of approved school books. John Millar pronounced this new school library program a "great success" when he spoke at the April 1904 meeting of the Ontario Educational Association.<sup>15</sup> Brown, who was genuinely interested in the education of adults, later complained that his first approach should have been to the Department of Agriculture, where rural interests held more weight.<sup>16</sup>

The second petitioner, an ordained Presbyterian minister, Rev. Alfred Fitzpatrick, had graduated from Queen's College in 1892. There, he became acquainted with extension education activity and emergent Social Gospel beliefs anticipated by its renowned Principal, George Monro Grant. Fitzpatrick was influenced, but not ruled, by the liberal Protestant view seeking to impart the social relevance of religion. Proponents of the Social Gospel considered social welfare for the working class to be as important as spiritual salvation. They emphasized a broader collective responsibility for church work to counter the sins of society in general. Individual self-improvement and elevated moral standards among all classes could build self-respect and contribute to the fellowship of man.<sup>17</sup> In the Victorian middle-class frame of reference and prevailing liberal discourse, respectability, morality, self-help, social order, and progress were canons of faith.<sup>18</sup> Fitzpatrick took particular interest in using books to encourage literacy in order to offer better working conditions, personal advancement for campmen, and good citizens for society. The young minister had worked in rural California, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan before taking up his new charge in 1899 at Nairn Centre, a small village southwest of Sudbury. He respected the manly physical labour woodsmen performed and was determined to advance their well-being, believing that traditional missionary service that supplied aboriginals and isolated communities with religious and self-help works was inadequate.

Individual empowerment through access to reading and competent instruction within the camps became Fitzpatrick's chosen path to convince the government it had a duty to inform and instruct the camp worker. In 1899, he set about enlisting the cooperation of sympathetic reformers, employers, organizations, and governments in this cause. Fitzpatrick's campaign was not an eccentric impulse, it was a shared social value. The value of reading good books to develop the mind and build character often was extolled in an exaggerated vein by individuals and groups because literacy achievement was held to be one of the keys to a successful life.<sup>19</sup> Many promoters in the discourse of improvement and self-help felt they were more knowledgeable about praiseworthy books in the Anglo-centric literary canon than people with little or no formal education. Ontario's Deputy Minister of Education, John Millar, was one

such optimistic advocate for natural history, biography, and literature:

It is not necessary in these days of good books that a person should remain illiterate because he has not money enough to go to college. The poor, as well as the rich, may hold converse with philosophers and scientists. A little self-denial may be needed, but without it little progress of any kind can be expected.<sup>20</sup>

Millar accepted that library regulation of novel reading to prevent false and debasing views of life was a necessary part of educational work through selection of conventional authors or limitations on grants for fiction. Fitzpatrick knew there were kindred groups seeking to use print materials for education and uplift. The Lady Aberdeen Association, organized in Winnipeg in 1890, had as its main task the distribution of reading material both religious and secular to isolated persons and frontier settlements.<sup>21</sup> Most of its resources were donated older materials and its delivery method the postal service. As it opened branches across the country, the Association organized efforts from Ottawa and began mailing more than a thousand packages of books and magazines monthly. Fitzpatrick spoke at its annual national meeting in 1899 on "Library Extension" telling his Ottawa audience he anticipated reaching eleven mining and lumber camps by September 1899.<sup>22</sup>

Fitzpatrick's plans were not entirely without precedent. There were other nascent instructional efforts underway in the north when Fitzpatrick first settled at Nairn Centre. For several years, Faculty from the government's School of Practical Science in Toronto and the Ontario School of Mining at Kingston had given summer lecture classes for northern miners.<sup>23</sup> His innovation was the creation of a reading camp, a tent, or well-equipped room separate from dining or sleeping quarters where reading and recreative activities could take place in one section and study in another. On occasion, sections could combine for lectures, instruction, or religious services. In this way, Fitzpatrick explained in his first pamphlet, *Library Extension*, he hoped that "camp life can be made more homelike, that the men will improve their spare moments, that they will quit the demoralizing tramp habit of 'jumping,' [abrupt exaggerated reactions] and that they will be less likely to frequent the saloons."<sup>24</sup> The reading rooms were a novel way to edify lumberjacks on their home ground, an enlightening space where learning and pleasure intersected. Distance education programs provided by correspondence schools could not bridge the barrier of illiteracy or language that hindered educational attainment in the camps. Fitzpatrick estimated his scheme would cost \$37,500 in the first year and not more than \$25,000 annually thereafter, including a supervisor. He reasoned the government could spare this amount from the revenue gained through its annual timber licenses and taxes. Fitzpatrick's arguments were cogent, but could he convince the government to act on his proposals?

### **Reading Camps Established, 1900**

Unlike James Brown, Fitzpatrick was more resourceful and persistent in rallying people to his cause and leveraging government assistance. Both Nairn Centre Women's

Christian Temperance Union and Agnes Sproule, the W.C.T.U. “missionary to lumber camps” who also was working in the Algoma region, became early adherents. This was important endorsement in the cause of the distribution of “pure” literature and enforcement of standards of reading to adults.<sup>25</sup> In August 1900, Fitzpatrick contacted Superintendent May, who headed the small library branch, about establishing small libraries at camps. Hoping that camp owners would permit the formation of clubs for reading, lectures and sermons, he asked if the Education Department would help.<sup>26</sup> After he was rebuffed by Dr. May with the comment that similar schemes had failed because many workers were “unable to read,” he followed up with personal letters to Richard Harcourt and John Millar requesting clarification of legislation. The current Public Libraries Act permitted a tax-supported public library to establish “branch libraries and branch reading-rooms” and to offer “open evening classes” for promotion of mechanical and manufacturing arts. Fitzpatrick felt this section might be amended to include lumbering operations where established groups existed. Millar replied that it would be possible for a library board to send out small travelling libraries to camps.<sup>27</sup> In early September, Fitzpatrick asked Little Current free library to request the Minister to be allowed to circulate library books to camps. Then he mailed a letter (figure 2) to lumber camp managers and employers requesting backing on three issues: (1) government appointment of a travelling library commission, (2) government authorization for library boards to lend small collections to camps, and (3) the interim organization of camp library clubs by companies.<sup>28</sup>

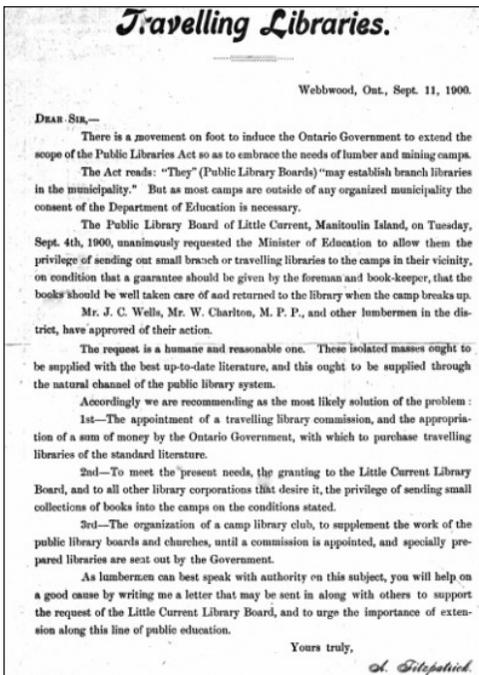


Figure 2: Fitzpatrick's travelling libraries letter (Library and Archives Canada, MG 28 I 124)

