

## ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH: DEFENDING FORT YORK IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The materials below are presented on behalf of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common to stimulate informed discussion at a time when the integrity of Fort York, a national historic site, is threatened yet again.

On five previous occasions in this century serious attempts have been made to diminish the fort. In 1903 the southeast bastion and east rampart were removed to make way for a pork-packing plant; in 1905-09 a streetcar line was proposed to be built through the centre of the site; in 1958 the Gardiner Expressway was projected to cut across a corner; in 1958-59 moving the entire fort nearer the lakeshore was widely advocated; and in the 1970s an extension to Front Street cutting across the Common just west of the fort was almost approved. In the selected readings that follow, which are taken mostly from newspapers, these assaults are reported against a background of neglect and shortsightedness.

Since 1903 the City of Toronto has had effective ownership and control over Fort York, although the formalities to transfer the property along with 142 acres of the present CNE Grounds were not completed until 1909. The Government of Canada granted the lands on condition that the site of the Fort would be restored as far as possible to its original condition as shown on a plan of 1816 and maintained that way forever, failing which the grant would become null and void, allowing the Government of Canada to re-enter upon all or any of the lands. It was clearly understood at both levels of government that the lands were being acquired for park purposes (The Globe, Oct. 23 and 26, 1903).

Yet within two weeks of taking control City Council consented to the removal of the fort's southeast bastion and eastern rampart at Bathurst Street to facilitate expansion by a neighbouring abattoir (The Globe, Oct. 4, 1905). Within two years Council had put its entire support behind a scheme to run a streetcar line through the centre of the fort from Bathurst to the CNE Grounds (1907-08 readings passim). The latter project was abandoned only after the city's voters turned it down by a wide margin in a referendum and the Dominion Government made it clear that building a tram line was contrary to the agreement. Credit for defending Fort York during this period belongs to the Ontario Historical Society and to an ad hoc group called the Old Fort Protective Association.

While the 1909 grant required the municipality to restore the fort it set no deadline. Hence, the City took its time--nearly twenty-five years--before making a start on renovations in 1932 in anticipation of Toronto's centenary celebrations two years later. Meanwhile, some people even forgot that the fort was municipally-owned. On Jan. 20, 1926 The Star asserted, "The Old Fort at Toronto is the property of the dominion government." The Globe (Apr. 17, 1930) treated the ownership as news: "Proceedings in the House of Commons . . . have revealed the little-known fact that Toronto's Old Fort is in the City's keeping." This and most other reports of the time mentioned the neglect and decay that were evident on the site.

In these circumstances it is no wonder the Bathurst Street bridge, which was rebuilt and realigned in 1930, was allowed to shut off vehicular access to and from the fort at the east end. While the mistake was recognized immediately (The Star, Oct. 18, 1930) and the difficulty of entering the site has been deplored ever since, no attempts to reverse the error or to substantially improve access to the fort from the east have been made in the intervening sixty-four years.

In 1948, when Fort Henry was attracting about 100,000 visitors a year and Fort York only about 4000 persons, poor access certainly was partly to blame (The Telegram, Oct. 16, 1948). But another problem was that Fort York was becoming ruinous once more (The Telegram, Jun. 12,

1951). Repairs were made starting in 1952 under the supervision of the newly-formed Civic Historical Committee and visitation had climbed to 20,000 visitors a year by 1958 when the fort faced yet another threat.

That year the designers of Metro's Frederick G. Gardiner Expressway proposed to have the road cross a corner of the fort, and to place one of the supporting piers within its ramparts. The Globe & Mail was loud in objecting (Feb. 25, 1958; Mar. 10, 1958) but the most valuable champion turned out to be the Legislature's standing committee on Municipal Law. After hearing from various individuals and historical societies it quashed a bill that would have permitted the City to transfer the necessary land to Metro. The engineers were expected to find an acceptable way to 'bend' the road at some increase in the project cost. "The MPPs have shown wisdom where the City and Metro failed," declared The Telegram on May 25, 1958.

What happened next probably surprised most observers. In June a suggestion was floated that Fort York be moved away from the railways, brewery and cement works surrounding it to a site in Coronation Park nearer the lakeshore (The Globe & Mail, Jun. 3, 1958). Metro chairman Gardiner took up the idea with enthusiasm and urged it on the Committee of Associated Historical Societies that had been formed during the expressway controversy (The Toronto Daily Star, Jun. 19, 1958). Bending the road was said to cost \$2 million; moving the fort just \$1 million. But if the Committee was not persuaded by the chairman's honeyed words, Toronto's newspapers were. All three came out in strong support of the proposal (e.g. The Telegram, Jul. 4, 1958; The Globe & Mail, Sept. 22, 1958).

Then in November Gardiner announced, uncharacteristically, that he was giving up the idea of shifting the fort in the face of strong objections from the historical societies, especially the Toronto Historical Board, and their threats to take the fight to the federal government (The Toronto Daily Star, Nov. 22, 1958). Gardiner's retreat may have been just a tactical one, however, to allow Mayor Nathan Phillips and Premier Leslie Frost to occupy the field, which they did shortly after Christmas when Frost announced the Province would share half the cost of moving the fort (The Toronto Daily Star, Jan. 9, 1959). Premier Frost, much respected for his well-known interest in history, put forward a curious rationale for resiting the fort: ". . . moving Fort York would not be an act of desecration but the reverse, since it has already been desecrated by faulty planning which permitted it to become all but lost from public view." (The Globe & Mail, Jan. 10, 1959). Could two wrongs really make a right?

Meanwhile, the case for not moving the fort had been put with great skill by Prof. J.M.S. Careless (The Globe & Mail, Dec. 10, 1958) and Pierre Berton (The Toronto Daily Star, Jan. 6, 1959). It was not their arguments, however, that brought about a remarkable reversal in the Star's editorial position that was announced on Jan. 17, 1959. As the campaign to move the fort for reasons of cost and safety collapsed, The Star suspected the underlying motivation for moving was to open up the site for private development. "We do not know whether this speculation is true," it cautioned, "But we are quite sure that the public would not sanction the invasion of our most important historic site, the cradle of Toronto, for the purpose of private gain." Prophetic words. Two weeks later the whole issue was at an end, and Metro's expressway was destined to curve in slight deference to Toronto's history (The Toronto Daily Star, Jan. 31, 1959).

Again in 1972, history seemed to be repeating itself when City Council accepted in principle an extension to Front Street that cut through the Garrison Common, separating Fort York from the military cemetery (The Globe & Mail, Mar. 7, 1972). Only in the last decade has this idea in some form or other been abandoned.

In 1994 the issue may not be one of trespass upon the fort or the lands transferred to the City in the 1909 (although this deserves to be investigated), but the spirit of the agreement. Also, it must be asked: does it make sense for the City, which spends approximately \$2 million annually to run Fort

York, to handicap itself in discharging this perpetual trust? Today Fort York attracts only about 40,000 visitors a year. In effect, each visit is subsidized to the extent of almost fifty dollars. Clearly, the public interest is better served if more people visit, which they will do if Fort York is made more accessible and its context is improved rather than diminished by adjacent development.

Stephen A. Otto  
17 June 1994



## Minutes of Toronto City Council, 1902, Appendix A, pp. 139-140

## DUMPING GROUNDS.

Your Committee beg to recommend the adoption of the following report of its Sub-Committee re the above :

*Sub-Committee Report re Dumping Grounds.*

Since the completion of the filling in of Block D, west of Bay Street on the Bay Front, the cost of hauling ashes, etc., from the central and south-western sections of the City has been considerably increased through the lack of suitable dumping grounds. The eastern, northern and north-western sections of the City are amply provided for, for some years to come, but the section of the City bounded by College Street on the north, Yonge or Jarvis Street on the east and Dufferin Street on the west, has no convenient dumping grounds, thus necessitating a long and expensive haul. In dealing with this question your Sub-Committee have had in view, first, the reduction of the cost of hauling and, secondly, making the best use of the material.

With this end in view, your Committee considered the advisability of constructing a roadway or boulevard along the Lake front, from Bathurst Street to High Park, and instructed the City Surveyor to prepare a plan showing such a driveway. The City Surveyor has prepared a plan starting from the corner of Bathurst and Front Streets, thence crossing the railway tracks by the present overhead bridge, thence through the old fort, thence following the present road leading to Stanley Barracks, the tracks of the C. P. Ry. being crossed by the present overhead bridge. From this point westerly the Boulevard would be reached by a gentle ramp to the level of a new road, which will wind along the shore, passing Stanley Barracks, Exhibition Grounds and on past old Parkdale until the Lake Shore is reached at a point west of the level crossing at Sunnyside, thus establishing a continuous driveway from the heart of the City to the mouth of the Humber, without crossing any railway tracks on the level. From Bathurst Street to the foot of Dufferin Street the lands are owned by the Dominion Government, and as a general roadway is now established through the old fort and on to Stanley Barracks, the City Surveyor thinks there should be no difficulty in the City getting permission to widen and improve it and possibly the City may also be able to acquire the old fort grounds for park purposes, which at a very small expense could be beautified and maintained by the City, being a place of much historic interest. From the foot of Dufferin Street to Sunnyside the foreshore is owned by private persons and the City, but with the great advantage of having a highway constructed as proposed along the whole front, most of which is now inaccessible, and with all street connections therewith, the granting of a free right of way of the width of 150 feet he considers should be easily arranged.

The construction of such a driveway would provide a dump for ashes, etc., from the south-west part of the City, for many years to come. The work can be carried on in sections as required, and as the bed of the shore is hard and rocky and the water is shallow, the cost of a stone protection would not be very great.

After mature consideration your Committee strongly endorse the plan of the City Surveyor and recommend that application be made to the Dominion Government: first, to dedicate or lease to the City at a nominal rental, the old fort property for park purposes: second, the right to widen and improve the present roadway to the bridge crossing C. P. R.: third, a right of way for said driveway, from the bridge crossing the C. P. R., southerly and westerly to and along the Lake front to the foot of Dufferin Street.

Your Sub-Committee further recommend that the Assessment Commissioner be instructed to enter into negotiations with the owners of the water lots between Dufferin Street and the Lake Shore for the purpose of obtaining an easement without cost to the City, for said driveway on that section of the Lake front.

*(The Board of Control recommend that the negotiations above referred to be carried on by the Assessment Commissioner under the direction of the City Law Department.)*

# CITY ACQUIRES GARRISON COMMON.

Excellent Deal Made With Militia Department.

FOR PARK PURPOSES.

Stanley Barracks to Go Near Lambton.

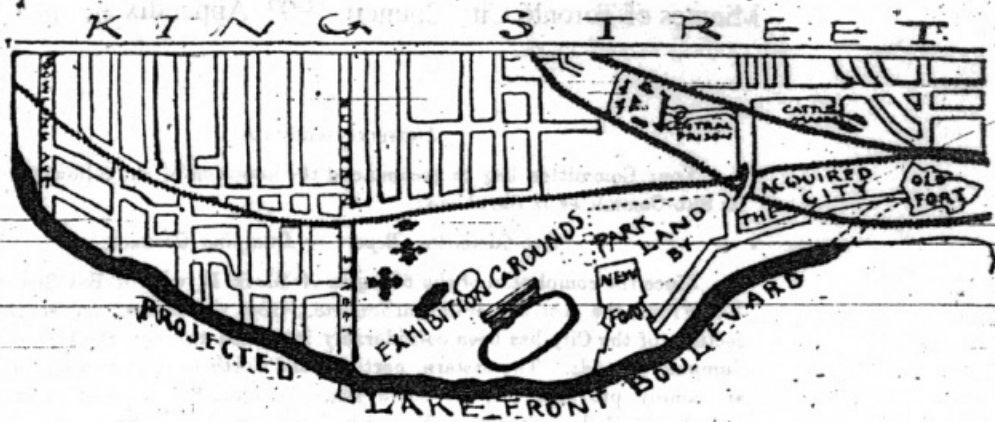
A Farm on the Humber Already Secured—Plans For Improvement of the Waterfront.

Garrison Commons and Exhibition Park, in all 200 acres, on the lake shore south of the Grand Trunk tracks, between Bathurst street and Dufferin street, have been sold to the city by the Dominion Government for \$200,000 on condition that the land be used only for park purposes, that the Old Fort, which is included, be preserved as an historical landmark, and that the military burying ground on Strachan avenue be maintained. Stanley Barracks are to be removed to a site recently acquired by the Militia Department west of Toronto Junction. The property is known as the Baby farm, and comprises, with some additional land between Q and Dundas street to the north secured, to give access to the C. P. R. tracks, 200 acres. A small triangular piece of land between Dundas street and the C. P. R. tracks has been secured, and there the stores department will be located. At the Baby farm the banks of the Humber are very high, and a splendid view of Lake Ontario may be had from there. The location was selected by Lieut. Col. Bigger, and Col. Huchan and Col. Lessard have expressed themselves greatly pleased with it. The erection of the new barracks will require perhaps a couple of years, and in the meantime the permanent force will continue to occupy the new fort, but the city will not be hindered in undertaking the improvement of the park.

### How It Was Secured.

At the last session of the Legislature an act was passed empowering the city to purchase the Garrison Commons and issue debentures for the cost. Not in a quarter of a century, perhaps never, has any one thing been accomplished by the municipality that in result will compare with the acquirement of this great park. Its lake front is a mile and a quarter long and lies now almost in the heart of the city. It will stand forever a monument of increasing beauty to the wise administration of Mayor Urquhart. Commissioner R. J. Fleming urged the acquisition of it upon Mayor Shaw, then upon his successor Mayor Macdonald, then upon Mayor Howland, and it was one of the first proposals he made to Mayor Urquhart this year. Mayor Urquhart at once appreciated the incalculable value of the great property to the city for park purposes and authorized the Commissioner to immediately open negotiations with the Dominion Government with a view to its purchase. Mayor Urquhart joined earnestly in the work. They received very material assistance from Hon. J. M. Gibson. Sir Wm. Mullock, too, took a keen interest in the matter, and the Minister of Militia and the Government as a whole took a broad-minded and liberal view of the question.

# A GREAT WATER FRONT PARK.



The purchase by the city of the Garrison Commons for \$200,000 and the removal of Stanley Barracks to a commanding site on the east bank of the Humber north of Bloor street give the people control of one of the finest waterfront park stretches on the great lakes and make possible the development of a park fashioned after Lincoln Park, Chicago, with a lake front boulevard, extending for several miles along the southern boundary. The intention is to use street refuse and excavation material in the construction of this boulevard, and, as there is a fine rock bottom suitable for the foundation of a concrete sea wall, the work should be comparatively inexpensive. The map shows the lands to be added to Exhibition Park, which will then have over 200 acres of land and some 80 acres of

loreshore suitable for filling. The Old Fort is, of course, included in the transfer and will be restored and maintained as one of the historic spots of Upper Canada. The land has been acquired at something like \$1,500 per acre, exclusive of the water lots, which are "thrown in." Real estate men will understand how remarkably low the price accepted by the Dominion authorities is.

loreshore suitable for filling. The Old Fort is, of course, included in the transfer and will be restored and maintained as one of the historic spots of Upper Canada. The land has been acquired at something like \$1,500 per acre, exclusive of the water lots, which are "thrown in." Real estate men will understand how remarkably low the price accepted by the Dominion authorities is.

One of the big railway companies was after the property, and had it gone to them, besides being lost to the city for park purposes, in all probability the Exhibition would have had to be moved, since Exhibition Park is part of the property and has been merely leased by the Government to the city. From a private corporation the Government could doubtless have exacted a much larger price, but they decided to let the city have it for three reasons—the welfare of the citizens by the preservation of the property for park purposes; second, the welfare of the Exhibition, and, third, the preservation of the Old Fort as an historic landmark and of the military burying ground.

### Improvements Contemplated.

This property must be the basis of any great park improvement scheme for the city, such as has been talked about for years. Ald. Curry has now on the order paper of Council a motion for the employment of a competent expert to prepare a plan of such a park scheme, a plan that could be worked to for years, and, when finally completed, make Toronto one of the beautiful cities of the world.

It is proposed that a line of street railway shall be laid along the northern boundary of the park to the Exhibition grounds, thus affording not only access to the park without defacing it, but also another means of reaching and leaving the Exhibition grounds. This will greatly relieve the nightly street car crush during the weeks of the Exhibition. A wide avenue through the park shaded by double lines of fine trees is also contemplated.