About two dozen camps, as well as churches and newspapers, responded favourably with commitments in autumn 1900. Three major businessmen endorsed Fitzpatrick's circular.<sup>29</sup> The railway baron, J.R. Booth, responded on 17 September: "We will be building two new camps at Cache Bay for next year's work; and to aid in the experiment I will have reading rooms built at both of them." Another powerful lumberman-politician, M.P. John M. Charlton, offered to erect two rooms at his forest camps. Francis H. Clergue, the American industrialist with interests in the Algoma area, gave his endorsement. Churches supported the idea and urged the government to amend legislation authorizing branch libraries.<sup>30</sup> A member of the Ontario Legislature endorsed the extension of library services.<sup>31</sup> Press and magazines editors added their appreciation: "we hope his efforts may be crowned with success" *The Canada Lumberman* (Peterborough) editorialized.<sup>32</sup> The only setback, a small one, was the refusal in November by the Methodist Book and Publishing House to directly supply low-cost books and religious tracts on a free basis.<sup>33</sup> Of course, the directors realized there were many individual Methodists and local congregations willing to make donations.



Figure 3: *J.J. McFadden's Camp at Pinage Lake, Mrs. Alex Scott, camp supervisor, at far left* (Library Extension in Ontario, 1901)

Without further delay, Fitzpatrick began setting up his first reading camps in fall 1900 with the approval of employers. Small collections of French and English books were loaned by the recently formed Nairn Centre library for two nearby lumber camps operated by the Victoria Harbour Lumber Co. and Edmund Hall. A third camp, operated by J.J. McFadden Lumber, was set up near Whitefish Station and supervised by Mrs. Alex Scott, the foreman's wife (figure 3). A fourth camp, also operated by Victoria Harbor Lumber (figure 4) received books after Charles Gould wrote saying McGill would send a travelling library case to Nairn Centre.<sup>34</sup> By all

accounts, rooms were frequented on a regular basis. The Edmund Hall camp foreman definitely was pleased:

The reading camp is a success. In spite of the fact that eighty percent of our men are French Canadians, and fifty percent cannot read English or French, I am surprised to find that a building 20 x 30 feet is filled every evening, and all day Sundays. There is less swearing, gambling, 'jumping' and running to the saloons.<sup>35</sup>

Similar conclusions for the two Victoria Harbor camps were reached by a government timber officer, the camp foreman, and visiting Methodist and Catholic clergy. The reading rooms were patronized because they were a novelty, a welcome respite, and exhibited thoughtful book selection. Fitzpatrick explained in his first report:

Many illustrated magazines have been received from friends. One-syllable editions of Robinson Crusoe, Swiss Family Robinson, and Pilgrim's Progress are being given to those who cannot read, and they are being urged to improve their spare moments, and ask help from the nearest neighbor. The principle of mutual help is being encouraged.<sup>36</sup>

News and literature could be a relaxing pastime at the end of long day's work or during a rainy interlude. Fitzpatrick's unsupervised reading rooms were accepted by camp men.



Figure 4: Interior of reading shanty at Victoria Harbor Co. Camp 2 (Library Extension, 1901)

Contemporary pictures and Fitzpatrick's annual reports give a glimpse of the camp reading environment. Early reading rooms constructed by camp employers and equipped by Fitzpatrick resembled classrooms. Readers and instructors often wore

more formal attire: hats, ties, and jackets. A cozy atmosphere was encouraged but rules usually were in place to prohibit smoking, tobacco spitting, swearing, and drinking. Walls were decorated with illustrations (perhaps from requested magazines such as the *London Illustrated News*) alongside the occasional blackboard. Magazines and papers were available for casual use. Tables and chairs offered seating for study, writing, or relaxation in an era when some public libraries continued to make users stand at newspaper racks. Book shelving on walls and free standing bookcases were available in more commodious structures. Rooms were used when work was completed or during inclement weather. Kerosene lamps and small windows provided light; wood stoves supplied heat. Most camp collections were limited in scope—a travelling library case of fifty books might be “read out” after a few months but not exchanged. Topics chosen by instructors varied greatly—one illustration from 1905 shows Parry Sound workers studying “The Seasons.” Of course, reading tents along rail lines or remote lumbering operations were less well equipped; their furnishings or reading materials needed to be ready for transport on short notice. Reading often took place in the open beside the tent. Generally, reading rooms were frequented on a regular basis for instruction or self-help purposes: “we always have as many as we can pack in the reading room, and an orderly and pleasant gathering” reported one Parry Sound instructor.<sup>37</sup>

While Fitzpatrick worked to establish a few camps, he kept contacting the Education Department. John Millar replied in October with assurance that the department was properly evaluating matters.<sup>38</sup> There were more than thirty public libraries scattered across New Ontario, some reasonably well placed to organize lending services to lumbering operations. Towards the end of the year, the Minister authorized local libraries to send out books. He wrote to Fitzpatrick with encouraging words saying he would assist “in every way in my power.”<sup>39</sup> With firmer support, Fitzpatrick adopted the name, Canadian Reading Camp Association, and, in early 1901, issued his first report, *Library Extension in Ontario*, to which the Department contributed \$100 for printing. True to his word, Harcourt announced his department’s intention for camp libraries to the press in early 1901:

It was never contemplated that boxes of books, say 25 or 50 in a box, would be sent to localities which were already in enjoyment of some public library. The system therefore is intended for the advantage of somewhat remote sections, distant from the towns and villages in which were kept any public libraries.<sup>40</sup>

The Minister, who was personally studying American methods by writing to Melvil Dewey,<sup>41</sup> thought “a reasonable percentage of each box of books would be devoted to works on practical agriculture, horticulture, etc.” Clearly, he favoured supplying remote areas using travelling libraries; he had nothing to add about appointing library commissioners or recognizing camps for legislative purposes.

The most likely commission supporters were members of the newly formed Ontario Library Association. Fitzpatrick had already received supportive replies from James Bain and Dr. Archibald B. Macallum (Canadian Institute) in September

1900.<sup>42</sup> At OLA's April 1901 meeting Macallum made a presentation on travelling libraries. The University of Toronto professor traced the history of American experimentation and suggested a broad cooperative approach encompassing women's clubs, temperance and community organizations throughout rural counties and northern districts.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, the OLA formed a standing committee on travelling libraries with Dr. Macallum as chair. At the 1902 meeting, Macallum reported travelling library progress although he felt there was too great a proportion of light fiction and reiterated OLA's position that a library commission should be appointed to deal with the whole question. Fitzpatrick's best contact was Edwin A. Hardy, OLA's Secretary, who agreed to become the Librarian for the reading camps in 1901. Hardy became a reliable supporter of Fitzpatrick's ideas and often reported on reading camp activity.<sup>44</sup>