The Old Fort was established by Gov. Simcoe in 1796. It was captured by the Americans April 27, 1813, and evacuated four days later. Stanley Barracks was originally built to house militia troops. It was constructed by Col. Oldfield, O. D. C., and Lieut. Col. Ward of the Royal Engineers. The estimated cost was £22,258 and the actual cost £20,904.

# SITE OF THE NEW BARRACKS.



The Baby farm overlooking Humber River chosen for the new fort and barracks is an extensive tract, and offers an unusual facility for the purpose required. There is a stone quarry at the head of the park which will yield material to erect the barracks. Col. Otter favored locating the barracks on the east end, where two hundred acres were available on the lake shore. The Minister of Militia, however, deemed the Baby farm, which was recommended by Col. Bigger to be the more preferable.

## The Globe, Oct. 26, 1903

### TORONTO'S NEW PARK.

Not in a long time has anything been done here municipally for which Toronto has had so much reason to rejoice as the acquisition of Garrison Common for park purposes. Though the announcement of the purchase has been received with general satisfaction, the citizens have not begun and will not for a long time begin to realize the enormous value of this lakeside park, with its mile and a quarter of shoreline and two hundred acres of land almost in the centre of the city.

Municipal improvement in America during recent years has been largely along the lines of developing parks and playgrounds, not on the isolated method of a park here and a square there, but the development of a system of parks and playgrounds often on a very large scale. That has been the field of advanced municipal effort, and within the last decade some American cities have spent many millions in acquiring and developing a park system, both within and without their own boundaries. The planning of such systems has become an art.

Before long Toronto will employ an artist of eminence to prepare the plan of a park system, the basis and beginning of which will undoubtedly be the Garrison Common. Years hence, when such a plan has been brought in part to maturity, the citizens will begin to appreciate the importance of the acquisition of the property and will acknowledge it the greatest of Mayor Urquhart's long list of achievements during his first year of administration.

The proposal to acquire the common for park purposes originated with Commissioner Fleming years ago, and he urged it upon Mayor after Mayor, but it remained unaccomplished. When Mayor Urquhart took office it was one of the first proposals the Commissioner made to him, and the Mayor, with the far-sightedness and single-mindedness characteristic of him, authorized the Commissioner to proceed with the negotiations. In these the Mayor took an active part, and efficient aid was given by Hon. J. M. Gibson, and Sir William Mulock took a keen and active interest in the city's welfare in the matter. The city is indebted also to the Dominion Government for taking a large and liberal view of the question, especially when it is remembered that a large railway corporation was anxious to acquire the property and was prepared, if not to outbid, at least to bid against the city. It is not too much to say that the citizens of Toronto have reason to be proud of the city's present position municipally.

### SAVE THE OLD FORT.

~~Miss Gerson has rendered the people of Toronto~~  
 a valuable service by calling attention, as she does in a letter that appears in another column, to the proposed destruction of part of the "Old Fort." It is right enough to run a street railway line from the foot of Bathurst street to the eastern entrance of the Exhibition ground, but some route must be found which will render unnecessary the desecration of our most historic spot and the destruction of its most interesting relics.

Brief as Miss Gerson's statement of the matter is, she has said enough to make out a case that will appeal to the public not merely of Toronto but of the whole Province. The story of the Old Fort is not accurately known in its entirety by anybody, for, prompted by true antiquarian enthusiasm, she has discovered some things not heretofore published, and others may be expected to come to light as public interest in the spot is aroused and developed. It is no ordinary burial ground; the dead defenders of the city fell in the war of 1812-15, and their remains lie interred where they fell. The buildings are no ordinary structures, but are typical specimens of the primitive military architecture of nearly a century ago. The obstructing fence of cedar posts has largely disappeared, but it should be replaced. Every part of the fort should be restored with all the antiquarian skill and sympathetic care that can be brought to bear on the work. Already one bastion has been removed to make room for a manufacturing establishment, and the restoration plan should contemplate the feasibility of its renewal.

The authorities of this city have been so careful in preserving parks from street railway desecration that they have steadily resisted the introduction of the cars into the Queen's Park, where they would be a great convenience. For this the people are not finding fault, though they might do so with some reason, if their own comfort in travelling were the only thing to be considered. A City Council that "strains at the gnat" of a Queen's Park car route and "swallows the camel" of the removal of priceless and unreplaceable historic souvenirs of an heroic struggle will go down to history as a fit subject for endless patriotic execration. When these disappear, there will be lost forever the finest chance the children of Toronto schools have of profiting by the visual teaching of local history.

The people of Canada have begun to display a widespread and laudable determination to mark historic spots and keep them free as public resorts. Along the Niagara, Detroit, and St. Lawrence Rivers many such localities have been identified and monumented. Our civic authorities, contrary to the growing spirit of the time, threaten to destroy the characteristic features of a spot second to no other in Canada in patriotic and tragic interest. Not Fort Erie, or the Prescott Windmill, or Fort George, or Queenston Heights, or even Lundy's Lane, can surpass it in all that give such places a claim to preservation and veneration.



# NOTHING SACRED TO-DAY

## TORONTO PROPOSES TO DESTROY HER OLDEST BUILDINGS.

Miss Jean Gosson, the Most Careful Investigator of the Old Fort's History, Makes a Protest Against Location of Car Tracks in Fort Grounds.

(To the Editor of The Globe.)

Just two years ago this month the citizens of Toronto were called upon to rejoice in the fact that Garrison Common and the Old Fort had been purchased by the city from the Government, by which transaction were added 290 acres to our park system. It was stated that the Government parted with this valuable and historic property on one condition—that the Old Fort and military burying ground were to be maintained as historic landmarks.

The columns of our daily papers were conspicuously decorated by glowing headlines, from which the following are clipped:—"Historic Glories of Toronto's New Park." "Great Boom to Toronto. A Boom for All Time." In an editorial the citizens were told the following:—"The rescue of Garrison Common from the despoiling tread of commerce and industry, the preservation of the priceless landmarks of local history, the dedication of such an area to the health and pleasure of the people, are great deeds that must bring great honor to the names of those who voted yea to the question."

Within two weeks' time of this demonstration the City Council granted a permit to the Park, Blackwell Co., pork-packers, to remove the whole of the southeast bastion, also to cut away half of the eastern rampart, during which process soldiers' bodies were unearthed and their remains carted away with the debris. I was present and rescued some of the bones.

### Oldest Buildings in Toronto.

The Street Railway Company are desirous to commence operations at once to run the new Exhibition line over the railway at the foot of Bathurst street into the northeastern extremity of the fort and out on to Garrison Common, and thence to the Exhibition grounds. This work will necessitate the removal of the old guard house, fire hall and sergeants' quarters. These buildings run along the northern side of the enclosure, and are the oldest buildings, not only in the fort, but in Toronto.

By order of Governor Simcoe in 1793 these log huts, as they were then called, were erected by his Queen's Rangers as their barrack rooms, and are made of logs probably hewn down to make room for their erection. With what interest should Torontonians view these primitive dwellings, for they are the beginning from which has sprung out great and glorious city!

### The Married Men's Quarters.

The next buildings allotted to fall before the destroyer are what are known as the married men's quarters. These are to the north side of the western entrance. They are made of brick, which places their date after the American invasion of 1813, yet of great historic value.

The old Fort Rouille guns are also marked for sacrifice. They were originally French guns, used in the trading post before the conquest of 1759, and were placed in their present position prior to 1820.

### Principal Part of Toronto's Battlefield.

This battlefield does not belong to Toronto alone, but to the whole of our fair Dominion, for the sacred enclosure—all ground is sacred where lie the honored

dead—is one vast sepulchre of unnamed and unhonored heroes—unhonored by any outward sign—who fought not alone for Toronto, but for the keeping of our own beloved land. The value of this old historic landmark is perhaps best expressed by the following extract, published at the time of its purchase two years ago:—"As one surveyed the old buildings, which stood there in those troublous times of 1812, he could not but feel thankful that their preservation was insured to future generations.

There is something in those old piles of wood which makes the heart go a little faster, and causes the chords of emotion to vibrate in the breast. There have been unearthed the bones of men who fought to preserve this heritage for their children and children's children. The names of many have been forgotten. They sleep in unknown graves, while the waves as they lap upon the beach seem to sing their solemn dirges, but their heroic deeds will live and be told in song and story to the last moment of recorded time."

And so could be quoted column upon column. Can it be that—in two short years public sentiment has changed? Has it been forgotten that this Old Fort is the cradle from which has sprung our magnificent and life-throbbing city, the Queen of the West, and the centre from which armies have gone forth to fight, not only for this Dominion, but for the mother land?

The writer has many heretofore unpublished facts concerning the Old Fort, which she has not time now to lay before your readers, but which if known would immensely increase the public interest in this the chief landmark of Toronto's history. If she is not mistaken in the sentiment of her fellow-countrymen, the recital of these facts will also increase the indignation with which this attempt at desecration will be received.

Jean Marie Gosson,  
62 Wilson Avenue, Parkdale.

# Save the Old Fort

*Toronto World* - 7 Dec 07

## Joint Meeting of Patriotic, Historical and Military Societies Pass Resolution on Subject.

On Wednesday last, Nov. 27, a joint meeting of those interested in the preservation of the old fort at Toronto was held in the rooms of the Daughters of the Empire, St. James' Chambers. Mrs. Nordheimer, president of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, was in the chair. Those present were: Lady Edgar, W.C.H.S.; Miss Vandermissen; Mrs. Nordheimer, I.O.D. of E.; Mrs. J. S. Wallison, I.O.D. of E.; Mrs. J. I. Davidson, I.O.D. of E.; Mrs. Bruce, I.O.D. of E.; Mrs. Albert G. Gooderham, I.O.D. of E.; Miss Collett, I.O.D. of E.; Mrs. Arthur VanKoughnet, I.O.D. of E.; Lieut.-Col. Greville Harston, Batoche Col., 1886 Association; Capt. J. Q. Thorn, Battleford Col., 1886 Association; E. Cairne, N.W. Field Force; J. Pearson, 1886 Association; Lieut.-Col. Delamere, N.W. Field Force; Lieut.-Col. Clarence Denison, N.W. Field Force; Lieut.-Col. Grassett, N.W. Field Force; Dr. G. Sterling Ryerson, S.A. Association; Major W. A. Collins, Army and Navy Veterans; Mrs. E. A. MacLaurin, U.E.L. Association; Mrs. J. S. Carstairs, U.E.L. Association; Barlow Cumberland, Ontario Historical Society; Mrs. E. J. Thompson, Ontario Historical Society; E. B. Biggar, Ontario Historical Society.

Mr. Cumberland explained, with the aid of maps, what had been done since the special meeting held by the Ontario Historical Society in October, 1905, at the old fort. A discussion followed, in which Mrs. Nordheimer, Col. G. Sterling Ryerson, Major W. A. Collins, Capt. Thorn, Mrs. E. A. MacLaurin, Col. Greville Harston, Lieut.-Col. Delamere, Mr. E. B. Biggar and Mr. J. Pearson took part. Surprise was expressed at the statement of Dr. Orr, that the historical societies had consented to the construction of a car line thru the old fort, as nearly every historical society in the Dominion had sent resolutions to the City of Toronto protesting against the desecration of the old fort. Among them were: The New Brunswick Historical Society, Quebec Literary and Historical Society; Niagara Historical Society, Wentworth Historical Society; Hamilton: Elgin Historical and Scientific Society; Huron Institute, Colingwood; Woman's Canadian Historical Societies of Ottawa, Toronto and Bowmanville; Nova Scotia Historical Society, Halifax; Lundy's Lane Historical Society, Niagara Falls. The meeting was unanimous in protesting against further destruction of the old fort. It was moved by Col. G. S. Ryerson, and seconded by Lady Edgar:

Joint meeting of the Patriotic, Historical and Military Societies, held in the rooms of the Daughters of the Empire, on Nov. 27, 1907.

Moved by Lieut.-Colonel G. Sterling Ryerson;

Seconded by Lady Edgar:

Whereas, under the terms under which the city was to come into possession of the Garrison Common, the most splendid lakeside park on the continent, the conditions were that the property should be used only for park and exhibition purposes, and that the city should be bound to preserve for all time the Old Fort and its build-

ings, and was required to spend immediately a sufficient money to put them into first-class condition;

And whereas, in November, 1903, the council of the city undertook to make an expenditure sufficient for such repairs "immediately";

And whereas, in October, 1905, it was unanimously resolved at a meeting of the citizens held in the Old Fort that the preservation of the Old Fort and its grounds should be considered a sacred trust and not merely for the citizens of Toronto, but for the people of the Province and the Dominion at large;

And whereas, in May, 1906, at the time when it was proposed that the land in which the north bastions stand should be transferred to the Grand Trunk Railway, to be added to its shunting yard, the council withdrew from that proposition and the mayor advised that the ramparts should be restored, the buildings be repaired and the cannons replaced;

And whereas, in January, 1907, a by-law to construct a street railway thru the Old Fort was voted down by the citizens;

And whereas, nothing in the way of repair has at any time been done, but the Fort allowed to remain in its disgraceful and ruinous condition, without care or protection;

Be it resolved that the Patriotic, Historical and Military Societies of Toronto hereby enter their protest against the continuation of the neglect of this sacred memorial of the earliest days of our country, and submit that in fulfillment of our duty to the Province and Dominion, who have confided it to our care, and in good faith to our undertakings, the city at once arrange for the restoration and repair of the Old Fort, and its buildings, as an "historical memorial" as it has agreed with the public should be done.

That a comprehensive plan for dealing with the park property as a whole, its water front, reservations, parkways and access to the park and exhibition grounds should at once be prepared and agreed upon.

And that the Dominion government be memorialized that no transfer of the land shall be made to the city until such time as the city shall have specifically arranged to fulfil its agreement to restore the ramparts and buildings of the Old Fort and for its proper maintenance, and to agree that a street car line shall not be put thru the Fort.

That the societies will use their best endeavors to promote the preservation and repair of the Old Fort by every means in their power, and protest against any street railway being put thru the Fort.

Carried and referred to committee.

# Memorial

To His Worship the Mayor and the Members of the City Council, Toronto.

The Old Fort Protective Association, affiliated with the various historical and patriotic societies, regret to learn that a fresh attempt is being made to influence the City Council to consent to the running of a double track street railway through the Old Fort.

This Association represents over thirty societies and associations of this city and various other parts of Canada, who, during the past three years, have appealed for the preservation of these historic grounds and the restoration of the Fort to its original condition.

In the name of the societies this Association would respectfully put before this Council some of the reasons why the building of a street railway through these grounds should be rejected once for all as a proposal dishonoring the good name of the city.

When the city first applied for the transfer of the Garrison Commons, in 1899, the sole plea for its possession was that the city desired to "preserve the Fort, and to maintain it in its present condition on account of its association with the early military history of this city." This plea was the only one put forward in the later stages of the negotiations, and the city accepted without qualification the conditions laid down by the Government as appears from the report forwarded by the Assessment Commissioner to the Mayor and Board of Control, dated October 30th, 1903, from which the following paragraph is quoted:—

"You will observe that the Government stipulate that the property shall hereafter be used only for park and exhibition purposes: and further, that the city will be bound to preserve for all time the Old Fort and such of the old buildings upon the premises as the Government may designate. In addition to this, the city will be required to spend upon the buildings immediately sufficient money to put them in a first-class state of preservation."

This condition was further made clear in the preamble of the Order-in-Council passed at Ottawa, consenting to the transfer. When for the third or fourth time an attempt was made in the City Council to violate this agreement, the Hon. J. P. Whitney, Prime Minister of Ontario, called the attention of the Government at Ottawa to the threatened desecration of the Fort, and the Minister of Militia thereupon reminded the City Council in a letter, dated November 27th, 1906, that such a street car line would be a violation of the conditions of the transfer, and expressed the hope that the city would give its assurance "that the spirit as well as the letter of the understanding would be carefully observed."

Again in January of the present year, upon a further attempt being made to revive this project, the Hon. Minister

of Militia felt called upon to remind your Council of the covenant made when seeking possession of Garrison Commons. The Minister, in quoting from the correspondence to show how clearly the city pledged itself to restore and maintain the Fort, said: "These enclosures are being forwarded to you with a view of acquainting you with the position of this Department as regards the preservation of the Old Fort property, a position from which the Minister has no intention of receding."

It will thus be seen that the city sought possession of this property for the sole purpose of restoring the Fort. The first question is: Will this Council maintain the city's credit for business honor if it violates a covenant so deliberately made? Especially will this question be raised when the subject of the covenant is not only a shrine of history, but a mausoleum of the heroes of Canada's first war of self-defence.