### Fostering Learning in the Reading Camps, 1901–03

After Harcourt's declaration to loan travelling libraries, Fitzpatrick became freer to develop his ideas and solicit sponsors. He was already out of pocket \$1,200 according to his Association treasurer, William J. Bell, who appealed for public support in early summer 1901.<sup>45</sup> Fitzpatrick acknowledged that a few localized branch libraries sharing books with camps would be "quite inadequate and impracticable for any length of time."<sup>46</sup> Needing funds to continue, he requested the Minister to grant aid directly for his camp recruits. In response, the government granted only \$100 in 1901 and 1902.<sup>47</sup> Then, Fitzpatrick broadened his appeal in the May issue of *Canadian Magazine*.<sup>48</sup> Instruction, as well as good reading, was the way forward: the "appointment of some one[sic] specially qualified to supervise the work in each camp" was a necessity—possibly cullers (officials who measured logs), teachers, or medical students who could also conduct evening classes. Fitzpatrick also mentioned his efforts to encourage government legislation for improved sanitary conditions to prevent outbreaks of smallpox, dysentery, and typhoid. Smallpox, in particular, had already posed a threat to his operations and led the Provincial Board of Health to suggest remedial actions for contaminated camp books.<sup>49</sup> He requested in-kind donations for his proposed expansion to eight more camps in 1901. Access to the best literature and social intercourse could "uplift the soul and inspire the solitary to newness and cleanness of life." It was a humanistic, moral discourse that elicited support from groups such as the Y.M.C.A. and Christian Endeavour that Fitzpatrick spoke to on occasion.<sup>50</sup> These groups were influenced by evangelical Protestantism and progressive political policies that could strengthen social relations. E.A. Hardy expressed the general sentiment: "There is a large interest in this movement throughout the province. It appeals to Christian workers, merchants, employers of labo[u]r, public men and the public at large."<sup>51</sup> After one year, he was progressing beyond the passive concept of supplying reading libraries to isolated camp workers. Now, he was exploring a more active role for instructors to look after the camp rooms and to teach workers during idle periods.

Making literature accessible for social uplift and disseminating ideas as widely as possible for educational purposes was viewed as a positive action with many benefits.<sup>52</sup> In spring 1901, Fitzpatrick visited George Grant to discuss his work and

secured his whole-hearted support and assistance.<sup>53</sup> In an August 1901 interview with the *Globe*, Fitzpatrick revealed he had received formal backing at the recent Dominion Educational Association convention.<sup>54</sup> When the first government travelling library finally was announced in the *Globe* for Michipicoten in May 1901, the Minister hoped it might lessen the “drink evil” in the north, perhaps with an eye to temperance campaigners. Harcourt’s suggestion that libraries could act as an antidote to alcoholic excess overlooked the fact that camp rules prohibiting drinking were likely to be more effective. Book selection drew press attention since the circulation of print to northern workers was a novel, and laudable, endeavour. Harcourt explained about ten percent was “good fiction,” the balance being works of travel, adventure, biography, science, agriculture, and domestic science.<sup>55</sup> To achieve consensus, Harcourt had corresponded with literary and college men as well as religious leaders to compile lists of suitable books in early 1901. As a practical matter, the Department forwarded James Bain’s list to the Methodist Book Room and William Tyrrell & Co. in order to expedite matters.<sup>56</sup> Other smaller Toronto publishers also were approached and work proceeded slowly through the summer. Harcourt replied to Fitzpatrick’s request for more libraries by saying two libraries had been supplied by July and another would be ready by September.<sup>57</sup> When Fitzpatrick contacted Harcourt again he counselled that “elementary” readers and French books would be appreciated.<sup>58</sup> Eventually, for this first winter season library cases were supplied to Michipicoten Harbour, French River, Gertrude Mine, Victoria Mines, Cache Bay, Cartier, Seguin Falls, and Carnarvon.

Preparing cases for circulation without direct knowledge about the recipients involved a degree of consultation with publishers and educators as well as informed guesswork. The contents of ‘Case A’ offer some insight into the character of Departmental book selection. Initial selections included *Abraham Lincoln* (Leland), *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll), *Bird Studies with a Camera* (Chapman), *Frederick the Great* (Brackenbush), *The Influence of Christ in Modern Life* (Hillis), *The Gospel of Wealth* (Carnegie), *The Grey Fairy Book* (Lang), *Joan of Arc* (Tuckey), *Squirrels and other Fur Bearers* (Burrows), and *Wolfe* (Bradley).<sup>59</sup> Fiction works, naturally, were less numerous—the general rule of thumb in the Departmental being twenty percent of total purchases for grant purposes. Only a few current bestselling novels, such as *To Have and to Hold* (Johnston), *Unleavened Bread* (Grant), or *The Redemption of David Corson* (Goss) were present. A fair proportion of works extolled male heroes and British life. Some books were dense reading and far removed from the immediate working environment.<sup>60</sup> Opinions about selections were mixed. One Victoria Mines clerk complained, “there were not enough works of fiction for this class of readers” in ‘Case D.’<sup>61</sup> Another at Victoria Mines reported, “I received Case M., and everyone seems to like the books.”<sup>62</sup> Comments about the selections appeared in Fitzpatrick’s second camp report. Regarding the scarcity of novels, one employer, J. McLelland, maintained that newspapers could supply tastes for this “ephemeral class of literature” and that history, biography, and science were well chosen. Another camp noted the lack of French papers and books.<sup>63</sup>

By the time the Department started authorizing more applications for 1901–02,

Harcourt was writing the manager at Cache Bay to say that books in French and elementary English would be provided.<sup>64</sup> He continued to request lists hoping he could tailor selections for specific groups, such as Catholic camp readers.<sup>65</sup> Fitzpatrick helpfully suggested more fiction: Ford's *Janice Meredith*, *David Harum* (Westcott); *The Habitant* (Drummond); *The Golden Dog* (Kirby); Seton's *Biography of a Grizzly* and *Wild Animals I Have Known*; Merriam's *With Edged Tools*, *The Sowers*, and *Slave of the Lamp*; Parker's *Seats of the Mighty* and *Pierre and His People*; Connor's *Black Rock* and *Sky Pilot*; and *The Forge in the Forest* (Roberts). He also wanted to exceed the general fiction rule.<sup>66</sup> The Department reversed its course saying, "it will be advisable to limit the libraries to more light reading, and that standard and recent fiction, with a sprinkling of biography and general science, forms the most attractive literary diversion for the men."<sup>67</sup> Some cases contained standard French editions by popular authors, such as Alphonse Daudet — *Contes Du Lundi*, *Jack*, *Le Petit Chose*, and *Tartarin sur les Alpes* — as well as Jules Verne — *De la Terre à la Lune*, *Vingt Mille Lieues sous les Mers*, *Voyage au Centre de la Terre*, and *Michel Strogoff*.<sup>68</sup> With a better grasp of what was needed, the Department was able to furnish seventeen cases in 1902. Applications from groups, such as the provincial rangers in Algonquin Park, were vetted carefully before approval.<sup>69</sup> Harcourt claimed the Department's experience with travelling libraries thus far was "very satisfactory."<sup>70</sup>