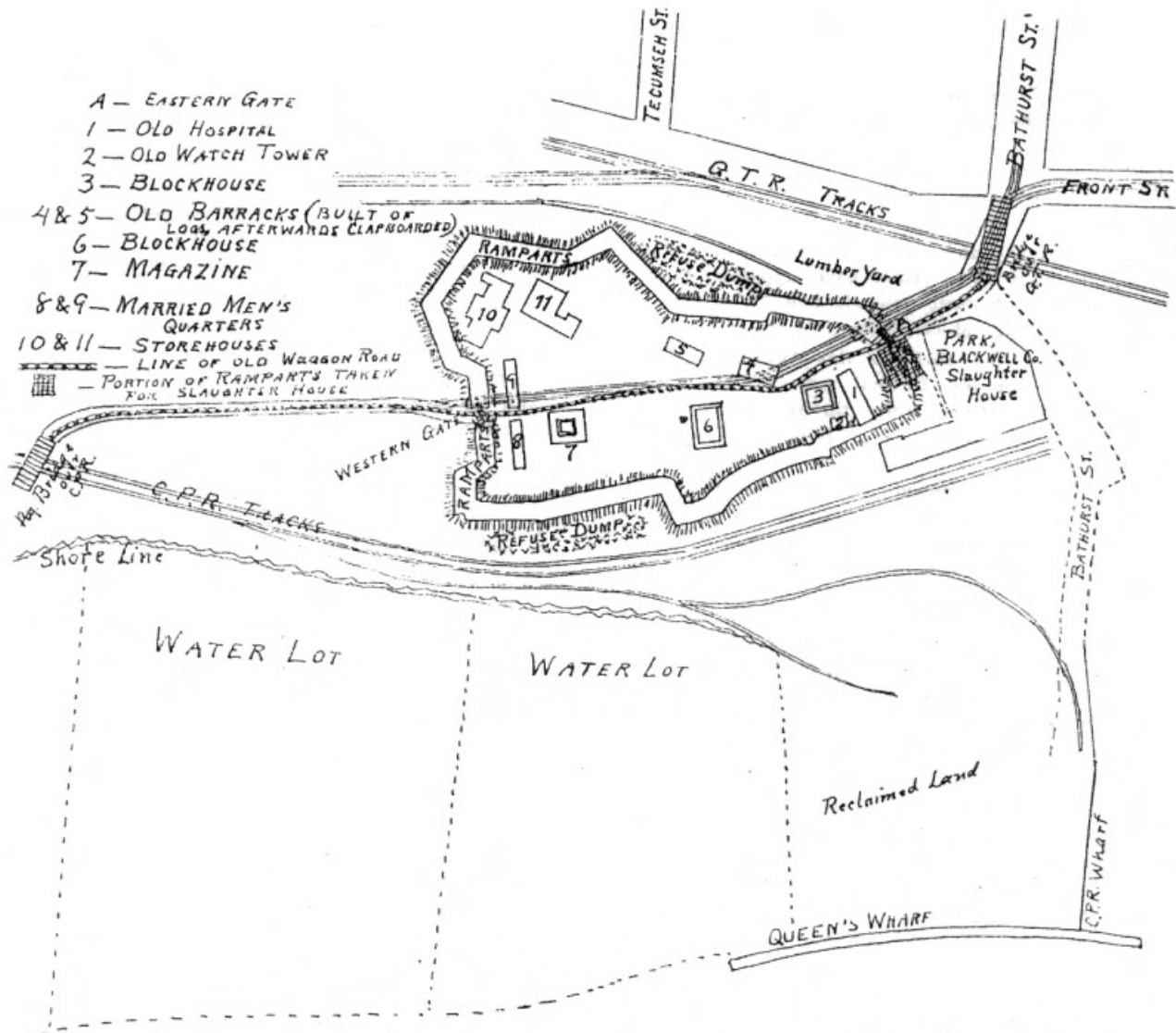
The societies wish it distinctly understood that they are not in any way opposed to an eastern entrance to the Toronto Exhibition, but they are opposed to any interference with the Old Fort except for the purpose of restoring it to its condition in the War of 1812; and, while other routes can be taken around the Fort, or through other portions of the two hundred acres comprising Garrison Commons, there appears to the societies no excuse for this desecration.

This Fort is unique in Canada—perhaps on the whole continent—as a well-preserved type of fortification designed against attacks by Indians as well as white foes. For this reason alone its educational value to future generations cannot be overrated. It is, moreover, of great historic interest as being a monument of the work of Ontario's first Governor, Simcoe, and as marking the very beginnings of Toronto's history. It is, in fact, the only relic left that carries us back to the eighteenth century. But, apart from this, the Fort contains the graves of several hundreds of British, Canadian, and American soldiers, who were killed in the attack on York in the year 1813, and no street railway could be laid down here without passing over the graves of these men, who died to save Canada to the Empire in the first great crisis of our history. Such a profanation of these graves would bring lasting dishonor upon the citizens of a city whose reputation for loyalty stands as high as that of Toronto.

That these are the sentiments of the great majority of the citizens is proved by the fact that when four by-laws came before the people in January, 1907, the Bathurst Street Bridge by-law (which involved a railway through the Fort) was voted down by the heaviest majority of all.

Moreover, these grounds cannot be regarded as the sole possession of Toronto, but are the rightful inheritance of every Canadian who venerates the memory of those who sacrificed their lives to make us a nation; and this view of its national character was taken at the representative public meeting held at the Old Fort in October, 1905, when, in protesting against this same proposal, a resolution was unanimously passed declaring that the Old Fort "Should be considered a sacred trust, not merely for the citizens of Toronto, but for the people of Ontario and the Dominion at large."

The statement has been made that a double track railway through the Old Fort will not injure it, but will bring people to see it who would not otherwise come. Your memorialists beg to observe that street cars already come to the foot of Bathurst Street, nearly opposite the eastern gate of the Fort, and a car line around outside the Fort would afford easier access without damaging the ancient works. If this Fort is to be preserved for its antiquity, then undoubtedly the Gates and the Ramparts are its most essential features. No one who has read history needs to be told that in former times the gates of a fortress were



The shaded figure at foot of Bathurst Street represents the present bridge, and the position of proposed bridge is marked by heavy lines outside. The bridge as proposed would connect with a viaduct carrying the double-track railway, where it would cut through the ramparts or gates, or both, at the eastern entrance; then cause the removal of one of the oldest structures in the fort, and finally cut through the western gates and ramparts.

The Garrison Commons was acquired for park purposes as well as for the preservation of the Old Fort itself, and it has been a well-recognized principle of our civic policy that no street car line shall run through a park. Scarcely any city in the world permits street cars through its parks and gardens.

the key of the position, and, since the western gate of this fort is only eighteen feet wide—even measured from wall to wall of the two interesting buildings inside the gate—it follows that it would be impossible to lay a double track railway without cutting away both buildings and ramparts, and, of course, blocking up the gates, both east and west.

This will be made clear by the plan attached. Not only would the route of such a railway involve the removal of some of the oldest structures in the Fort (referred to as "old sheds" by those instigating this depredation), but the roadbed would undoubtedly have to be laid over the bodies of the soldiers within the grounds—a sacrilege which would forever disgrace the Council which authorized it.

In a moment of thoughtlessness the City Council of Winnipeg permitted the gates of Old Fort Garry to be pulled down, and, while that site was unhallowed by the graves of its defenders, and its history has not the national significance of the Fort at Toronto, yet there are citizens of Winnipeg who would to-day give a thousand dollars out of their own pockets if Fort Garry could be restored. When visitors from various parts of the world come to Winnipeg and ask, "Where is Fort Garry?" its citizens are humiliated to confess that their own Council gave consent to its demolition. Will the future visitor to Toronto wring the same confession from our citizens, with the added shame that the act which destroyed the historic character of our oldest landmark was also an act of bad faith in the matter of a public trust, and at the same time a deed of sacrilege committed upon the bodies of those who laid down their lives for their country?

Your memorialists would remind you that in the United States all the great battlefields are systematically being converted into national parks, and in some cases private lands are being expropriated at great cost for this purpose: that in our own country within the past few years the old fort at Annapolis Royal, in Nova Scotia, which was on the point of being ruined in the same way as this fort, has been restored and put under the care of a Commission, whose work has made it an interesting attraction for tourists; that the battlefield of Stoney Creek has within the past year been made a park, and the old Gage homestead, where the American generals, Chandler and Winder, were captured, is converted into a museum of relics of the war, while the spot where American and British soldiers were buried has been purchased by public subscription of the citizens of Hamilton and vested in the Veterans' Association of Wentworth County; that the old windmill and fort at Prescott have for years been kept with care by the townspeople, and is every summer viewed by thousands of tourists; that the people of Louisbourg quite recently defeated the project of an American company to run a railway through the old fortress of that town; and that the citizens of Quebec (now realizing the folly of having allowed the Plains of Abraham to pass into private hands) are now joining with His Excellency the Governor-General to regain possession in order to consecrate that battlefield as a national park. Will it remain to be said that, while other cities and towns are maintaining these monuments of the past, our authorities have for several years permitted two of the moats of the Old Fort to be used by a manure merchant as a dumping-ground for offal and manure, and a part of the eastern bastion to be devoted to the slaughtering of hogs, and now listens to a proposal to run a railway over the bodies of the heroes of 1812?

As those who are now urging this vandalism have asserted that Earl Grey approved a railway through the Fort, we beg to quote the words of His Excellency, spoken a few days ago at Toronto University:—

"One way to keep the greatness of the country before them was to preserve historical landmarks. There were

three historic spots threatened with destruction: Fort Louisburg, the Plains of Abraham, and the Old Fort in Toronto. An American railway company were about to destroy Louisburg. That has happily been prevented. I find that your Fort York is still in danger. You students must see to it that it is not destroyed." His Excellency then referred at length to the preservation of the Plains of Abraham.

If one's action is to be governed by mere convenience or desire, without regard to questions of right and wrong, then the burglar would be justified in robbing houses, but burglary is still a crime, no matter how much the burglar needs money. Therefore, when the needs of the Exhibition have been pleaded in excuse for this wrong, the societies must urge that the honor and self-respect of this city is of more consequence than a few hundred feet of extra track.

It has been said of the societies who here solemnly protest against this outrage that they themselves have done nothing to restore the Old Fort. The societies cannot, of course, deal with a place over which they have no control, but if the authorities will place this Fort under our care we will guarantee that it will be placed in order and a restoration made within a year, and that in course of time it will be made the most attractive feature of Toronto's park system, as well as the most instructive object lesson in Canadian history to be seen in this part of the Dominion.

Your memorialists hope that upon reflection this Council will be convinced that the highest interests of the city will be served by a decent observance of its covenant in dealing with these grounds, by an intelligent regard for its chief landmark of history, and by a proper respect for the men who sacrificed themselves in their country's cause.

In conclusion, your memorialists beg to quote the appended extracts from letters of the Hon. Minister of Militia to the present Council and to your predecessors in office.

G. STERLING RYERSON,  
President.

F. A. FLEMING,  
Secretary, Old Fort Protective  
Association.

---

Ottawa, Jan. 18, 1908.

Sir,—I have the honor to inform you that the Minister of Militia and Defence has received a telegram, dated 17th inst., from Dr. G. Sterling Ryerson, President of the Old Fort Protective Association, reporting that your Council is about to make another attempt to run the street railway line through the Old Fort, and requesting, on behalf of the historical and patriotic societies, that you should be informed that such a step would be a violation of the conditions under which the sale of this property to the city of Toronto was authorized by His Excellency-in-Council.

In pursuance of that request, I forward herewith a copy of a letter to your predecessor, dated November 27th, 1906; also a copy of a letter to the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior, dated March 12th, 1907, and of the reply thereto from that Department.

These enclosures are being forwarded to you by the Minister's direction, with a view of acquainting you with

## Papers of the Old Fort Protective Association, [1908] (continued)

the position of this Department as regards the preservation of the Old Fort property, a position from which the Minister has no intention of receding.

(Signed), EUG. Fiset,  
Colonel,

Deputy Minister Dept. of Militia and Defence.

To His Worship,  
The Mayor of Toronto.

[Copy.]

Ottawa, Nov. 27, 1906.

Sir,—The Hon. J. P. Whitney, Prime Minister, has called the attention of the Minister of Militia and Defence to the alleged intention of your City Council to allow the Garrison Commons property, or part of it, to be used for street railway purposes, or for purposes other than that for which it is being sold to your city.

The Minister has directed me to invite your attention to this matter with a view to the property being used only for the purposes for which it is being sold—park and exhibition purposes. The attention of the Minister had previously been called to the possibility of the property being used for other purposes, but until the receipt of the letter from the Premier he did not consider there was any reason why he should take any action, as he felt satisfied that any fear that the property would be otherwise used was groundless.

For your information, I would like to make several extracts from the correspondence in order to show how clearly it was defined for what purposes the property was being disposed of in the correspondence which led up to the sale.

Mr. Thos. Caswell, then City Solicitor, made formal application for the transfer of the Old Fort property to the city on October 12th, 1899. Following is an extract from his application:—

"I am authorized by the Council of the Corporation of the city of Toronto to apply to you for a transfer of the Old

Fort property to the city on the understanding that the property will be preserved and maintained in its present condition (or as nearly thereto as circumstances will permit) on account of its association with the early military history of this city."

On August 29th, 1903, Mr. R. J. Fleming, Assessment Commissioner, wrote to the Minister, in which letter he said the property (the Garrison Commons property) was desired for a public park and exhibition purposes.

On October 19th, 1903, the Minister replied to Mr. Fleming, definitely accepting the offer of your city to pay the Government the sum of \$200,000 for the said property, and Mr. Fleming, in his letter of August 29th, referred to above, used these words:—

"I have already stated in my letter of 29th that it must be understood that the Ordnance Lands are only to be used for park and exhibition purposes, and that the old cemetery shall be properly cared for and the Old Fort preserved."

This Department has been furnished with a copy of a report made by Mr. Fleming, Assessment Commissioner, to His Worship the Mayor and members of the Board of Control, dated October 30th, 1903, which report contained the following paragraph:—

"You will observe that the Government stipulate that the property shall hereafter be used only for park and exhibition purposes; and further, that the city will be bound to preserve for all time the Old Fort and such of the old buildings upon the premises as the Government may designate. In addition to this the city will be required to spend upon the buildings immediately sufficient money to put them into a first-class state of preservation."

The foregoing extracts should clearly establish the purpose of the sale of the property, and the Minister would like to have your assurance that the spirit, as well as the letter, of the understanding will be carefully observed.

(Signed), E. F. JARVIS,  
Acting Deputy Minister,  
Department of Militia and Defence.

## The Mail and Empire, Feb. 15, 1908

### DON'T GIVE UP THE OLD FORT.

With singular tenacity the civic administration holds to its purpose to extend a street railway line into Garrison Common, and to shift some of the buildings of the Old Fort in order to provide a right-of-way. In spite of the repeated protests of bodies of citizens who regard the unnecessary obtrusion of a railway among the graves of the city's early defenders as a kind of sacrilege, the Parks Committee has again reported in favor of the line being built without deviation from the route selected, and the Board of Control has again declared its determination to carry the scheme through.

Fortunately, the Board of Control, even though backed by the whole Council, has not the plenitude of power to do the thing it has thus set its heart upon. It cannot build the railway and connecting bridge without the consent of a superior authority. It must have either license from the ratepayers or special permission from the Legislature. The board was prompt to choose between these. It had little hope of obtaining the necessary credit from the ratepayers, as these by an overwhelming vote had rejected a by-law for the same purpose a little more than a year ago. It would therefore go to the Legislature, which in the past had granted like applications without asking too many questions. But it was impressed on the attention of the board that a new spirit prevails in the Legislature. There is now a majority there which respects the rights of ratepayers and is averse to giving a free rein to municipal debt-contracting. Consideration of this fact seems to have caused wavering on the part of some members of the board. In reply to a deputation yesterday Mayor Oliver, Controller Hocken and Controller Ward professed themselves ready to submit the matter to the ratepayers, but Controllers Spence and Harrison were mute on that subject. If the Mayor is in earnest, as we are inclined to believe Controller Hocken and Controller Ward to be, the obstruction of Controllers Spence and Harrison cannot avail to prevent a reference of the question to the property-owning citizens. Unless there is insincerity on the part of Mayor Oliver or one of the two controllers, who, along with him expressed willingness to submit a by-law, the course of ignoring the ratepayers can no longer be persisted in. Controller

Spence appears to dominate the board in relation to this business. Mayor Oliver and Controller Harrison have evidently accepted his leadership. In the pursuit of this piece of business, condemned by the ratepayers less than fourteen months ago and unmentioned in the last municipal campaign, the new board has shown mysterious, if not indecent, haste. If the Toronto Railway people want the bridge and right-of-way, is that a sufficient reason for the Board of Control defying the will of the ratepayers and suspending the municipal constitution to have the road and bridge constructed within the next six months? Mayor Oliver is now in a great hurry to have the transfer of Garrison Common to the city completed. The city's \$200,000 must be paid over and the deed executed instantly—though the militia authorities are not yet prepared to vacate the property. Why this hot haste on the part of the new civic government? Fourteen acres, it seems, are to be leased to the Department of Militia and Defence for store purposes, and before the citizens are made acquainted with the terms of this new deal the sum for which the common was to be turned over without other reserve than the trust conditions is to be handed to the Government. This method of doing the public's business cannot be allowed. Nor, when we have the property paid for, can we violate the trust conditions even to please the Toronto Railway Company. Yesterday, as if there was not a moment to be wasted, Controller Spence suggested that the specifications for the bridge be drawn up immediately, and the board at once gave orders to that effect.

All this is extremely puzzling to the citizens. They know that there is urgent need for the extending of existing lines of the Toronto Railway Company along certain streets, and for the building of new lines on other streets. They have been crying out for such additional mileage and service, but all to no purpose, and no civic government has been more deaf to the cry than is this one. But when the Toronto Railway Company wants to quit our streets and invade a historic ground we have undertaken to preserve exclusively for park purposes, we have a civic government impatient to override the will of the people in order to build a great bridge and approach so that the company may have what it wants. Thus to give the company a line that will be a rich earner two weeks in the year the Board of Control is ready to burst all restraints, but it makes no move to have lines built that the citizens sorely need the use of every day in the year. What is the secret of this?

## THE OLD FORT ONCE MORE. /

Surveys made by the city and a search by the Ontario Historical Society of the titles relating to the Old Fort make it evident that the encroachments on that property on the north-east and south are quite without warrant in law. Especially is it shown that the Government intended to fully preserve the outlines of the eastern bastion, and that no patent has ever been issued to Park, Blackwell & Company for the portion of the site occupied by them which encroaches on that bastion. On the north also the Grand Trunk have, it is believed, trespassed quite thirty feet.

These discoveries make it necessary that the whole question of the preservation of the Old Fort shall be gone into more carefully than has up till the present time been the case, and that the problem of providing an eastern entrance to Exhibition Park be worked out on broader lines. It may as well be said that the great body of public opinion is opposed to the two extreme views held on the Old Fort and eastern entrance problems. On the one hand, the citizens are not prepared to spend a large sum of money and build an expensive bridge for a two weeks' car service to the Exhibition. On the other, they are equally hostile to the notion of the antiquarian wing that the Old Fort should be restored and maintained by the city as a park, even though the odors coming from the pork packing-house on the east and south absolutely prevent any person from using it for purposes of recreation. The citizens are too hard-headed to keep a garden surrounded by a nuisance. If the Old Fort, therefore, is to be cared for, the first step is to get rid of the packing-house. If, as the surveys seem to show, the packing-house is encroaching it should be comparatively easy to make a bargain for its removal. With the packing-house out of the way the Old Fort could easily be made one of the most charming spots in the city.

The question of an eastern entrance to Exhibition Park is being dealt with by Council and the Exhibition Board on an absurdly narrow basis. It will be necessary to eliminate the masterful Fleming and the Street Railway before we get a real idea of what is needed. The Exhibition

Association and the Street Railway are confronted for ten days in each year with the problem of moving enormous crowds in a very limited time. To the Exhibition directors and the Street Railway Manager the eastern entrance is a sort of glorified Y, and the people are invited to pay a huge sum for its construction. The eastern entrance is really much more than that. Bathurst street bridge is at the eastern extremity of what will be in future years the great recreation ground and waterfront park of Toronto. For the purchase of land to be included in this park and the lakefront boulevard which forms a part of it the city of Toronto has already spent half a million dollars. When Stanley Barracks are removed and the boulevard is completed—probably ten years from to-day—we shall have in that quarter 300 acres of the finest park land in America. The Globe wishes to see an adequate entrance to that land for street cars so that the people may have the most convenient access to it all summer, and not merely during the Exhibition season. Such an entrance can best be obtained by the removal of the Park-Blackwell buildings and the prolongation of the Bathurst street bridge ramp to a point at which it would join the Lake Shore boulevard. This would provide a permanent right of way for a car line along the waterfront from Bathurst street to the Humber, a route that would be the most popular in Toronto during the summer season. Not only so, but it would be the first step to an improvement that will inevitably follow the rapid development of the Island, viz., the construction of a railway from the foot of Bathurst street to Centre Island.

To all these projects—the preservation of the Fort in such form as to be worthy of preservation, the building of a great lakefront car line, and the extension of car service to the Island—possession of the Park-Blackwell property is essential. The Mayor cannot too soon secure for the city the patent for the land on which encroachments have been made, and, having done so, launch a really adequate scheme that will secure the united support of the citizens.



The Globe, Jan. 15, 1909

the largest in area and with the possibility of proving the richest in natural wealth.

*Globe 15 Jan 09*  
**THE OLD FORT AND ITS ENVIRONMENT.**

The future of the Old Fort, situated at the foot of Bathurst street and overlooking the western entrance to the harbor of Toronto, may now be regarded as assured. A few years ago it seemed doomed to destruction through want of public interest in the question of its restoration and preservation; now it belongs to the corporation of Toronto, and there is not only no chance of further destruction, but a fair prospect that it will eventually be restored to its original form, and that its characteristic appearance will as far as practicable be preserved.

There is little doubt that within a few years it will be the most popular park for a convenient outing that the city can furnish. Its popularity is guaranteed to it not merely by its history, but also by its position. No other spot has such patriotic and tragic associations clinging around it, and from no other point on the lake-front can so picturesque a view of the lake, the Island, and the two bays be obtained. In carrying out the work of restoration this aspect of the situation should carefully be kept in view.

The greatest drawbacks to be removed are the comparative inaccessibility of the Fort and the prevalence of offensive odors in its immediate vicinity. The street railway will eventually, under proper safeguards, be carried through to the east end of the Exhibition ground, and no matter by which proposed route it is taken thither it will bring passengers nearer to the Old Fort than they are brought by the present Bathurst street service to the corner of Front and Bathurst streets. Sooner or later the railway will be continued to the Island, and many of those who make the round trip from all parts of the city will stop off to see a spot so famous and so attractive.

The suppression of the smell nuisance is a more difficult matter, for it involves the necessity of transferring a settled industry to another locality—perhaps more than one. There must be no talk or thought of confiscation in this connection. Those who established industries there were thought by the public generally to be doing a commendable thing, and if they are asked to transfer their investments to other places they must get fair compensation for their loss. This is not mentioned as a ground of discouragement, but as a reminder that there are serious difficulties to be overcome before the projected improvement can satisfactorily be completed.

~~THE MAIL AND EMPIRE~~  
RESTORATION OF THE OLD FORT.

Garrison Common will come into the care and possession of the city as soon as the Government surrenders the property in accordance with the agreement reached two years ago. In that agreement, we are glad to say, the Militia and Defence Department provided for the putting and keeping of the historic field in a condition far more worthy of its past than that in which the Government itself maintained it.

When the 200 acres is transferred the city may not do with it as it pleases. This land will not be as other real estate purchased for park purposes or playgrounds by the municipality, or acquired by bidding in at tax sales. To whatever public use they may for any time be put, all the lands in the city's unlimited ownership may be cut up into lots and disposed of to private parties. Even where such diversion from the public use is prohibited by deed of gift from the private donor, it is in the power of the Provincial Legislature to enable the city to turn the land to private purposes. But the Ordnance lands that are about to pass to the city are to be held forever as a park, and may be taken back into the direct keeping of the Dominion Government once this or any other condition of the deed of trust is violated. The Ontario Legislature cannot loose the city from any obligation assumed in respect to them, for the city's relation to them is purely that of a trustee for the Dominion, whose interests, of course, no province can legislate away. Toronto will be proud to live up to the requirements of the trust. The municipal authorities will have the warm support of the citizens in the carrying out of plans to reclaim Garrison Common from its present state of neglect; to preserve what remains of its structures and to restore what has disappeared; to beautify the grounds by tree-planting, the making of flower plots, walks and drives; to

erect memorials of events of which the common has been the scene; and to collect in some of its old buildings souvenirs of the regiments that have been quartered there. We say it will be the pleasure of the citizens to carry out beyond the letter the city's undertakings in respect to this historic spot. If Toronto should prove unworthy of the stewardship thus assigned to it by the nation, historical societies in all parts of Canada would call the Government's attention to our default, and the Militia Department would resume its control. To these patriotic societies the country owes a debt of gratitude, of which the sense will deepen as the Canadian people grow in greatness. The Ontario Historical Society and the numerous patriotic bodies affiliated and associated with it have done splendid work in stirring up the public and the authorities to a proper interest in the Old Fort that is the historic centre-piece of the Ordnance lands. Realizing that the first step of the City Council in fulfilment of its engagements under the agreement with the Government would be the restoration of that defensive work, the society has prepared a plan of the fort as it originally stood. This called for patient investigation of old documents, and much delving into other sources of information on the subject. The plan drawn up as a result of these painstaking labors shows the fort as it was before the effects of time and vandalism had wrought their changes upon it.

The work of restoration calls, first, for the building up of worn ramparts, the material for which can be obtained from the now nearly filled ditch that protected the western batteries; second, for the rebuilding of the stockade at the foot of the ramparts; third, for replacing the batteries. At the entrance to the Old Fort roadway it is proposed to erect memorial gates, one to be named in honor of Sir Isaac Brock, the other in honor of Governor Simcoe. The plan and proposals should be adopted and worked out by the city, which is indebted to the Ontario Historical Society for its valuable services in the matter, and in particular to the society's president, Mr. Barlow Cumberland.

The Toronto Daily Star, Jan. 20, 1926

### The Old Fort a Public Asset

The Old Fort at Toronto is the property of the dominion government. It is useless as a defense, but priceless as a survival of early times. Its blockhouses are boarded up and its value as a point of interest obscured, because it is somewhat off the beaten track of traffic and because no one has taken the leadership in a movement to give it civic prominence. Yet it could easily be made accessible and added to Toronto's centres of interest.

The lake front boulevard and its extension via Fleet street, to the centre of Toronto, constitute a traffeway which will be patronized by almost every person who sets out to see the city. Passing, as it does, through the Sunnyside amusement area, and also through the Exhibition grounds, the waterfront highway has many attractions for visitors. It might have at least one more. It runs to the south of the Old Fort buildings, and an effort should be made to add these buildings to "the sights of the city" by giving them an adequate connection with the boulevard and by putting them in shape to receive tourists.

The blockhouses (one of them the oldest building in Toronto) should be thrown open to the public. They are rich in historic interest; an invaluable link with Toronto's past. These and the neighboring cottages, with their old cellars and underground passages, could be made a splendid attraction at a small cost. There is in them an appeal to romance and sentiment which should not be allowed to lie dormant. It should be utilized not only to entertain Toronto's visitors, but to give the people of the city, and especially the school children of the city, a new and vivid interest in local history.

At the Humber end of the waterfront boulevard the city should erect a striking monument to Etienne Brule, the first white man to view the site of what is now Toronto. He saw it from the mouth of the Humber. At the Old Fort the city should afford tourists another point of interest. It is a reflection upon the municipality that it makes no effort to give proper access to the oldest and most historic buildings within its boundaries, and does nothing to have them put in proper shape for public inspection. It is hardly conceivable that the dominion authorities would refuse to co-operate if approached by the city.

### "THIS NEGLECTED SPOT."

Proceedings in the House of Commons during the present session of Parliament have revealed the little-known fact that Toronto's Old Fort is in the city's keeping. Therefore upon Toronto must be saddled responsibility for the condition of neglect into which this historic spot has fallen. In accepting a property deed for the land it was agreed by the city that "the site shall, as far as possible, be restored to its original condition," and that "the same shall be preserved and maintained in that condition forever."

This should be good news to the people of Toronto; but they will want to know why, during all the intervening years, the Old Fort has been allowed to drift into its present state of decay. A piece of land and a group of buildings that should be one of the show places of the city present more the appearance of a neglected graveyard. This is historic ground. It has been the scene of stern fighting. More than a century ago its garrison looked out on a foreign fleet, under a Commodore, anchored in the lake, and received a storming party led by the American General Pike, who, with many of his force, met death when the magazine exploded. Those were important days in the history of a young country, and the Old Fort is about all that remains, at least in a physical way, to recall the early struggles in this district to maintain the supremacy of British rule.

And this important and impressive link with the storied past is being allowed to crumble to an inglorious disappearance. There is evidence that public opinion is being aroused by this indifference. Throughout the Dominion patriotic and public-spirited organizations are marking in a suitable and enduring form the localities made famous as the scenes of stirring occurrences in Canadian history. The homes of eminent Canadians of an earlier day are being preserved from decay. The folklore of the pioneers is being collected and given a place in the literature of Canada. And while all this worthy work has been going on, the Old Fort in Toronto, carrying the mind back to the struggles and the triumphs of the country's early settlers, has remained unnoticed; probably chiefly on account of uncertainty as to ownership.

Now that doubt has disappeared. The Old Fort belongs to Toronto, and it is Toronto's duty to see that it does not remain in its present deplorable condition. The Women's Historical Society, which is doing such excellent work in keeping in repair many historic buildings, should be generously supported in its efforts to have something done so that the Old Fort, beautifully situated as it is, may be maintained as one of the most interesting spots about this city.

### Toronto's Neglected Fort

The new bridge at the foot of Bathurst St., while admirable in itself, has the unfortunate effect of shutting off one of the two means of vehicular access to Toronto's Old Fort, which is now to be approachable only from the west. This historic treasure, of untold value if properly developed and if given the accessibility which its importance deserves, is, instead, being sidetracked and neglected.

In an address the other day to the Women's Canadian Historical Society, Col. Alexander Fraser suggested that a suitable cairn and memorial tablets should be placed within the fort so that its site will be remembered even when the old buildings have decayed. That, of course, should be done. But in the meantime, the Old Fort should be made accessible by an entrance from Fleet St., so that tourists and Toronto's own people may alike be encouraged to visit it and study the old buildings. These should be open to the public, literature describing them should be available, and the whole Fort area should be developed as a historic site of interest to the general public.

This site contains the oldest buildings in Toronto, some of them, it is said, dating back to 1794. As the scene of the American invasion of 1813, it would be of particular interest to tourists from across the line. It could probably be operated at a profit for that reason. But to our own citizens and our own school children, most of whom have probably never seen it, the Old Fort could be made an attraction which would give history a new and more intimate hold upon the imagination. It is certainly not that at present.

FORT YORK REDISCOVERED.

One of the gratifying by-products of the projected celebration of the centennial of Toronto next year is the rediscovery of old Fort York. This ancient group of log and brick buildings at the foot of Bathurst Street, so sadly neglected as to be almost unknown to the majority of citizens, yet so significant in its relation to the birth and early development of Toronto, is undergoing a measure of restoration in preparation for the celebration.

Today is the 120th anniversary of the Battle of Fort York in 1813, when the defense was captured and partly destroyed by an American force, and the occasion will be marked by the 3rd Toronto Regiment. During the parade a wreath will be placed on the 1812 Monument in Victoria Square, a precious bit of land adjacent to the Old Fort, and near which many of the dead from the campaigns of 1812-14 are interred. The action of the Toronto Regiment in keeping alive the fine traditions of those stirring early days, when after more than two years the Canadian and British soldiers repelled the successive invading forces, is worthy of all praise.

The attack on York in the closing days of April, 1813, was marked by gallantry and dramatic incident. On the late afternoon preceding the attack the American fleet was sighted far down the lake by farmers on Scarboro' Bluffs, two of whom are said to have mounted horses and carried the alarm to the town. A projected dinner at Powell's that night was quickly cancelled, as the family sought safety, and none of the guests came.

General Sheaffe, who commanded the defenders, has never been forgiven for his undue caution in withdrawing a large portion of the defense forces to a point of safety down the Kingston Road, but others played a noble part in resisting the onrushing Americans between Sunnyside and the Fort. Many of the attacking force were killed when the heavy magazine in the fort exploded, and because of this casualty some of the Americans wreaked vengeance on the town and burned the Parliament Buildings, at the foot of Parliament Street.