Fitzpatrick also believed his plans were unfolding satisfactorily. His second annual report in 1902 incorporated ideas on sanitation for books, better accommodation for reading and writing, and instruction of labourers. He called upon the Education Department to amend the Public Libraries Act to allow (1) an extension of the public library system, (2) travelling libraries of special books for study clubs, and especially (3) an extension of the present privileges (i.e., grants) accorded public libraries directly to reading camps and club houses.<sup>71</sup> Fitzpatrick again raised the issue of departmental payments for instructors, normally graduate students, who could fill the roles of physician, inspector, and instructor. From his own resources for the 1901–02 season, he had employed seven people to oversee the reading camps. One Queen's graduate student, J.F. MacDonald, had experimented with instruction for one month, finding success reading prose to camp workers by novelists such as Charles Levers and Ian Maclaren. Macdonald noted that "the men read or listen eagerly to one reading aloud anything strongly humorous or pathetic — particularly poetry." Fitzpatrick himself had taught enough to be "strongly prejudiced" towards reading and tutoring, a method he credited to Rev. Samuel Dyde, a Queen's professor.<sup>72</sup>

As the Reading Camp's General Secretary, Fitzpatrick forged wide-ranging contacts. In April 1902, he secured an important resolution at the Ontario Educational Association annual meeting endorsing government assistance for books and supervision in the northern camps.<sup>73</sup> Melvil Dewey asked him for details in the hope of offering this service to lumbermen in the Adirondacks and, afterwards, Fitzpatrick spoke about reading camps at the New York Library Association's Lake Placid conference.<sup>74</sup> His second report indicates many groups and donors were cooperating with him, especially The Aberdeen Association, which continued to contribute its "packet libraries." Subscriptions included major Montreal and Toronto newspapers. Local

papers, such as *Renfrew Mercury*, *Fort William Times-Journal*, *Rat Portage Miner*, *Huntsville Forester*, and the comical magazine, *Alley Sloper*, were particularly prized.<sup>75</sup> Many individuals contributed books, often favouring Canadian works such as *Sylvan Ontario* (Muldrew) and Drummond's *Johnnie Courtreau and Other Poems*. Donations of chairs, stoves, lamps, and games cultivated a congenial atmosphere for reading, conversation, and learning.

Reading camps and travelling libraries frequently attracted enthusiastic public notice. A writer for *Canadian Magazine* stated the Ontario government ought to do even more for the northern workers.<sup>76</sup> A *Globe* editorial emphasized the possibilities for learning:

In 500 frontier camps of the Province there are 50,000 able-bodied woodsmen and miners, who, between the hours of 7 and 9 o'clock nearly every evening, and on rainy days, public holidays and Sundays, are absolutely idle. Here is a field for work that is not charitable in the offensive sense of the term, but is broadly educational.<sup>77</sup>

The *Methodist Review* favoured participation: "Here is an open door through which we can reach fifty thousand of that class and reach them all the more effectively because of their isolation and their needs."<sup>78</sup> The national Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, local congregations and clergy of various denominations, and branches of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor and Young Women's Guild were dependable donors. Fitzpatrick's alma mater, Queen's, proudly linked his work to George Grant's encouragement of social justice, manliness, and ideal citizenship.<sup>79</sup> The *Labour Gazette* gave indirect credit to Fitzpatrick for Ontario's legislative sanitary improvements, chiefly because of the increased publicity he had given to conditions prevailing in camps.<sup>80</sup> Support continued at the OLA annual meeting in April 1902 where delegates adopted a resolution in support of reading camps.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the publicity and obvious base of support, there was no Departmental offer for direct grants to any lumber camp. When Fitzpatrick queried Harcourt about this crucial issue in March 1902, the Minister wrote saying it was too late in the legislative sitting to do anything.<sup>82</sup> Fitzpatrick replied with a grant request for newspapers and evening classes and included a reference to his own instructional work and personal monetary sacrifices.<sup>83</sup> Even so, there was continued satisfaction that the current limited arrangement (and consequent modest financial outlay) was well-suited for camp needs. The Deputy Minister, John Millar, offered a self-congratulatory appraisal in a newspaper interview: "In Ontario we have not made the mistake of duplicating the work of travelling libraries and public libraries. Travelling libraries here are confined to the new and sparsely settled parts of the Province."<sup>84</sup> When Fitzpatrick requested a grant increase to \$500 later in 1902, he had to settle for \$150.<sup>85</sup> Obviously, a comprehensive northern scheme was not part of the government's agenda. During winter 1902–03, Fitzpatrick employed three college graduates and five instructors to conduct evening classes after work, a transition ably outlined by A. O. Paterson, another Queen's man temporarily serving as Fitzpatrick's educational secretary. He promoted

the intellectual growth stimulated by “school camps” to the Ontario Educational Association as well as the justice and humanity this work exemplified.<sup>86</sup> The camps were popular and successful, but would the government assume more responsibility as Fitzpatrick intended?

### Camp Education and Library Extension: Different Goals

The Education Department was cautiously pragmatic in its method of book supply and expenditure. It combined a liberal-administrative perspective tinged with the progressive-humanistic view that chiefly motivated Fitzpatrick. The government’s first priority was aid for viable local libraries and encouragement of new libraries. Library extension through involvement with untried adult education experiments or direct book delivery was accorded less attention. The Department existed principally to oversee elementary and secondary schools and to ensure the supply of teachers through certified training schools. In its view, the ability of camp workers to read popular books, recognize simple words or phrases, and write or speak at a basic level was a challenge the Reading Camp Association seemed ill-prepared to ameliorate. There were also logistical problems to overcome—purchasing, processing, distributing, and supervising thousands of books. Fortunately for the Department, it maintained many publishing and bookselling contacts in Toronto. In the first year of the library program, relatively little book money was expended and Harcourt frequently corresponded with firms himself. The major Toronto supplier was William Tyrrell, who was rapidly enlarging his operations.<sup>87</sup> The foreign businesses of note were the American bookseller and publisher, C.E. Lauriat & Co. of Boston, and the reputable publishing firm of Adam & Charles Black, London.<sup>88</sup>

Harcourt made a practice of publishing book lists in his annual report to demonstrate the new program’s educational merit. His reports attest the transition to more popular works, such as Kate Wiggins’ *The Birds’ Christmas Carol*, the moving story of a dying young girl, and Robert Kernighan’s entertaining Canadian poetry, *Khan’s Canticles*. To be sure, instructive personal guides, such as T.S. Arthur’s moralizing best-seller, *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room*, were on hand. One shipment, ‘Case Z,’ prepared in 1903, contained a combination of Anglo-American and French works with decidedly more accent on fiction: *By England’s Aid*, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, and *Friends Though Divided* (Henty); *The Deerslayer*, *The Pathfinder*, and *The Pilot* (Cooper); *The Gorilla Hunters* (Ballantyne); *Great Expectations* and *Old Curiosity Shop* (Dickens); *Lovey Mary* (Rice); *Eugénie Grandet* and *Le Médecin de Campagne* (Balzac).<sup>89</sup> On this evolving basis, over four years, 1901–04, the Minister reported thirty-seven travelling libraries were sent out.