One story of the day that is little known concerns General Pike of the American force, who was mortally wounded. It is told by Benson J. Lossing, an American writer, in his book, "Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812," published in 1869.

As Pike was being carried on ship he heard cheering, and said, "What does it mean?" "Victory," answered the sergeant. "The British Union Jack is coming down from the blockhouse and the Stars and Stripes are going up." His face was then illuminated with a smile of great joy. He asked that the Union Jack be placed under his head, and died shortly after.

This is a story which should make still more powerful the appeal of the Old Fort to visitors from both our own and the neighboring nation.

## Old Fort York Returns to Life, Restoration Problems Overcome

Commerce once threatened to scoop up old Fort York with a steam shovel, but thanks to Mayor W. J. Stewart and the present City Council there is no longer any danger of the old landmark disappearing under the ruthless advances of industry.

Citizens who have not visited the old shrine at the foot of Bathurst street lately will be amazed at the transformation achieved by the workmen who have been engaged on the task of restoration during the last summer.

The reconstruction of the ramparts is practically completed, work has started on the buildings and the place is rapidly losing the atmosphere of neglect and desolation that has characterized it for many years past. Unquestionably it will be one of the most interesting show places in Canada when completed.

However, His Worship Mayor Stewart and Col. H. R. Alley, Director of the Centennial, are meeting many obstacles in their frantic search for a remnant of the proper type and period, 1780-1800.

### HAVE DETAIL PLAN.

The Fort is being restored as nearly as possible to its condition of 1816, at which time a survey was made by an engineer officer, which is fortunately preserved in the archives, showing everything in the greatest detail.

The artillery plan shown is as follows: In the south bastion, one 24-pounder; northwest bastion, one 18-pounder; in the semi-circle in the centre of the southern rampart, two 12-pounders.

The guns which are at the Fort, the property of the city, are four long 32-pounders and two 64-pound carronades, in addition to the old 12-pounder and 18-pounder, without trunnions, which for generations served as hitching posts at the western entrance to the Fort.

These latter are undoubtedly the two guns that were strapped to logs and used at the risk of the lives of the defenders of the Fort when the Americans captured Toronto in 1813. They are regarded as priceless and will be rigged up as they were on the day of the Yankee invasion and displayed as museum pieces when the Fort is reopened.

### SEEK PROPER GUNS

In the effort to preserve historic accuracy in the smallest detail in the restored Fort, the Mayor and Col. Alley are combing the Dominion for guns corresponding in every way with the plan of 1816. The Department of Militia and Defence at Ottawa is co-operating and has already arranged for an exchange of two 32's now in Nepean Park, Ottawa, for two of the 64's now at the old Fort.

These guns were owned by the Federal District Commission at Ottawa and they have graciously agreed to the exchange of the smaller pieces for the 64's, which, while very impressive in appearance and excellent display pieces, are not historically accurate armament for Fort York.

The City of St. John owns considerable old ordnance of the Loyalist days, some of which are of the size and type needed here, and Mayor Stewart is now appealing to the people of that city for an exchange. Four pieces available for an exchange in Toronto are two long 32-pounders and two 64-pound carronades. The exchange has the approval of the Department of Militia and Defence and it is hoped that the swap will be agreed to by the Maritime city.

If the exchange is made it will still leave Fort York two 12-pounders short on the basis of gun for gun, but an appeal has gone forward to the British War Office and there is hope that any deficiency may be made up for in that quarter. Quebec will also be appealed to in the effort to restore Fort York as nearly as possible to the 1816 condition, as called for by the agreement made with the Dominion Government when the city took over the old Fort York property nearly 25 years ago.

The Telegram, Oct. 16, 1948

## Title To Exhibition Site Binds City To Maintain Old Fort York "Forever"

Historic Buildings, Cluttered About by Railways,  
Too Difficult of Access — Lakefront Area  
Reverts to Dominion If Trust Unfulfilled,  
1909 Document Discloses

Visitors to Toronto often have expressed pleasure and surprise at the long stretch of Exhibition waterfront that is public parkland, and have observed that there are few cities whose choicest area has not been carved up into private lots.

But there are not many residents of the city itself who know how Toronto acquired those lands, or who realize that the title to them is vested in the Corporation of the City of Toronto on a strictly conditional basis.

The Ontario Historical Society has just brought to light the document which in 1909 awarded to the city the lands that today constitute the largest part of Exhibition Park.

The area—then 184 acres, now somewhat larger by reason of 100-odd acres of new land reclaimed from the lake—was given to the city by the Dominion Government, on condition that "the site of the Old Fort shall upon said lands shall as far as possible be restored to its original condition . . . and shall be preserved and maintained in such condition forever."

### DESTROYED IN 1813

This "Old Fort" is historic Fort York, first established on the site by Governor Simcoe in 1783, destroyed by United States invaders in 1813, and rebuilt in 1813-14. It was located then on the triangular point of land between Lake Ontario and the then Garrison Creek, which has now disappeared.

Old Fort York was at the extreme eastern end of the 184-acre grant of 1909, and in return for its undertaking to restore the neglected fortress, the City of Toronto was granted the so-called Garrison Common, which includes all the waterfront from Dufferin st. eastward to the road, (now Bathurst st.) that led down to old Queen's Wharf. The tract extended back from the waterfront as far as the Grand Trunk right-of-way (now the CNR tracks).

The grant was actually divided into two parcels of land, since CPR tracks bisected the area diagonally in the vicinity of Strachan ave.

In other words, by that bargain of 1909, the City of Toronto acquired about five-sixths of the present-day

Exhibition Grounds, as well as the area from the Princes' Gates to Bathurst st.

### APPEARANCE CHANGED

The appearance of the area today is substantially different from its appearance at the time of that grant. Within three years of making the bargain with the Dominion Government, Toronto undertook waterfront improvements. The lake which had previously lapped at the south palisades of the old fort was backed up to a line which straightened the shoreline from Stanley Barracks to the new Western Gap.

The impressive document granting Toronto the Garrison Common—bearing the signatures of Deputy Governor General C. L. Jones, Deputy Minister of the Interior A. A. Cory and Under-secretary of State J. Pope—is dated at Ottawa May 17, 1909.

It provides that if Toronto failed to fulfill the terms of the trust by restoring Fort York, title to the lands was immediately to revert to the Dominion Government.

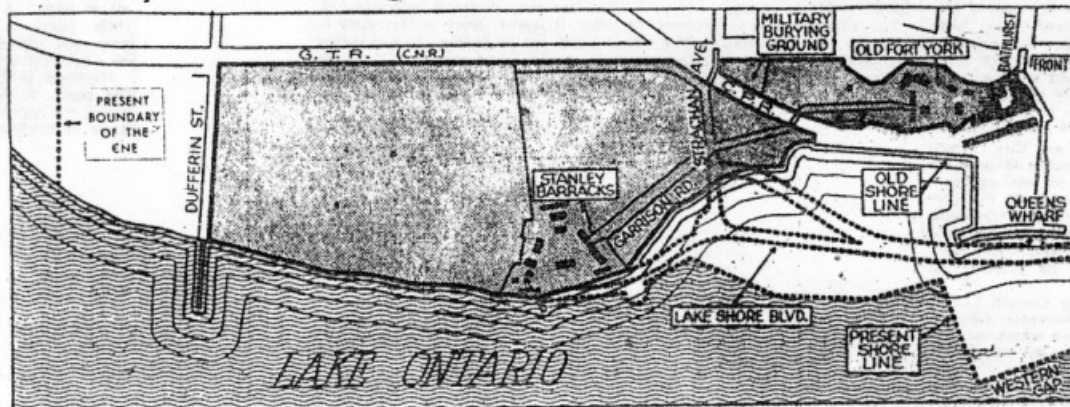
In point of fact, the Corporation of the City of Toronto has lived up to literal terms of the agreement—although proper restoration of the old fort did not commence until 1932, in preparation for Toronto's centenary celebrations of 1824.

Many persons believe, however, there is also an obligation on the city not only to restore Old Fort York, but also to establish it as a place of historical interest both for residents and for tourists. Only about 4,000 persons visited the fortress during the past year—as compared to a visitors' rate of about 100,000 per year at old Fort Henry outside Kingston.

Reason for the site's failure to attract more visitors is undoubtedly difficulty of access. The way to reach the fort is down a ramp leading from the middle of Bathurst st. railway bridge or by a road crossing railway tracks behind Fort York armories. But few people know either approach, and there are no prominent signs to attract the tourist's attention, or to direct his way.

The Parks Department, however, is now considering a plan to construct an improved entrance to the historical site, with signs. Historians maintain the cost will be infinitesimal compared with the enormous value of the Exhibition Park grant-of-land, both in terms of real estate worth and as an invaluable municipal asset.

## Railways And Bridges Barriers To Historic Fort York



Toronto, by an agreement dated 1909, won title to all 184 acres of Exhibition and waterfront land shown dotted above. In return, the city undertook to restore and maintain old Fort York, at extreme eastern end of the grant-of-land. Since that date, harbor improvements have expanded the area by filling in the bay which once reached the foot of the fort's south palisades; and the old fort, cluttered about by railway tracks and bridges, is as difficult of access, or more so, than it was on that morning in 1813 when the Americans fought their way towards it.

## Wait A Minute!

By Wessely Hicks

## FEAT TO FIND FORT

To drive to Fort York, a sightseer must have the determination of a woman at a bargain sale, the skill of a trained navigator and the calculating eye of a sniper.

The car entrance to the old fort runs along the west side of the Fort York Armouries, off Fleet st. The sign which marks the entrance doesn't beckon sightseers in. It whispers confidentially.

The sign which marks the car entrance to Fort York is about the size of the bottom of a shoe box. It is painted white and the lettering on it is black and small. A man with faulty eyesight would have to shin up the pole to read the sign.

## AN OBSTACLE COURSE

Once the sign has been deciphered, the sightseer is not inside the fort. He is put through a thorough obstacle course driving test.

The road to the fort is the driveway to the Fort York Armouries at its entrance. But it twists behind the armouries through pot holes and ruts. It turns left at right angles

over a narrow wooden bridge across a railway track, drops off suddenly on the north side, turns sharp right and ends in frustration just outside the fort.

Yet Fort York is one of the few remaining historical sites in Toronto and certainly the most exciting. Men died in and around the gallant fort defending the site on which Toronto now stands.

There is a cairn in the centre of the grounds of the fort. There is a plaque on the west side of the cairn, which faces south. The plaque reads:

"In grateful memory of Capt. Neal McNeal, the King's Regiment; volunteer Donald MacLean, York Militia, and the non-commissioned officers and men of His Majesty's regular forces, fencibles and York militia, who fell while defending York, April 27, 1813.

There is a bronze plaque on the east side of the stone cairn, too. That plaque reads:

"To the glory of God and in memory of Brigadier-General Zebulon Pike and the officers,

soldiers and seamen of the army and navy of the United States who were killed during the attack on York, April 27, 1813."

There can be no doubt that, when the U.S. naval and army forces attacked York on the morning of April 27, 1813, the feeling was bitter and the action which was fought was hard and bloody. Since then, Canada and the U.S. have drawn closer together than the two bronze plaques on the sides of the stone cairn in the centre of Fort York.

## WAR PART OF YOUTH

But back during the War of 1812, the U.S. was an enemy. And our country stood up and fought for itself and repelled the invader. The war was part of our growing up. And Fort York and its garrison played an important role.

Today, Fort York is falling into ruin. Its gun embrasures are crumbling. The floor in some of the buildings are heaving and rotting. The walls are scaling and flaking. The doors are patched and warped and defaced. Windows are broken and there is the musty, dead air of neglect over the gallant old site.

Even compared to the unlovely rail yards and gravel pits and commercial establishments surrounding it, Fort York is no beauty spot. It is a forlorn patch of uncertain green in the midst of the gray and black of its surroundings.

Today, Fort York is a direct charge upon the city of Toronto. The old fort and a large part of the Exhibition grounds running east from Dufferin st. to the City of Toronto were deeded to Toronto by the Dominion Government in 1909 on condition that Fort York be maintained forever in a state of good repair.

## FLOURISH IN 1934

In 1934, the city went convulsively into action and made some repairs to the fort in order that it would look reasonably tidy for Toronto's centennial. But since then, nothing has been done and a bit of our heritage is aging and dying on our doorstep.

The renovating and repairing of Fort York is on a priority list under the care of the Board of Control of the City of Toronto. The sum involved is close to \$130,000.

But the work need not be done all at once. A little dusting off, a little paint, a little thought and care and simple carpentry would do nicely for a beginning.

Heritage is not an emphasis on the past. It is a bit of ourselves which we regard proudly and which gives us confidence in the future.

## Wait A Minute!

By Wessely Hicks

## APATHY PERILS FORT

City Council and Board of Control are fully aware that Old Fort York, the most significant of Toronto's historic sites, is in need of repair and restoration. Back in the summer of 1948, a subcommittee of the Parks Committee, under the chairmanship of ex-Alderman Everett Weaver studied means of renovating the Fort.

The subcommittee recommended that the buildings be repaired, restored and painted at an estimated cost of \$42,000. To protect the Fort from vandals, it recommended that a chain-link fence be erected around it, outside the ramparts, at a cost of \$12,000.

The subcommittee also recommended that a new bridge be erected over the railway tracks just west of Fort York armouries at a cost of \$94,000. When the report was made, three years ago, the total price for restoring the fort was \$148,000. Since then, higher costs of materials and labor have probably added at least one-third to the estimated cost bringing the total to about \$200,000.

Board of Control and City Council approved the recommendations in principle, but held up final approval pending negotiations with the Provincial and Dominion governments about sharing the cost. And the Board of Control placed the name of Fort York on its priority list awaiting action.

Actually, the City Council had no claim upon the Dominion Government, for the land on which the Fort stands was deeded to the City of Toronto in 1909 on condition that the City maintain the gallant old fort in good repair forever. "Forever" seems to be a rather brief period of time, for the fort is decrepit right now.

However, the Province and the Dominion contributed \$1,000,000 to the restoration of Fort Henry at Kingston. And the province, through the Niagara Parks Commission, restored Fort George at Niagara Falls last year.

## SOURCE OF REVENUE

Last year, 80,000-odd persons visited Fort Henry and paid a 25-cent

admission fee. The subcommittee of the Parks committee suggested, in 1948, that, if Fort York were restored, an admission fee of 25 cents could be charged and the money could be devoted to the maintenance of a permanent guardian who could live within the fort.

The subcommittee also suggested that a restored Fort York could be the scene of celebrations or commemorations on patriotic holidays and that regiments of the Toronto garrison could be induced to hold one parade a year on the site.

And the subcommittee pointed out that the Fort could be part of a course in visual history for Toronto school children who could visit there on special days when no admission charge would be made.

The subcommittee's recommendations are nicely dovetailed. The new road and wider bridge to supplant the maze which now leads into Fort York would encourage visitors. And a dressed-up Fort York would attract more and more visitors yearly as its fame spread.

## COULD BE GRADUAL

As I say, the renovating of Fort York is on a priority list and no action will be taken until Board of Control approves. No one is going to question that there is a long list of other works on the priority list, many of them of immediate importance.

But the work of restoring the old Fort, which figured so gallantly in the early history of Toronto, could be done gradually. A bit at a time, the Fort could be renovated, repaired and maintained until it is completely restored.

In its day, the old Fort served well. In the end, it stood unconquered. Now, it seems about to capitulate to a more subtle enemy than invading U.S. troops. And the enemy's name is apathy.



## Expressway vs Fort

It is natural that people who are interested in preserving Toronto's historical monuments should be perturbed at changes in the plans for the Frederick G. Gardiner expressway which will nip a corner off the ground of old Fort York. We believe they are needlessly alarmed, and that rather than doing harm to the old fort, it will be brought more to public attention.

As it is now Fort York is boxed in by factories, railway tracks and a bridge. Few know where it is or how to get to it, and as a result the number of visitors is not as large as one should expect at such an important historical site. As the expressway is planned, a corner of the palisade surrounding the fort will be lost, but at the same time the buildings will not be touched, and the whole fort will be brought into view of thousands of motorists.

Unfortunately, because the expressway is a limited access highway, and is elevated at that point, it will not be possible to provide direct access to the fort from the expressway. However, those passersby who are attracted can readily reach it by Strachan Ave.

The Toronto Daily Star, Feb. 7, 1958

25

The Globe & Mail, Feb. 25, 1958

## Fort York Threatened

Old Fort York, the headquarters of British power in Upper Canada in the early period of Canada's development, is again under threat of injury. The designers of the so-called Frederick G. Gardiner Expressway are planning to encroach on its ramparts and the military burial grounds adjacent thereto, and run an overhead structure across the southwestern corner of it.

As much as any piece of ground can be, Old Fort York is the symbol of the British origins of Ontario, and, indeed, of all Canada. It is comparable to the Plains of Abraham as a Canadian historic site, and it was on its garrison lands that the American invasion of York was fought in 1812.

About the beginning of the century, the City of Toronto made approaches to the Government to obtain the fort grounds, and was finally ceded the property on the solemn condition that the whole of the area would be used only for park and exhibition purposes, and that the buildings of the fort would be maintained forever as they were in 1816. This promise has never been kept by any City Council. Some of the land has been alienated to other uses.

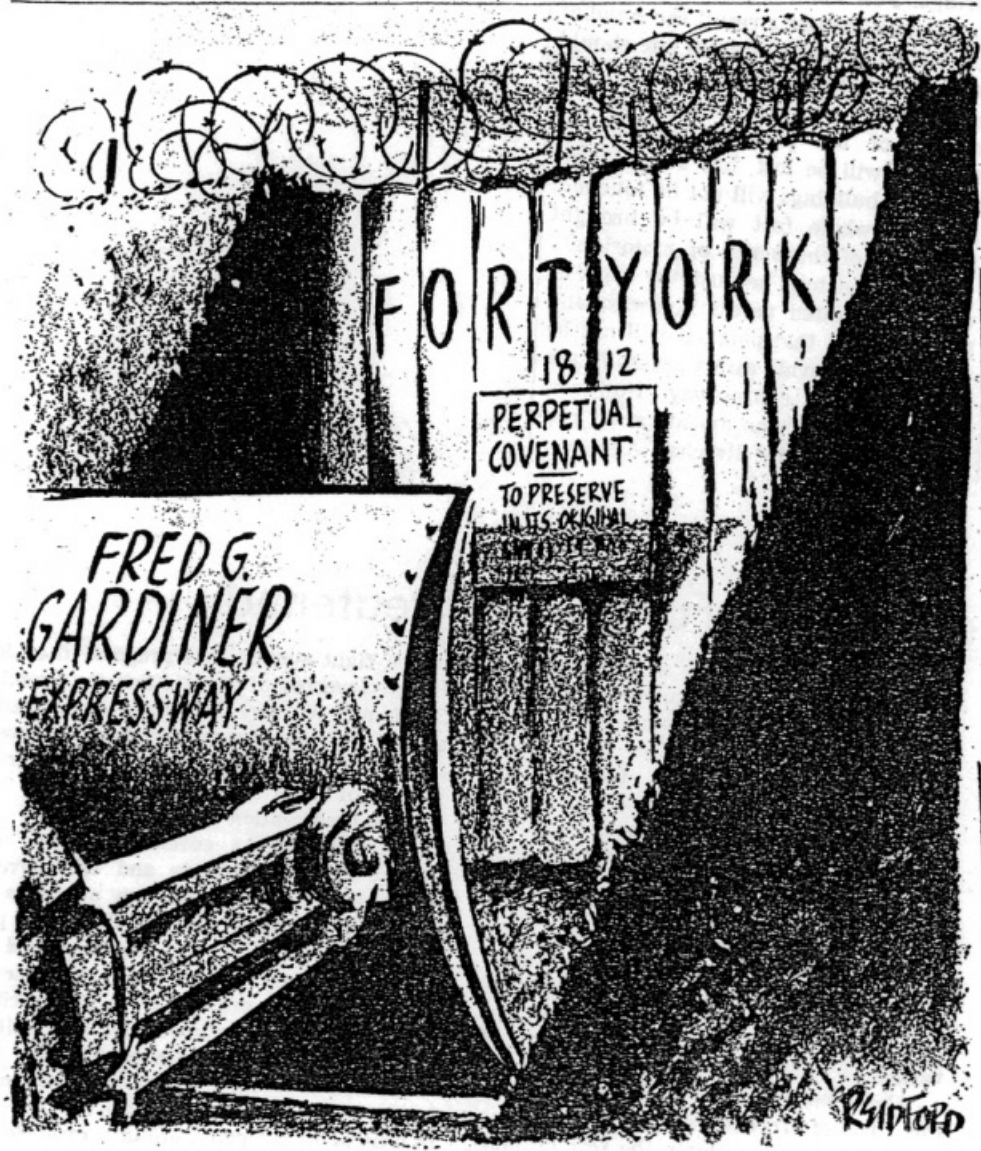
Fifty years ago, another effort was made to put a road across the fort grounds, and

in the fight against that proposal the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario and the Premier, Sir James Whitney, lent their direct assistance. The encroachment now being proposed merits a similar interest from the present holders of those offices.

The preservation of Old Fort York and its environs was a covenant entered into by the City of Toronto and the Government of Canada. Its violation ought to be a matter of importance to the legal profession of Ontario, who are supposed to guard the sanctity of such agreements. There should be protests from the teachers of history in high schools and universities, but their silence is an accusation. The fort is a superb example of military engineering, but it is engineers who are now seeking to destroy its integrity. Military protests can scarcely be heard. All these local groups should be heartily ashamed of their indifference.

The difficulty is simply due to the engineering mania to make roads straight. There is plenty of room in the area to avoid the fort. If present engineering talent is not up to the demands, let us get some of higher quality. Fort York should be preserved.

No Surrender!



TUESDAY  
Mainly Cloudy  
Low 30  
High 40  
Details Page Two



# THE TELEGRAM

The Pink Tely  
**Night**

82ND YEAR

48 PAGES

TORONTO, MONDAY, MARCH 24, 1958



PRICE 10 CENTS

Late Sports - Markets

## Block 'Invasion' By Expressway

# MPs GUARD FT. YORK

The committee voted after hearing representations from the Toronto and York Historical Society and several of its members who protested that history should be overridden by an expressway.

Palmer Kent, city solicitor, said the application to get provincial approval for the Expressway to go over part of the old Fort York cemetery was entirely separate from the need for right of way over the old Garrison commons in Exhibition Park.

John Yaremko, PC Bellwoods, protested that there was "a great tendency in Toronto to tear things down."

"We should make our voices heard," he said. The application for right to go through part of Fort York with the Gardiner expressway was contained in Section 19 of an act to amend the Metropolitan Toronto Act which would have given Toronto the right to transfer the land necessary to Metro for highway use.

## 'Tear-Down' Trend Of City Protested

Metro's application to have the Fred Gardiner expressway go through part of historic Fort York was turned down by the Legislature's standing committee on Municipal Law today. The vote was unanimous.

Gordon Clarry, president of the York Pioneer Historical Society, said any encroachment on Fort York would give the Federal Government the right to repossess all the land there. He described the fort as an "international sepulchre."

"Any type of progress which disregards historic shrines hardly merits the term progress," Mr. Clarry protested.

"10 CENTS PER PERSON" Alf. Cowling (PC, High Park) moved that the section be deleted.

If it costs \$100,000 to go around Fort York, he said, that would represent an outlay of only about 10-cents per person in Metro.

F. M. Cass, (PC, Grenville-Dundas) asked why Toronto should be allowed to tear down historic spots. "Our rights as citizens of Ontario shouldn't be overrun by the Fred Gardiner expressway," he said.

The Telegram, May 25, 1958

## Fort York Repels Invaders

THE defenders of historic Fort York have triumphed. The Legislature's standing committee on Municipal Law has unanimously rejected a section of the bill to amend the Metropolitan Toronto Act which would have permitted the Fred Gardiner Expressway to go through part of the fort.

Perhaps, as those who place engineering before history suggest, this will mean an expressway which falls short of the ideal. Perhaps it will cost Metro a handsome pot of gold to circumnavigate Fort York. Perhaps, also, those responsible for planning the expressway should have given a little

more thought to history and to national sentiments before starting work.

They had, in truth, no right to violate this national monument.

"A wise nation," said Joseph Howe, "preserves its records, gathers up its muniments, decorates the tombs of its illustrious dead, repairs its great public structures, and fosters national pride and love of country, by perpetual reference to the sacrifices and glories of the past."

The MPPs have shown wisdom where the City and Metro failed. For this they deserve the gratitude and the commendation of the nation.

The Globe & Mail, Jun. 3, 1958

### Serve History

## Let's Move Fort York To Shore

By SCOTT YOUNG

With all due respect to those who love playing Horatio at the Bridge on behalf of old Fort York, I think Hiram McCallum was right when he said again that the idea of moving the fort is worth investigating.

I also think that it would be seemly for the York Pioneer and Historical Society and all other valiant defenders of our historic traditions to admit when they are wrong — and try to build something constructive out of defeat.

It is sad the way they act now.

Mr. McCallum, who is general manager of the Canadian National Exhibition and a former Toronto mayor, made the latest "move Fort York" suggestion last Friday.

Immediately, the air became blue.

If you want to hear invective, don't go to the fish market. Just threaten to move that fort.

It is ugly commercialism, they say. Broken promises. It is this and it is that.

Really, all the time, it is the only sensible and broad-minded solution — and in the long run would serve the ends of history, tradition and understanding of our past better than most of the other solutions.

The people who cry, "Save Fort York!" didn't lose this fight this year, or last year.

They lost it 29 years ago when the CNR took a good whack out of the fort for railroad yards, without so much as a whimper from the public. They lost it when the Bathurst St. viaduct was built east of the fort, when Molson's built their own fort just to the south, when parking lots and gasoline stations and rushing roadways pushed in and through the area.

It seems to me that the value of any historic object must be measured by the extent to which it fulfils its potential in public meaning. I would say that Fort York fulfils about one per cent of that potential. It is the darling of the local fort-worshippers, very little more.

ON THE WATERFRONT, I THINK THAT since there is very little left of the original fort, anyway, a strong positive argument could be made on behalf of moving the fort back to the waterfront.

There, with land now available, a rebuilt fort could be placed in a setting that would be much more meaningful for visitors—grassy slopes up from the lake, clean air, relative quiet. The most cursory tourist, or yakking little band of local schoolchildren, then could be shown something they could both enjoy and understand.

In fact, it would be almost impossible for anyone even passing through the Toronto waterfront area NOT to be conscious of a fort rebuilt in such a setting.

This in itself would be a total reversal of the present situation, when if anyone thinks of Fort York at all it is to reflect that it was lucky for the Americans that they attacked in 1813. They'd never even find the place, now.

Forts have been moved before. In fact, they often were moved a few hundred yards this way or that, back when they were being used. These

moves were made for usefulness or convenience. It is only since the advent of the historical society that people have been loth to move forts.

I would like to see Fort York rebuilt on the shore of Lake Ontario near where H.M.C.S. York is now; its proper setting.

I'd like to see it rebuilt in its original form (which isn't the present one) so that it could display once again its full original functions.

And I'd like to see it managed by historians with a vital interest in making our history exciting to all who pass—including those who belong to no learned societies.

A film could be made depicting life in and around the fort at the time of its greatest use. This could be shown to visitors on entering. I have seen films used that way elsewhere (Williamsburg, Va., for instance). It is a great help to understanding what later is seen.

Then we would be doing something to make our history live. And that would be a welcome change from our present practices with regard to Fort York, which often resemble nothing so much as "a process of embalming."

## PLAN TO MOVE FORT YORK DESCRIBED AS 'VANDALISM'



—Star Photo by Federal Newsphotos  
**SGT. HAROLD FORD AND MRS. J. KEILLER MACKAY**  
 Wife of Lieutenant-Governor Gets Mulled Apple Cider

The secretary of the Toronto civic historical committee last night described as "vandalism" a proposal to move Fort York and its cemetery out of the path of the Fred G. Gardiner expressway.

Col. J. A. McGinnis said the proposal "is a scandalous situation" and a contemplated act of vandalism.

Mr. Gardiner, chairman of Metropolitan Toronto council, said Metro is willing to pay for moving the historic fort "piece by piece and brick by brick" out of the path of the \$60,000,000 super highway.

He said the 18th-century fort can be moved for probably much less than \$1,000,000. Diverting the expressway would cost about \$2,000,000.

Col. McGinnis said he would rather have the expressway infringe on fort property than see its buildings torn down and put together on some other site.

### Historic Attraction

"The fort is an original," he said. "We don't want a restoration job which would turn the building into a tourist instead of a historic attraction."

Bricks in some of the fort's buildings would crumble dur-

ing dismantling and the bricks could not be duplicated.

The future of Fort York, which figured in the war of 1812, came under discussion among civic officials when it was discovered two piers of the elevated super highway were to be located on fort land. Metro later promised to by-pass the fort.

Leslie Saunders, former mayor, also spoke out against the moving of the fort, at a reception held at the fort by the Historical committee.

"You can move buildings but not battlefields," he said, after Lieut.-Gov. J. Keiller Mackay mentioned "the importance of preserving tradition."

### Cannon Is Fired

After the lieutenant-governor and Mrs. Mackay received the guests, a Retreat ceremony was performed by members of the Queen's York Rangers and the Civic War Veterans.

The flag lowered and the historic cannon of the fort was fired, and then the lieutenant-governor took the salute.

During the reception that followed, guests were served hot mulled cider and cakes and cookies, all made by ladies of the Historical committee from old colonial recipes.

## Gardiner Pleads

# May Halt Expressway If Fort, CPR Adamant

Metro Chairman Gardiner yesterday pleaded with the Toronto Historical Board to consent to the transfer of Old Fort York to Coronation Park on the lakefront out of the path of the F. G. Gardiner Expressway.

Mr. Gardiner told board members and representatives of other community historical societies that he was fond of historical sites but it wouldn't be the first time one had to be moved in the name of progress.

Leslie Saunders, chairman of the city board said its members are not in favor of the proposal but will not close its mind to Metro's problems.

As outlined by Mr. Gardiner the expressway route must either encroach on CPR lands or lands of Fort York in order

to proceed east from behind the CNE grounds to an elevated position over Fleet St.

Mr. Gardiner indicated that if neither the guardians of the fort or the CPR would give away land, the expressway may have to be halted at the western end of the CNE grounds.

This section of the Gardiner expressway from the Humber River to Dowling Ave. will be formally opened Aug. 8 by a ceremony on the Humber bridge. Mr. Gardiner invited the historians to attend.

Mr. Gardiner said Metro would take great care in moving the fort and adjoining military cemetery one-quarter of a mile to the new site under the architectural supervision of anyone the historical board wants to nominate.

The Metro chairman was told by Mr. Saunders that final decision on transfer of the fort will remain with city council. He hinted that since this decision could be made so close to municipal election time at the end of the year anything could happen.

## GARDINER CHARM FAILS TO CONVINCE HISTORIANS

Fred Gardiner, Metro chairman, can be extremely affable and persuasive when the occasion demands. The occasion demanded it yesterday and his charm was on full throttle, but he didn't appear to make much progress in urging local historians to agree Fort York should be moved to a new location on the Toronto waterfront.

Looking for all the world as if he were walking on eggs, he pleaded eloquently for approval of his proposal that the fort be moved one-quarter mile to the south, out of the path of the lakeshore expressway which bears his name.

Using his favorite expression to describe a difficult situation, he told the approximately 25 persons gathered in the Metro council chamber: "I'm up against the velvet."

### Called Boycott

While a boycott of the special meeting had been called for by A. Gordon Clarry, chairman of the Associated Historical Societies Committee dedicated to save the fort from the expressway, representatives of several groups were present, although many stressed they were there as private individuals.

Leslie H. Saunders, former mayor and chairman of the civic historical committee which administers the fort, doubted his group could go for any moving proposal. "Then it would not be a historic site," he stated.

"Next to the Plains of Abraham, this is one of the most important sites in Canada," added J. C. Boylen, member of the civic historical committee. He warned Mr. Gardiner his plans would bring trouble from Ottawa.

Fort York and surrounding lands were sold to Toronto by the federal government early in this century on the understanding they would be maintained as they were in 1816, he said. "I imagine this will soon be discussed in parliament," said Mr. Boylen. "The government will be asked if it can condone this act of vandalism."

Harriet Clark, a member of the York Pioneers, said she could only infer from Mr. Gardiner's comments that the fort had to go to preserve railway, brewery and grocer properties. "It won't be Fort York if it's moved," she stated. "It may be compensation for destroying the fort, and a better tourist attraction, but you can't move a place."

### Bitter Voice

Others referred to military graves in a cemetery to the west of the fort, and the bodies of soldiers who fell in the War of 1812 and are reputedly buried in unmarked graves all over the present fort grounds.