Even though Harcourt continually sought improvements in book selection, a few criticisms continued. One Rat Portage camp declared selections to be above the reading level possessed by workers.<sup>90</sup> The *Catholic World* called attention to Ralph Connor’s negative depiction of the Irish and cautioned against efforts to make the Reading Camp Association “an agency for heretical teaching.”<sup>91</sup> Fitzpatrick reiterated his views about elementary reading in January 1904, when he suggested to Harcourt

that many of the novels by Thackeray, Scott, and Dickens might be better utilized by the school libraries:

After nearly four years experience, I find a good simple story, in words of one syllable, to be the best for adult beginners. They do not like primers, etc. They realize that they are grown up men, and will begin with a story, while they hesitate to work with the ordinary readers.<sup>92</sup>

In the same letter, he offered a list of forty-eight books he felt worth purchasing and noted he had gotten one syllable editions of *Gulliver's Travels*, *Black Beauty*, *Kidnapped*, and *Rab and His Friends* at the Methodist Book Room in Toronto. His list reveals a catholic taste. Most novels listed were by contemporary authors, books such as *Mooswa* and *Thoroughbreds* by the Canadian writer, William Alexander Fraser. One book, a romance, *In the Palace of the King* (F. Marion Crawford) had been adapted into a Broadway play. Many books, for instance *Letters of a Self-Made Merchant to His Son* (George Horace Lorimer), continue in print a century later.

The tie between the General Secretary and the Department was a workable partnership but was tenuous because Fitzpatrick and his associates were outside the educational establishment. Little was accomplished when a deputation of employers and supporters lobbied the Premier, George Ross, in March 1903 asking for grants of not less than \$100 to camps as well as “dollar for dollar” grants matching expenses on newspapers and books.<sup>93</sup> Harcourt advised Ross to give the Association \$200; later, in July, after Fitzpatrick approached the Premier directly, the Minister refused to pay \$812 for camp instruction and cautioned Fitzpatrick to “proceed as far as my Department is concerned on more systematic lines with regards to finances.”<sup>94</sup> The Department did give a \$150 grant for camp work and continued paying William Briggs to print Fitzpatrick's annual report. As the number of camps increased, for 1904 it raised the grant to \$500 and paid the printing for 4,000 copies of *Camp Education Extension*. The following year, \$1,000 was granted, making the Department the Reading Camp Association's foremost benefactor and helping it achieve solvency.

At times, Fitzpatrick's relation with the Department was strained. Inevitably, book losses occurred. Travelling library ‘Case Y,’ originally forwarded to the Murdock Brothers in North Bay for railway workers, “went astray” for about a year according to Fitzpatrick, thereby generating consternation and correspondence until forty books were recovered.<sup>95</sup> The Nairn Centre library itself became a flash point in 1903–04. Here, where Fitzpatrick served as chair of the board, reporting problems and issues with the purchase of books using promissory notes from suppliers to claim matching provincial book grants became Departmental concerns.<sup>96</sup> At one point, Fitzpatrick threatened to “expose his [Dr. May] methods in the public press” for permitting the practice of using loan agreements to count towards local revenue, although the Department had already closed this loophole in spring 1903 legislation. Eventually, fifty dollars was sent to Nairn Centre for arrears. For his part, Fitzpatrick declared he had “no more time to spend over this matter” and resigned as chair. By this time,

he was concentrating on camp education, as shown by a newspaper article he had penned a month earlier:

The chief work of the Reading Camp Association is a separate building, or tent, at the camp, well manned with a duly qualified teacher, for the purpose of reading, instruction and public worship. Clergymen of all denominations are welcome to the use of these reading camps. Ten young men are at present employed as instructors.<sup>97</sup>

On the other hand, library extension was the government's concern. The Department clearly preferred to centralize travelling libraries and offer the Reading Camp Association small grants to help employ instructors.

By 1903–04 the terms “education” and “school” were supplanting “library extension” in Fitzpatrick's promotional literature. He was beginning to actively employ the concept of “labourer-teacher” that became the basis for success in the camps after one instructor worked with his companions during the day to gain their confidence and then taught by night. He thus (perhaps inadvertently) created the vital connection between instructor and learner. This practice also eased the Reading Camp's financial burden—instructors now received a portion of their wages directly from employers. Fitzpatrick valued fieldwork and urged, “we must bring the education to the man instead of the man to the education.”<sup>98</sup> In his mind, the reading camps were a complement to the manual training schools for students. Social justice required the diminution of ignorance along the frontier: “There is not too much spent on university education, but too little on camp education extension.”<sup>99</sup> Poor schooling, rudimentary working conditions, and many immigrants lacking French or English necessitated the introduction of elementary instruction.<sup>100</sup> Fitzpatrick judged literacy to be a troublesome collective concern:

It is no exaggeration to state that 30 per cent of the navvys, woodsmen and miners of Canada can neither read nor write; 50 per cent do not know the multiplication table, and 75 per cent cannot make out their time or tell whether they receive justice at the hands of their employers.<sup>101</sup>

The Reading Camp Association was a pioneering way to reduce literacy and develop better citizens, demonstrating that some form of government action was vital—“No state should tolerate an illiterate citizenship.”<sup>102</sup>

The number of departmental travelling libraries, just less than 40 in four years, followed Fitzpatrick's gradual progress in employing competent labourer-teachers and establishing permanent reading camps. By expanding his work in western Canada and acquiring greater private support, he was able to field twenty-one instructors with suitable reading camp facilities by 1904—thirteen in Ontario. Several club houses were becoming year-round cultural and recreational operations: the Gorringer Club (Copper Cliff) and Free Methodist Church at Cordova Mines; sawmill or mining sites at Cutler, Searchmont, Deloro, Gold Rock, and Helen Mine; and a Parry

Sound lumber camp. New requests for libraries, such as the Dunlap Mining Co. at Cobalt (La Rose Mine), continued to expand Fitzpatrick's range and bring him closer to mining communities.<sup>103</sup> For construction workers, a reading car on the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway had come into use through the assistance of the railway commission. Further, the financial position of the Reading Camp Association was stabilizing. The fifth report (1905) showed an expenditure of \$5,001.07 ending with a credit of \$274.33—the second consecutive year with a surplus.<sup>104</sup> Separate disbursements by camp employers and the Education Department in aid of Fitzpatrick's personal efforts had eased his financial position considerably though he still was unable to draw a salary from the Association.

Gradually, in its efforts to establish a presence on the frontier the Reading Camp Association had overcome serious obstacles: general social disregard for the working class, bureaucratic obstinacy, financial adversity, and skeptical views about doubtful pedagogic practices. Henceforth, Fitzpatrick assumed a new title in his annual reports, Superintendent of Camp Education. For his frontier experiment, he had fashioned diverse partnerships with employers, politicians, university students, and government officials. The Association had acquired many friends—clergy, parishioners, newspaper editors, authors, youth groups, clubs and associations—sympathetic to Fitzpatrick's educational initiatives. The innovative combination of travelling libraries combined with resident group discussions and readings, public worship, class lessons, and personal tutoring by labour-teachers was a progressive educative step. Only a fraction of the total northern Ontario workforce had profited from this method of extension, but it was a sensible way to reach camps. Reports from experienced instructors confirmed that labour turnover presented difficulties but that the reading camp approach was working. Edmund Bradwin wrote:

Every day brings changes in the personnel of the camp, but though I am doing all I can to encourage them to enter classes, my efforts so far are but partially successful.

However, we are reaching them in the matter of reading. We are always glad to get a bundle of magazines, when you can spare them, and the large illustrated weeklies find appreciative perusers always.<sup>105</sup>

Fitzpatrick no longer boosted a provincial library commission or legislation to allow library boards to send small collections of books to camps.