"Those men preserved Canada for us—they died for us," said Mrs. G. C. Brown. "Out of respect for them, I ask you not to move the fort."

"You have the final word anyway," stated Miss Clark, a note of bitterness in her voice.

"I haven't," pleaded Mr. Gardiner. "That's why we're here today."

He laid two plans before the meeting, a large architect's sketch of how the fort would look in a new location in Coronation Park, south-east of the CNE grounds, and a scale model of how the Gardiner expressway could miss the fort in its present location by cutting over property now owned by the CPR.

The latter proposal, he pointed out, has little hope of success, as the CPR is unwilling to give up any of its holdings, and Metro has no power to expropriate railway properties. The railway, he explained, feels the land will be needed to store railway cars when Toronto's harbor expands following completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

"Money is not the important consideration here," he emphasized several times.

### Early Plan Blocked

He explained some weeks ago that rerouting the expressway around the fort will cost up to \$2,500,000, while moving the fort could be accomplished for about \$1,000,000. His earlier plan to have the expressway cut over a corner of the fort was blocked by the last session of the Ontario legislature.

Original plans to have the expressway run along the waterfront south of the CNE were strenuously opposed by both the CNE board of directors and the Toronto board of trade.

In a nutshell, said Mr. Gardiner, his dilemma is that the expressway must either go north of the CNE and across the fort, or else funnel into the existing Lakeshore Blvd. south of the CNE, which could not handle the traffic.

"In my humble opinion," said the Metro chairman, "the fort is in a very unsatisfactory position today, hemmed in by railways, breweries, slaughterhouses and railways. Very few citizens even know where it is."

The expressway running past it would be 30 feet in the air, not improving the setting. Moving Fort York to the waterfront would give it an "infinitely better location," where 1,000 times as many people could see it as see it now.

He explained the fort would be located on new parkland to the present shoreline to the be created by filling out from breakwater. "We would take it apart piece by piece and brick by brick, under the supervision of any architect or anyone you choose," he told the meeting.

### Asks for Help

"You can't stand in the way of progress," he stated, pointing out that before the St. Lawrence Seaway could be built valuable historic sites such as Chrystler's Farm had to be moved. "Ladies and gentlemen," said the chairman, "I'm asking for your help, I'm not here to argue with you." Not once during the 70-minute meeting did his voice rise to the shout so familiar at Metro sessions.

Mr. Saunders promised the civic historical committee would give careful consideration to all his arguments, but added that moving the fort would, in his opinion, end its value as an historic site. "In any event, the final responsibility must rest with city council," he said.

Two persons, Leslie Varley of the Toronto District Ex-Servicemen's Advisory Committee and Col. H. R. Alley, of the civic historical committee, criticized Mr. Gardiner for keeping people "in the dark" so long about expressway plans.

"If more meetings like this were held, I'm sure things would progress faster and more harmoniously," said Mr. Varley. "This is the first time we've heard all the facts," said Col. Alley.

"I accept justifiable criticism," replied Mr. Gardiner. He extended a personal invitation to all present to attend the opening of the first section of the expressway Aug. 8. "You will be very proud of how it is turning what was once the twelfth worst to one of the finest entrances to a city in North America," he said.

The Telegram, Jun. 26, 1958

## The Fort Is Desecrated Now

TORONTO is fortunate in having historically-minded men and women who rise as one to defend the precious sites of this city against desecration. It must be said, however, that the fervor of some of them rises to the extreme of accusing those who do not agree with their definition of "desecration" of being Philistines of a low order.

The argument over Fort York has been marked by implications that those who favor moving it to Coronation Park are completely devoid of reverence for history and for tradition, and that all they are thinking about is the Expressway. Some of them undoubtedly are thinking about the Expressway, but it would be charitable, if not reasonable, to assume when there is no evidence to the contrary that the human mind is capable of embracing thoughts about roads and at the same time retaining

respect for works of art or of history.

Fort York at present is surrounded by a brewery, warehouses, a cement works and railroad yards. Originally, it was situated at the lake front. Now, due to the filling in of the lake and to industrialization, the Fort occupies as dreary and obscure a site as could be imagined.

Those in favor of leaving the Fort where it is mean that it would be desecration to transplant the Fort to its original position in parkland at the water's edge where it would have a commanding view and command attention. It is this definition of "desecration" with which many people, also historically minded, will not agree.

The Toronto Historical Board is nominated by City Council and, on behalf of the city, supervises matters of historical interest. It rests with Council to assert its wishes when the Board's policy conflicts with the public interest.

The Telegram, Jul. 4, 1958

## Fort York Is For The Public

A MEETING of the Civic Historical Committee has gone on record opposing removal of Fort York to the lakefront or any encroachment upon it. City Council will note that only eight of the fifteen members of the Committee were present at the meeting and that two of them appeared to have reservations on the subject.

Even if all fifteen were present and all categorically opposed transfer of the Fort to Coronation Park, it must be clearly understood that Fort York is not preserved for the exclusive edification of the Committee but for the people in general.

There is, therefore, every reason why the Fort should be moved to the lakefront, not because of the Express-

way but because it will give people a better opportunity to see it.

At the new site in Coronation Park, a plaque might well be placed at the entrance to the Fort to point out that the original site was 800 yards or so to the north; that over the years the lake in that area had been filled in, and that the new site by the lake is relatively correct. For it was at the lakefront that Fort York stood when it met the American assault on April 27, 1813.

On behalf of the public, City Council ought to commence proceedings, in co-operation with Metro Council, to move Fort York to the site where it will be more convenient for people to see it and which bears a truer relationship to its historical position.



RELIVING A THRILLING HISTORICAL EVENT—AMERICANS ATTACK FORT YORK

## THE TELEGRAM

An independent newspaper, founded in 1876 by J. Ross Robertson, George McCullagh, president and publisher, 1948-52. Published at 227-245 Bay St., Toronto 1, by The Telegram Publishing Company Limited, proprietors.

JOHN BASSETT, Jr.,  
Chairman and Publisher

A. W. J. BUCKLAND,  
President and Editor-in-Chief

D. S. PERIGOE,  
Vice-President and Managing Director

J. D. MacFARLANE,  
Vice-President and Executive Editor

Authorized as second class mail, Post Office Department

TORONTO, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1958

### Respect For Fort York

MEMBERS of the Toronto Historical Board would do the public a favor by joining with others who wish to arouse interest in Fort York. It may be assumed that that is one of the chief aims of the board—to interest citizens in their historical heritage.

As Fort York now stands it attracts little public interest. This is inevitable. It almost takes the devotion of a dedicated antiquarian or pathfinder to venture to an institution that is set in a maze of railroad yards, warehouses, a brewery and a cement works.

However, when it is proposed

to move the Fort to the waterfront in Coronation Park where it would capture the eye and be easily accessible, members of the Historical Board fiercely protest. Yet that is exactly where the Fort once stood—by the waterfront before reclamation of the lake drove it to its present inland position.

The Historical Board is anxious, and rightly so, to prevent desecration of the Fort, but one might wish that it would abandon its opinion that those who are in favor of moving the Fort have no respect for it. On the contrary, they believe that the Fort would better serve the purpose of its

preservation if it were in Coronation Park.

The board argues that the Fort stands on sacred ground. To move the ground on which it stands is possible. A similar feat was accomplished at the St. Lawrence Seaway where earth, cemeteries and buildings were moved. The same could be done with the Fort, and by the water's edge it would stand on its own ground in its original position, and on a site clear and accessible, where it would invite thousands of residents and tourists. It could be one of the city's magnetic attractions.

In The Telegram's view the proposal could not be more reasonable. It eliminates the problem of aligning the Expressway and, far from desecrating the Fort, induces people to see it and, by their attendance, show regard for it. For the sake of public appreciation of history, the board, it is hoped, will agree to co-operate.



# Gardiner Will Ask Revision Of Bill 80 To Shift Fort York

A proposal to move Old Fort York and its military cemetery from the present location to a more suitable site on the waterfront in order to make way for the new Gardiner Lakeshore Expressway will be put forward at Tuesday's meeting of the Metro executive, Metro chairman Fred G. Gardiner said today.

Mr. Gardiner, who described the present location of the fort as "undesirable," said it could be re-located on the waterfront either within or adjacent to the CNE grounds, on a site designated by the City of Toronto.

He will also propose that Metro make application to the provincial legislature for amendment of the 1953 Metro Act which now prevents use of the Fort York properties for highways or other related works.

#### Park Land Now

If the fort is moved to a new location, Mr. Gardiner said, the disposition of the former site would be up to a decision between the city and Metro. At present it is considered city parkland.

Use of the land now is confined to its function as a historic site by a restriction enacted by the province of Ontario, Mr. Gardiner said. Any change in use would require approval by the provincial government.

So far as the Metro legal department can determine, the Dominion government no longer exercises any jurisdiction over the property, Mr. Gardiner said.

#### Many Objected

First suggestions earlier this year that the expressway cross over the fort or that the fort be removed brought a series of outcries from citizens objecting to what was termed "desecration of a historical shrine".

An application to have the expressway overhang the fort was ruled out by a standing committee of the provincial legislature. It was following this refusal that Mr. Gardiner made the suggestion the fort be moved "piece by piece and brick by brick" out of the path of the \$95,000,000 expressway. This suggestion brought further objections from historical-minded citizens and groups.

#### Sold to City

Members of the Associated Historical societies committee were among those who objected to any suggestions that the fort and cemetery be relocated for the expressway. They claim the fort and surrounding lands were sold to Toronto by the federal government early in the century on the understanding they would be maintained as they were in 1816.

The question was also brought up on the floor of the House of Commons recently when Hon. George Pearkes, minister of national defence, disclosed the lands would revert to the crown if the agreement to maintain them in their original condition was broken.

#### Road Over Common

Mr. Gardiner would have Metro request the city of Toronto to convey to it such parts of the garrison common as will permit the expressway to be located between Strachan Ave. and Bathurst St. in what he terms the "most advantageous position." This would be on the condition that Metro moves the military cemetery and fort from the present location to a more appropriate spot.

A new route for the expressway which completely misses the fort and cemetery was recently worked out by Metro engineers.

This new route, which passes south of the fort and cemetery, "deviates very little" from the original route, George Grant, Metro roads commissioner, stated.

#### Need New Bridge

The southerly route would require demolition of the Ontario Hydro building on Strachan Ave., estimated at \$500,000, purchase of rights across CPR rail yards and construction of a new wooden bridge at the entrance to the fort. It would still be necessary to cut through the northern part of the Loblaw warehouse on Bathurst St.

Mr. Gardiner had earlier estimated such a change would cost more than \$1,000,000. Mr. Gardiner had said changing the route would cost \$2,500,000 while moving the fort would cost only about \$1,000,000.

The alternate route as outlined by Metro engineers would deviate from the original course just west of Strachan Ave., cutting across the Hydro building. It would continue on, north of the Fort York armories across the CPR rail yard, then over Bathurst St., where it would cut through the corner of the Loblaw warehouse.

Metro officials indicated the CPR is now willing to allow the expressway to cross its rail lines but no agreement has been reached with Loblaw's. Removal of a corner of the Loblaw building would be necessary, however, whichever route is chosen.

## Orphan Fortress

Historical societies, Legionnaires and other defenders of the old Fort York site have fallen back on the argument that the buildings are not capable of being moved. They have told the Metropolitan Executive Committee that the proposal of Metro Chairman Gardiner to move the fort to the lakeside and allow the cross-town Expressway to go through is therefore "unrealistic".

All credit to their motives and their horror of encroachment on a shrine; but sentiment of this sort will frustrate the very objective it seeks to serve. The value of such historical sites as Fort York is to give this and future generations an authentic look at the times and doings of our ancestors.

And historically Fort York was a waterfront stronghold, designed to fight a waterborne invasion, defensible because it was readily reachable with reinforcements and supplies, both by lake and by land. Today it bears no such testimony. Land reclamation has long ago taken the waterfront far away, railroads and industry have surrounded and all but totally isolated it; among them they have engulfed the strategic location which gave it historical value. In short, its last-ditch defenders are fighting

a physical encroachment which has already taken place, yet overlooking the even more final encroachment of forgetfulness which its isolation makes inevitable.

Mr. Gardiner's plan is to restore the fort to its original concept of military importance by reconstructing it on a site commanding the harbor. There it can be a genuine historical shrine, readily accessible to visitors, a museum of both the martial and civilian genius of its time. It is not the doom of Fort York but its rescue which is at issue.

This simple and inescapable alternative should be recognized, so that work can proceed on the sensible route for the Expressway, a road made imperative by the same progressive development which thrust the old fort into oblivion. It is not too late to escape the expensive and impracticable bending of the Expressway, but time presses. Contracts have to be let for the next section. And not only can money be saved on its construction, but undoubtedly Provincial help can be secured to pay for the fort's restoration. That way we shall have both a proper Expressway and a permanent Fort York. Otherwise we shall wind up with neither.

The Toronto Daily Star, Nov. 22, 1958

## Old Fort to Stay Gardiner Gives In Cost Up \$1,000,000

Metro has abandoned efforts to shift Fort York to a lakefront setting to make way for the Frederick G. Gardiner expressway.

Instead, the road will skirt the fort—at a cost almost \$1,000,000 more than if the fort had been moved.

Mr. Gardiner, Metro council chairman, said he dropped his proposal to shift the fort when the Associated Historical Societies indicated they would fight the shift up to the federal government.

Three times Mr. Gardiner was prepared to introduce his proposal to Metro executive committee. Each time he changed his mind because of strong protests from the societies, especially the Toronto Historical board.

His proposal was to move the

fort and garrison burial ground to Coronation park from its present location, hemmed in by railway tracks on the north, the high level bridges of Strachan Ave. and Bathurst St. on the west and east, and the expressway on the south.

"We met the historical people and showed them how much better a lakefront site would be," said Mr. Gardiner. "They said they'd send a report. We never got it. Eventually, if you want to have a road, you have to have plans, so we went ahead with an alternate route."

The \$95,000,000 expressway originally went 35 feet over a corner of the fort. This was changed when a provincial government committee refused to allow the road to overhang the fort.

25 Nov 1958 'But 'Twas a Famous Victory' RFM



## What to Do With Fort York 10 Dec 58

May I put forward some comments on the controversy over Fort York? I write in my personal capacity as a professional historian, not as an associate of the so-called "hysterical historical societies" who have been accused of ignoring the public interest and treating history as their own private concern. Yet it does seem to me that some better description is due to a small, devoted group of people who have worked for years to help preserve our historical heritage in this Province—when, except for sudden brief outbursts, the general public could hardly have cared less. If this small group has ever regarded history as its own private concern, it may well be the result of the mass of the people failing to show concern at all. Thus Fort York came into its present situation: but that brings me to my first point.

1. It is not just a matter of a small group wilfully obstructing a simple, straightforward demand to move the fort. Fort York stands on original Crown property made over to the City of Toronto by the Federal Government on the express condition that it be kept inviolate. Yet all around that property has been infringed upon. If the surroundings of the fort now present an unattractive picture it is precisely because that condition was not respected—and the public did not arouse themselves to prevent it.

2. It is far from clear whether the actual physical structure of the fort can be moved without destroying it. If the buildings are taken down, for instance, the old brick in the walls may crumble beyond any possible re-use. Granted a lot of the brick and buildings even now are of modern (re-) construction: this, in fact, may also be a reason against moving the fort. Its significance now lies less, perhaps, in its structure than in the site itself—this is where historic events occurred. If the buildings are not fully original and authentic, then the place certainly is.

3. It does not necessarily follow that because a historic site does not have the same surroundings it did a century or so ago that this is justification for declaring it a historic site no longer. There are ancient castles and cathedrals in Britain now standing in the heart of smoking industrial cities, but no one suggests moving them because this isn't quite the landscape of the 12th Century.

4. Returning to Fort York, how can we tell what another 50 years might do to a relocated site? That question might seem a little remote, but the very essence of a historic site is that it doesn't just belong to us, but to the past, the present, and the future. Suppose we move it, and in 50 years changes we cannot foretell have spoiled the new location, or the fort again is neglected. What would remain? A crumbling, phony ruin—whereas, at least where the fort now stands, it will always remain an authentic historic site for redevelopment, even when our present ideas of "progress" may seem laughably old-fashioned to our descendants and the "new" Expressway itself may be a superseded wreck.