When he issued his fifth report in 1905, *The Education of the Frontier Laborer*, libraries were a subset of his national vision for resource industry workers. Now, with the realization that divided church efforts would have little impact on frontiersmen, he became more strident about advocating government's role in providing social justice for marginalized resource labourers in the *Canadian Magazine*: "Each province can well afford to provide for their social, moral and intellectual needs. The present treatment of them is nothing short of criminal. Canada's natural resources would be valueless without their toil."<sup>106</sup> Fitzpatrick detested societal neglect of the dangerous

work along the frontier. He sought to draw attention to this fact by asserting, “instead of educating these benefactors of mankind and ennobling their calling, we have degraded them by a life of isolation and ostracism.”<sup>107</sup> Although Ontario officialdom had repeatedly evaded Fitzpatrick’s arguments about the economic benefits the government derived from frontier workers, he had forged a small organization that lessened harsh frontier conditions and developed innovative educational practices through its egalitarian philosophy.<sup>108</sup> He had also successfully prodded the Education Department to begin a travelling library scheme, an accomplishment in its own right.

### New Directions—the 1905 Provincial Election

After a half-decade, new challenges were appearing in camps, mines, and railways. As one camp instructor, who worked along the railway lines (figure 5) in 1905, explained, there were about 95 Italians and only 35–50 English and French speaking



Figure 5: Reading tent at a railway construction camp (Canadian Magazine, 1905)

men in his group.<sup>109</sup> These men sought advancement by learning English and arithmetic. The summer mining schools also reported an influx of immigrants who lacked English.<sup>110</sup> A major demographic change was underway, especially in railway construction crews. Increasingly, after 1905, Fitzpatrick realized the “Canadianization” of immigrants and the duties of citizenship would be equally as important as literacy improvement. There was a shift from the provision of facilities, books, and recreation to patriotic messaging, English language classes, and numeracy instruction. Evenings became a time to learn the traditional Three Rs, to discuss manly topics, and read about becoming a “good citizen.”<sup>111</sup> Anglo-Protestant ideals of citizen identity, family responsibilities, and ties with British imperialism assumed more importance.<sup>112</sup> Now the Reading Camp Association was providing adult learning through instructional practices in real-life camp conditions and acting as an instrument of assimilation. A friendly *Globe* editorial on 19 January 1905, “Education and Labor,” congratulated Fitzpatrick and the Liberal government of George Ross for meeting the needs of

northern lumber communities in a way that is “producing encouraging results.”

Officials in the Education Department were not able to enjoy more acclaim about their furtherance of workers' well-being. Ontario voters ended the long hegemony of the Liberal Party in the provincial election of 25 January 1905. The Conservatives, led by James P. Whitney, swept to power. Dr. Robert Pyne, a former board member of the Toronto Public Library, became Minister of Education. John Millar died in the autumn and A.H.U. Colquhoun, a journalist and editor, replaced him as Deputy Minister in early 1906. In an era of patronage, Dr. May officially retired in November. T.W.H. Leavitt, a former teacher, journalist, and Conservative organizer, became Inspector of Public Libraries. When the Ontario Library Association convened in April 1905, Dr. Pyne welcomed a meeting with its deputation. Over the next year it became evident the new government was sympathetic to general legislative improvements and especially travelling library expansion beyond northern camps.

Fitzpatrick was quick to petition the new government. He introduced his work to Dr. Pyne shortly after the election and requested the provincial grant be raised to \$2,500, about half the Reading Camp's current budget.<sup>113</sup> However, it was a period to mark time while Inspector Leavitt applied his organizational talents to transform the travelling libraries by increasing the number of eligible recipients and tightening regulations. The Inspector found the circulation of libraries for six months to be quite inefficient because lumber camps normally operated for winter period and returned cases were idle at the Department in summer unless they were forwarded to sawmills. He altered regulations in 1906 to ensure that recipients were “small Public Libraries” to make library boards responsible for losses. A shorter loan period, three months, was instituted. Cases were to be returned to the Department for inventory. Unmistakably, the provincial service was beginning to resemble the schemes for the entire province initially presented by James Bain and Walter Brown.

The post-1905 departmental revisions included linkages to broader library policy. For 1907, the Legislature voted \$3,000 to expand traveling libraries because Leavitt recognized that rural libraries were struggling to finance new book purchases. The Inspector, mindful of Bain's opinion that travelling libraries were “cheap, efficient and practicable,” felt enhanced local grants would be counter-productive in his 1906 annual report:

A very large increase would be necessary to effect any substantial improvement among the small libraries, as the major portion of the grant would be absorbed by the larger libraries. A systematic and continued effort should be made to give access to collections of good books by farmers and the residents of small villages. To accomplish such a desirable result, I recommend the development of and increase in the number of Travelling Libraries.<sup>114</sup>

He established two types of travelling libraries collections, the fixed and open shelf. Instructive, entertaining books composed the fixed collections, which were intended to supplement general reading in small communities. The open shelf library was intended to satisfy special purposes, such as reading camps or study groups, since

Leavitt acknowledged Fitzpatrick's good work.<sup>115</sup> Reading Camp Association needs were addressed with supplementary primers, spelling and copy books, along with pencils and paper. The Inspector also arranged for new cases to be manufactured with moveable shelves that reduced book handling (figure 6). A lockable, hinged cover could be opened forming a small table to examine books. Cases contained a register and a catalogue. When he spoke to the OLA annual meeting in 1907, the Leavitt was rather satisfied saying, "I apprehend that the travelling library should do excellent work in the Province."<sup>116</sup> By this year the Department had expanded to 150 libraries with 7,750 books.

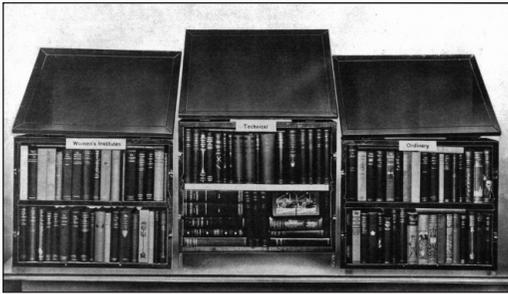


Figure 6: *Three types of travelling library cases* (Report of Minister of Education, 1911)

Certainly, the election of 1905 revitalized perspectives about travelling libraries and ushered in immediate expansion. The interactions between Fitzpatrick and the Education Department were now being realigned with new personalities and challenges. After 1900, Fitzpatrick represented the interests of frontier workers by opening up new possibilities for literacy and adult education work. The hinterland of Ontario served as his base, a counterpoise to the established organizations centered in Toronto. It reshaped his ideas as he interacted with northerners and assessed their needs firsthand. Reinforced by Social Gospel ideas stemming from Protestant church work, especially the expanding role of government in assistance to less fortunate citizens, he prodded politicians and administrators at Queen's Park into action, especially Richard Harcourt who assisted his work despite his officials' doubt. Fitzpatrick's own Christian beliefs, together with other lay persons and churchmen, helped in the cause of establishing reading camps. The force of his tenacious personality carried through a program that might otherwise have languished for years. He was aided by prominent business leaders keen to treat labour more fairly (and comply with new legislation) and be seen to operate efficient, hygienic, enlightened camps. As the northern workforce increasingly attracted European immigrants outside the British Isles, especially at the commencement of the railroad boom, Fitzpatrick recognized a new role to promote, Canadianization, which strengthened his original humanist case for literacy work among adults. Political parties could not gloss over this liberal-democratic aspect. The education of new citizens could not be neglected: including works such as Emily Weaver's *Canadian History for Boys and Girls* and Pelham Edgar's *Romance of Canadian History* in travelling cases could inculcate the proper perspective. These initiatives could also be applied to rural southern Ontario.

For northern residents, the revised system of travelling libraries would become available through the rapid growth of Women's Institutes branches—twenty-eight new northern branches between 1905–10.<sup>117</sup> Amongst the established free libraries, Fort William became a leader in library extension by distributing travelling libraries into the Thunder Bay District before the First World War. For six decades the Department of Education's provincial travelling library service would continue to assist rural study clubs, women's institutes, church groups, folk schools, home and school associations, as well as Frontier College until a disastrous fire in January 1963 curtailed operations in its downtown Toronto offices. For the Reading Camp Association, travelling libraries continued to be a necessary component as teaching practices and acculturation evolved in the northern camps. When he spoke to the American Library Association annual meeting in 1910, Fitzpatrick emphasized, "We are thus gradually winning the confidence of employers and men, and we trust our provincial and your state governments will take this matter up in the not too distant future and extend their systems of education to the camps — the first point of contact with the foreign immigrant."<sup>118</sup> However, Fitzpatrick was unable to realize this formal change. He would have to incorporate his own educational organization in 1919, The Frontier College, to accomplish the comprehensive needs he identified. Ontario education officials were more receptive to financing the night schools encouraged by Edmund Bradwin.<sup>119</sup>

Where the Reading Camp Association led, the Education Department and others would follow. After 1905, the reading camps gained more acceptance among educators in the Department as Fitzpatrick continued to garner praise in his efforts to implement non-formal learning. His contribution to community building in New Ontario was keenly appreciated by J.B. MacDougall, the Inspector of Schools for Nipissing and later teacher at the North Bay Normal School opened in 1908:

The Camp School was a unique possession of the North, a natural outgrowth of conditions that history rarely repeats. It served to reveal the possibility of the extension of our traditional system into fields of effort hitherto largely unthought of, and untouched in any form. It looks to the conservation of our large foreign population for sound, loyal and respected citizenship in areas where they happen to be hived, supplying a chance for a completed education...or giving the toiler, be he navvy, mechanic, woodsman or miner, some added culture, and, as well, an intelligent insight into the craft in which he is engaged.<sup>120</sup>

By the end of 1907, MacDougall was suggesting that Fitzpatrick's camp instructors and camp facilities be used for teaching during the evening, especially along the new railway centres. MacDougall recommended collaboration with the Association "which has capable men frequently on the ground, generally undergraduates of some university, in assisting them to conduct Night Schools."<sup>121</sup> Within a few years, more than twenty approved night schools funded by the Education Department were in place. The reading camps and travelling libraries that Fitzpatrick promoted for "New

Ontario” brought a measure of culture and education to northern residents as well as spawning new ideas about adult education and promotion of library services to rural and northern residents. Ultimately, Fitzpatrick would face defeat in his efforts to gain degree-granting status under a federal charter and resign his position as Principal of Frontier College in 1933.<sup>122</sup> By this time, however, his reputation for innovations in the cause of adult education and encouragement of travelling libraries for small localities in northern Ontario was secure.

## Notes

- 1 “Summer Mining Schools” *Report of the Bureau of Mines, 1902* (Toronto: Warwick & Rutter, 1902), 68–69. See Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900–1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987), p. 88–106 for typical camp life.
- 2 Donald F. Davis, “The ‘Metropolitan Thesis’ and the Writing of Canadian Urban History,” *Urban History Review* 14, 2 (1985): 95–113 provides an overview of different conceptual approaches to Laurentian views of Canadian development.
- 3 For example see Bruce Curtis, “‘Littery Merrit’, ‘Useful Knowledge’, and the Organization of Township Libraries in Canada West, 1840–1860,” *Ontario History* 78, 4 (Dec. 1986): 285–311; and Linda Wilson Corman, “James Campbell and the Ontario Education Department, 1858–1884,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 14, 1 (1975): 17–52.
- 4 James Bain, Jr., “Public Libraries in Canada,” *Proceedings of the Canadian Institute* 1, no 4 & 5 (1898): 99.
- 5 “Library Scheme is Progressing,” *Toronto Mail and Empire*, 26 Jan. 1899, 6.
- 6 Bain, “President’s Address, November 18, 1900,” *Proceedings of the Canadian Institute*, 2, 2 (Jan. 1901): 100–01.
- 7 Bain, “Library Movement in Ontario,” *Library Journal* 26, 5 (May 1901): 269.
- 8 Archives of Ontario (AO), Travelling Libraries enquiry from Michigan State, RG 2-42-0-2286, MS 5635. See Joanne E. Passet, “Reaching the Rural Reader: Traveling Libraries in America, 1892–1920,” *Libraries & Culture* 26, 1 (Winter 1991): 100–118.
- 9 British Columbia [Legislative Library], *Rules and Regulations Governing Travelling Libraries* (Victoria: Richard Wolfenden, 1902).
- 10 “Travelling Libraries for Farmers,” *Farming* 16 (July 11, 1899): 864.
- 11 John Millar, *The School System of the State of New York (As Viewed by a Canadian)* (Toronto: Warwick & Rutter, 1898), 134–35.
- 12 “Report on Public Libraries Visited by Dr. S.P. May,” in *Report of the Minister of Education for 1901; Part II, Appendix M* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1902), 197.
- 13 AO, Bain to Harcourt, 24 April 1901, RG 2-29-4-2, MS 913.
- 14 Report of the Minister of Education, 1900, xix–xx.
- 15 John Millar, “Rural School Libraries,” in *Proceedings of the Forty-Third Annual Convention of the Ontario Educational Association* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1904), 330.
- 16 For Brown’s efforts see Lorne Bruce, *Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850–1930* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1994), 126–27. Shortly afterwards, Brown became Principal of the Canadian Correspondence College serving student and adult learners.
- 17 See Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1985); and Brian J. Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*:

- Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875–1915* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier, 1988). Dorothy A. Lander, “The Legacy of the Social Gospel in Adult Education,” *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 1, 1 (June 2004): 81-82 briefly discusses Fitzpatrick’s influence.
- 18 For two Victorian communities, Galt and Goderich, see Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University, 2000).
  - 19 However, Harvey J. Graff, *The Literacy Myth: Cultural Integration and Social Structure in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1991) shows this is a simplistic relationship for Ontario.
  - 20 John Millar, *Books: A Guide to Good Reading* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897), 11-12.
  - 21 Lawrence Burpee, “The Aberdeen Association,” in *Papers and Proceedings of the American Library Association Held at Macinac Island, Michigan* (Chicago: ALA, 1910), 680-83.
  - 22 Stewart Mein, “The Aberdeen Association: An Early Attempt to Provide Library Services to Settlers in Saskatchewan,” *Saskatchewan History* 38, 1 (1985): 18.
  - 23 “Summer Mining Schools,” in *Fourth Report of the Bureau of Mines, 1894*, 216-21; and in *Report of the Bureau of Mines, Volume VIII—Second Part, 1899*, 280-83.
  - 24 Alfred Fitzpatrick, *Library Extension in Ontario: Travelling Libraries and Reading Camps* (Nairn Centre, Ont.?: s.n., 1901), 1.
  - 25 Fitzpatrick, *Library Extension* (1901), 14; Sarah R. Wright, “Missions to Lumbermen,” *Methodist Magazine and Review* 60, 1 (July 1904): 34-39 discusses Sproule’s work. Craig S. Wilson, “‘Our Common Enemy’: Censorship Campaigns of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and the National Council of Women of Canada, 1890–1914,” *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 10, 2 (1998): 438-79 reviews efforts to censor and cleanse reading materials.
  - 26 AO, Fitzpatrick to S.P. May, 7 Aug. 1900, RG 2-42-0-2281, MS 5635.
  - 27 AO, Millar to Fitzpatrick, 17 Aug. 1900, RG 2-42-0-3654, MS 5648.
  - 28 Library and Archives Canada, *Travelling Libraries circular* dated 11 Sept. 1900, *Frontier College fonds*, MG 28 I 124, 107.
  - 29 For responses, see Fitzpatrick, *Library Extension* (1901), 19-24.
  - 30 AO, Resolution by North Bay Presbytery, Sept. 24, 1900, RG 2-42-0-3648, MS 5648.
  - 31 AO, Andrew Miscampbell to Richard Harcourt, 24 Sept. 1900, RG 2-42-0-3649, MS 5648.
  - 32 “Travelling Libraries for Lumber Camps,” *Canada Lumberman* 21, 11 (Nov. 1900): 9.
  - 33 Janet Friskney, “Towards a Canadian ‘Cultural Mecca’: The Methodist Book and Publishing House’s Pursuit of Book Publishing and Commitment to Canadian Writing 1829–1926,” (MA thesis, Trent University, 1994), 139.
  - 34 Gould to Fitzpatrick, 4 Feb. 1901, printed in *Library Extension* (1901), 37.
  - 35 *Library Extension* (1901), 33.
  - 36 *Library Extension* (1901), 4.
  - 37 *The Education of the Frontier Laborer* (Toronto?: s.n., 1905), 24.
  - 38 AO, Millar to Fitzpatrick, 13 Oct. 1900, RG 2-42-0-2281, MS 5635.
  - 39 Harcourt’s three letters printed in *Library Extension* (1901), 35-36.
  - 40 “Travelling Libraries,” *Globe*, 24 Jan. 1901, 8.
  - 41 AO, Harcourt to Dewey, 24 Jan. 1901, RG 2-29-4-3, MS 913.
  - 42 Letters printed in *Library Extension* (1901), 25-26.
  - 43 Proceedings reported in “The Ontario Library Association,” *Public Libraries* 6, 7 (July 1904): 347-52.
  - 44 For example, E.A. Hardy, “Canadian Reading Camp Movement,” *Papers and Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth General Meeting of the American Library Association Held at Niagara Falls, N.Y., June 22–26, 1903* (Boston: ALA, 1903), 223.

- 45 “Books in Lumber Camps,” *Globe*, 15 June 1901, 15.
- 46 Library Extension (1901), 5.
- 47 AO, Fitzpatrick to Harcourt, 5 Feb. 1901, RG 2-29-4-2, MS 913; and Memo for the Minister of Education, Grants re Reading Camps, RG 2-29-4-10, MS 913.
- 48 A. Fitzpatrick, “Life in the Lumbering and Mining Camps: A Plea for Reform,” *Canadian Magazine* 17, 1 (May 1901): 49-52.
- 49 P.H. Bryce to Fitzpatrick, 22 Feb. 1902, reprinted in *Library Extension in Ontario: Reading Camps and Club Houses* (Montreal?: John Dougall & Son?, 1902), 22-23.
- 50 His Toronto lecture, “Y.M.C.A. Notes,” *The Varsity* 21, 4 (5 Nov. 1901): 43; and his appeal at Brockville, “To Aid Work of Christian Endeavor,” *Globe*, 3 Oct. 1901, 9.
- 51 Library Extension (1902), 48.
- 52 See Yvan Lamonde, Patricia L. Fleming, Fiona A. Black, eds., *History of the Book in Canada: Volume II, 1840–1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005) for this period.
- 53 Recounted at length later by Fitzpatrick, “George Monro Grant: A Retrospective,” *Montreal Gazette*, 28 Oct. 1927, 12. Grant arranged free travel on the CPR.
- 54 “Free Reading Camps,” *Globe*, 26 Aug. 1901, 10.
- 55 “Books for Michipicoten,” *Globe*, 24 May 1901, 10.
- 56 AO, Harcourt to Briggs, 25 April 1901 and Tyrrell to Harcourt, 2 April 1901, RG 2-29-4-3, MS 913.
- 57 AO, Harcourt to Fitzpatrick, 2 July 1901, RG 2-29-4-3, MS 913.
- 58 AO, Fitzpatrick to Harcourt, 2 Sept. 1901, RG 2-29-4-4, MS 913. Harcourt noted the need for simple books: Harcourt to Fitzpatrick, 23 Oct. 1901, RG 2-29-4-4.
- 59 Report of Minister of Education, 1901, xviii.
- 60 Terry Wilde, “Education at Work, Literacy at the Resource Frontier: A Matter of Life and Death,” *Historical Studies in Education* 24, 1 (Spring 2012): 139-4 attributes these factors to the marginal success in satisfying vital life needs before WW I.
- 61 AO, F. Simms to the Department, 28 Sept. 1901, RG 2-29-4-4, MS 913.
- 62 A.J. McDonald to Fitzpatrick, 2 Feb. 1902, in *Library Extension* (1902), 35.
- 63 J. McLelland to Fitzpatrick, 20 Feb. 1902 and H. McDonald to Fitzpatrick, 20 Feb. 1902, in *Library Extension* (1902), 32.
- 64 AO, Harcourt to A.J. Young, 26 Sept. 1901, RG 2-29-4-4, MS 913.
- 65 AO, Harcourt to Bishop N.Z. Lorraine (Pembroke), 20 Nov. 1901, RG 2-29-4-5, MS 913.
- 66 AO, Fitzpatrick to Harcourt, 17 Oct. 1901, RG 2-29-4-4, MS 913.
- 67 “Rural School Reading,” *Globe*, 14 Dec. 1901, 7
- 68 Report of the Minister of Education, 1902, xxii.
- 69 AO, Thomas Gibson (Secretary of Parks) to John Millar, 25 Nov. 1902, RG 2-42-0-2233, MS 5634. Requests for cases are documented in AO, Travelling Libraries Applications and Correspondence 1901–1909, RG 2-85.
- 70 Speech of Hon. R. Harcourt at the Opening Meeting of the Ontario Teachers’ Association, Normal School Building, April 1st, 1902 (Toronto: s.n., 1902?), 10.
- 71 Library Extension (1902), 4.
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- 83 AO, Fitzpatrick to Harcourt, 18 April 1902, RG 2-29-4-7, MS 913.
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