If we move it, do we have any real assurance the new site will be respected? Was the old one, despite a definite requirement? And if we leave it where it stands, may not Toronto some day follow Chicago's fine example and clear industry out of the central lakefront, and create a shoreline park system to be graced by old Fort York? The point remains, it is sheer short-sightedness to think only in terms of the present and ignore the future. Railway lines and breweries are not eternally placed where they are. Our waterfront has changed before and will change again.

5. It is not a conclusive argument to say that the fort once stood by the water and now no longer does. The shoreline might alter in a new location, too. But, in any case, the present site of the fort makes clear in sharp, dramatic fashion how Toronto's harbor front has grown—it illustrates history in itself. Besides, on the grounds that the setting now no longer looks as it did, one could justify clearing buildings to make farmlands in towns, or even planting heavy forests, as proper backdrops for other historic structures across the Province.

6. Finally, a historic site is not merely a tourist attraction, to be shifted around to where it will draw the biggest gate. Of course, it is important—highly important—that people should see it, know it, and recognize its worth: natives, perhaps, far more than visitors. And of course it is all to the good to realize the practical cash value of historic structures. But come what may, these can only be secondary to the site's prime purpose of preserving the reality of the past—"Here such-and-such actually took place." If you don't have that essential reality first, then, however excellent the reconstruction or construction placed elsewhere may be, it still is only make-believe. Would we do that to a fort and site that represent the very beginnings of this city—however good for business?

Toronto.

J. M. S. Careless.

## Chance To Move Fort

Two gentle elderly ladies were having a good chew yesterday about Fort York while munching their sandwiches. "Disgraceful, my dear, wanting to move that precious patriotic relic just to make way for a dreadful expressway." "Yes, heartless. And all—all, my dear—of the Toronto papers want the fort moved! What's the world coming to?"

Dear ladies: because all three Toronto newspapers may favor removing Fort York to a more sightly and strategically accurate site on the lakeshore, and thus getting it out of the path of the expressway, does not mean that they have no sense of historical fitness. To the contrary; newspapers generally are careful, even sentimental, about our historical monuments. Progress must not be allowed to erase the good past.

The Star, editorially and in articles, has constantly emphasized the importance of historical mementos and records, praised Premier Frost for his tender sense of Ontario history and certainly never condemned city or Metro council for grants to such organizations as the York Pioneer and Historical society.

It is because we have a lively sense of history and wish to see Fort York preserved that we advocate its removal nearer the lakeshore—out of the way of the bulldozers of the future. If it is not moved it is likely, some day or other, to be wiped out.

The fort's re-siting would be desirable anyway, even if an expressway had never been thought of. The present situation is ugly; the fort is hard to get at and jam-packed between a brewery, an abattoir and railway sidings. The lakeshore park site a few hundred yards away would be more sightly, accessible and true to historical flavor.

Instead of fighting the move, the Toronto Civic Historical committee should welcome the chance. For judging by the fact that the committee needed (and got) a city council grant of some \$26,495 this year, and similar grants in other years, it could never by itself afford to make the expensive move. Now the fort can have a proper setting at no cost whatsoever to the historians.



## By Pierre Berton

### WHY FORT YORK SHOULD NEVER BE MOVED

THE HOAX OF THE YEAR, nay, the hoax of the decade has been the sham battle over the moving of old Fort York. We have all been led down the garden path into a thicket of falsehood and misrepresentation. We have been conned, my friends, and I would mightily like to know who is responsible.

It has been said that, unless the fort is moved, the expressway would have to be redesigned at a cost of an extra million dollars with a dangerous curve added. This is not true.

It has been said we might, as well move the fort anyway because we are not sure that it actually stands on its original site. This is not true.

It has been said that the fort is only a reconstruction and therefore has no historical significance. This is not true.

It has been suggested that the fort can be moved easily and cheaply. This is a monstrous lie.

What has not been said, or scarcely whispered, is that the fort stands on some of the most valuable acreage in Toronto. The lowest possible estimate of the land value is \$150,000 an acre. It would make a lovely site for a factory, a tempting parking lot for the CNE, a mouth-watering railway extension.

A lot of high-minded reasons have been advanced for moving Fort York but the real deep down reasons, it seems to me, have always had to do with money.

One reason for all the fuss, it develops, was the argument the expressway builders had with the Hydro and the CNR. The problem could be solved, everybody said, by moving our most important and significant historical shrine.

And that is ironic for both the Hydro and the CNR are encroaching on land to which they had no original right. That land is the 200 acres of the Garrison Common, which surrounds Fort York and now includes the Canadian National Exhibition. It was deeded to the city in 1909 on condition that it be used solely for parks or industrial fairs and that the fort be repaired and maintained in its original condition forever.

There are 22 acres left today for Fort York and the neighboring Garrison cemetery.

### As it Looked in 1816

The city did not get around to repairing the fort until 1932, by which time most of the Common had been whittled away, some of it quite improperly. But the fort that stands today is the fort of 1816 as it was rebuilt during and after the war of 1812.

Some of the buildings are missing but the eight that stand are all original. One of them, the Simcoe block-house, goes back to 1793 and is the oldest building in Toronto and one of the very first. The brick, stone, mortar, window sash, logs and trim in these buildings have been there since the beginning.

The brick is hand formed and soft. The foundations go down four feet. How in God's name could you move them? You might be able to take them apart and piece them together again at a cost far in excess of that much-discussed million, but you would not then have Fort York. You would have a Hollywood set but you would not have the cradle of our history.

Fort York's site is easily as important as its eight buildings. Half a dozen famous militia regiments had their beginnings on this soil. Simcoe, the founder of Toronto, slept here and so did Brock, the general who saved Canada. General Pike, of Pike's Peak, died here storming the ramparts. Yonge St. was planned within these walls.

Toronto grew up in the shadow of Fort York and without the fort there would be no city. For the fort came first. Simcoe chose it as a naval bastion to guard the harbor in the days when the lakeshore was unpopulated. If he had chosen elsewhere—Hamilton, say, or Kingston—these cities would be the Toronto of today.

No one knows yet what historical treasures wait to be uncovered here. Back in the twenties, a packing plant was allowed to build on the southeast corner of the fort land. Workmen uncovered the bodies of the American soldiers who were killed at 2.30 p.m. on April 27, 1813, when the original fort was attacked and partially destroyed. The bodies were carted off and the plant built. It is gone today; the fort remains.

In 1933, excavators discovered two artillery pieces half buried in the fort soil. They were able to identify them specifically as guns used in defence of the fort against the Americans.

And just last summer Lt.-Colonel J. A. McGinnis, the director of old Fort York, poring over an original map of the site, came upon a spot marked "A.P." He figured it meant "ash pit," measured out the distance on the old charts, and there, just below the surface found a conventional British army ash pit, six by eight, undisturbed for more than a hundred years.

How could you move this site, with all its memories, to the sterile fill of the lakeshore?

### A Glimpse of the Past

When you step inside the walls of the old fort and walk across the quiet common between the buildings of old brown brick, you glimpse the past. The fort stands high, guarding the city and the harbor as it was meant to do, and today it overlooks 140 years of change and progress.

Below runs the old line of the lake and you can see it clearly, curving westward toward the CNE. Directly beneath, the reclaimed land, ribboned by rail and road, stretches toward the water. To the east, like shadows of the future, the spires of the new Toronto rise above the old fort buildings. (Did Simcoe glimpse them, too, in those far off days?)

It is a satisfying view but a sobering one, for it tells you that so much of what we know is impermanent. Expressways will come and go every quarter century, lakeshores change at the whim of man and nature, rail yards shift, factories rise and crumble. Only on these 10 acres do we walk with history.

It is perhaps true that the fort is inconveniently situated (though 50,000 people visited it last summer)—but so is the Tower of London. Most historical sites are found in odd places. That is why they are historical.

We can build a phony Fort York on the lakeshore if we wish and watch the lake move back from it again and new expressways cross its front yard. And perhaps for awhile more people will see it. Will they see the real McCoy? No, alas. In an age of sham and simulation they will see another piece of fakery. They will see a side show but they will not see a shrine.

And meanwhile, back at the old fort, somebody will have got himself a fancy piece of real estate.

The Toronto Daily Star, Jan. 9, 1959

# Should Move Fort York Will Pay Half, Says Frost

9 Jan 59

By RAYMOND HILL  
Telegram Staff Reporter

Premier Frost joined forces with Mayor Phillips today in action aimed at moving Fort York to Coronation Park and out of the way of the multi-million dollar Fred G. Gardiner expressway.

It marked the first time that the Premier had entered the battle of the fort—a battle which has been raging for nearly two years.

Mayor Phillips called for the removal of the fort to Coronation Park on Monday in his inaugural address to City Council.

"If the city, in its wisdom, feels that the moving of the fort and its restoration to its commanding position should be undertaken, the Province is prepared to regard the removal as a highway undertaking and pay 50 per cent. of the cost," said the Premier in a letter to Mayor Phillips.

Fort York's defenders were caught by surprise by the sudden turn of events.

A. Gordon Clarry, chairman of the city's associated historical societies, said the fort's defenders would stage a strategic retreat to Ottawa in the hope that the Dominion Government would intervene.

He charged that Metro was attempting to take over the land in the hope of "getting into a big real estate deal" and selling the 22 acres that would be left over after the expressway is built.

"Two industrial concerns are

interested in the property," he charged.

He said "this horrible creature Gardiner was behind the fight to move the fort."

The expressway was "horribly named," he insisted.

First official indication of support for the Mayor's stand came from the city parks committee yesterday.

A majority of committee members favored moving the Fort to Coronation Park but insisted upon having reports from Parks Commissioner George Bell before reaching a final decision.

But he said he had a "pro-

found respect" for the fort's defenders who thwarted previous moves to change its location.

He said the moving of the fort would likely cost more money than building the expressway around it.

It would not be an "act of desecration but the reverse," he said. The present fort, bounded by railway yards and away from the channel which used to be to the south is in its least advantageous position.

## CO-OPERATION

He pledged Provincial Government co-operation in moving it.

"The province has had experience in moving historical sites in the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Every grain of sand in the old fort and every brick can be removed and restored. The same applies to the little cemetery beside it," he said.

Premier Frost said the Ontario Government was prepared to make an "archaeological survey of the surrounding area to make sure that nothing is lost and to make possible the actual restoration of things which perhaps have been forgotten and buried over the years."

He said reasons for moving it were "overwhelming."

Last year, he said, Fort York had 20,000 visitors. In a new location, it would be visited by "hundreds of thousands," he said.



NEW FORT YORK on the LAKE LTD., MESSRS. PHILLIPS & FROST, prop.



The Globe & Mail, Jan. 10, 1959

## Mr. Frost and the Fort *gfm*

Premier Frost is a patron of the York Pioneer and Historical Society, an honor he merits because of his deep interest in the history of this Province. As proof of that interest, there are the numerous sites of historical value which have been preserved throughout Ontario under Provincial Government auspices, and the careful relocation of historically significant buildings in Seaway Valley.

Thus when Mr. Frost speaks of Ontario history, it is with the authority of one who has genuine feeling for, and appreciation of, that subject. And when he endorses the proposal to move Fort York to the lakefront—as he has now done—it must be concluded that the idea has more than enough merit to outweigh the objections of the overly sensitive historical purists.

The Premier has backed up his declaration with an offer, on behalf of his Government, to pay half the cost of moving the Fort (expected to mount to at least \$1 million). This generosity is possible because the Province pays half the cost of new roads, and the Fort's relocation would be part of the Gardiner Expressway project.

The question of whether the expressway goes around the Fort, under it or over it has become academic. Wherever it is routed, it will succeed in cutting off the old bastion further from public access. And when the interchange is built to link the expressway with Highway 400 some years from now, the Fort's submergence will be complete. It is only common sense to move it south to the lakeshore, where it can once again proudly stand guard, freed from its tangle of railway sidings, bridges and industrial buildings.

As the Premier said, moving Fort York would not be an act of desecration but the reverse, since it has already been desecrated by faulty planning which permitted it to become all but lost from view. And when he stated that every grain of sand and every brick could be removed and restored, it was with the authority of actual experience.

All that remains now is for the city to secure agreement from the Dominion Government for the project. Such agreement, now that Mr. Frost has thrown his weight on the side of relocation, should be quickly forthcoming. *10 JAN 59*

## Shift Of Ground On Fort Battle *Star*

Should Fort York be moved? The answer depends on whose sense of history you prefer.

On the one hand are those who regard a historic building as a sort of national shrine, a place for pilgrimages. To tamper with it is desecration, and the ground it stands on is hallowed. On the other hand are those like Premier Frost who believe the main purpose is educational, to evoke a picture of things past. To move Fort York to a more accessible site, is not to them a desecration but an enhancement of its virtue as a teacher of the past.

The question of whether or not money will be saved by moving the fort out of the way of the Gardiner expressway is no longer a significant issue. Premier Frost has said "it might cost a little more" to move the fort than to leave it where it is and by-pass the expressway around it. The original estimate of \$2,000,000 to by-pass the fort, it now turns out, was exaggerated. The actual cost, if the route now favored can be followed, will be about \$860,000. Engineers estimate the cost of moving the fort will be in the neighborhood of \$1,000,000. Mr. Frost has offered to pay half.

But though difference in cost is no longer an issue, other considerations may make removal of the fort desirable.

The new revised route of the expressway crosses property used by the CPR as a marshalling yard. The railway has said that with the seaway soon opening, it cannot afford to give up any yard space. It has agreed, however, to exchange some of its yard for a piece of Fort York grounds of equivalent size, into which it can extend its yards. Unless Fort York is moved this deal with the CPR falls through, and the whole business is right back where it started.

If the fort is not moved the expressway will have to be built over the garrison cemetery, which is the original plan to which the historical societies took violent objection, or alternatively, it will have to be built with a sharp and maybe dangerous curve to avoid the cemetery, the fort and the CPR. This is the plan on which engineers based their \$2,000,000 extra estimate, and to which they are still opposed.

All other considerations aside, The Star believes the old fort deserves a better setting than it has now. We agree with Premier Frost that to move it to the waterfront is not an act of desecration, but a fitting tribute to its importance in Ontario history. The real desecration would be to hem it in with a three-level expressway interchange of noise, speeding automobiles and gasoline fumes. But if it is moved the principle of an acre of new parkland for every acre taken from an existing park should be applied.

## MOVE OF FORT UP TO COUNCIL FROST CLAIMS

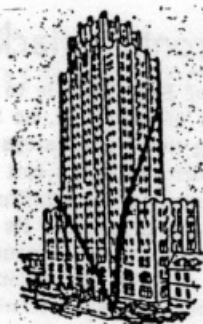
Initiative now lies with city council whether to move the old Fort York, Premier Frost said today. "If they decide to move it, we'll play ball with them."

Personally in favor of moving the fort to a waterfront position more in keeping with its former strategic purpose, the premier said that the undertaking would be considered as a highways project by the province which would pay half the cost.

The Toronto Daily Star, Jan. 12, 1959

The premier pointed out that he had said in his letter to Mayor Phillips that the fort already had suffered over 100 years of faulty planning. Surrounded by buildings and roads, it is hidden away and gives no idea of its former military value in defense of York, he said.

"If the decision is to move the fort, we'll also supply archeologists and other specialists they may need to see that the most thorough job is done, and not even a grain of sand is missed."



# TORONTO

Pub

Direct

HARRY A. HINDMAR

## Fort York Case Needs Closer Look

A newspaper may occasionally claim a woman's privilege and change its mind; should change it, if there is enough alteration in the facts of a case. The facts, about the conflict between the Gardiner expressway and Fort York have changed enough to cause serious misgivings about the wisdom of moving the old fort to a new site.

The original case for moving the fort to the waterfront was based on the saving of dollars and perhaps lives. It was said by Fred Gardiner and other Metro sources that \$1 to \$1.5 million would be saved by the move as against the cost of swinging the expressway around the present site and putting a dangerous curve into it.

The Star accepted these statements in good faith, but they have now collapsed entirely. Metro no longer claims that any money will be saved by moving the fort, and Premier Frost says "it might cost a little more" than to leave the fort alone and by-pass the expressway around it.

It might cost a little more, and it might cost a whole lot more. Metro's estimate of \$1 million or less for moving the fort stone-by-stone and brick-by-brick is considered a vast underestimate by some builders and archeologists. Before taking any action on

the proposal, city and Metro councils should demand an appraisal by independent experts.

Whereas the cost issue is now reversed, the safety issue—if it is real at all—has become more involved. The revised route for the expressway misses the fort and has no sharper curve than the original plan which would have had the expressway pass above the southwest corner of the fort. But the new route would require the use of some CPR land, which the railway is unwilling to give up unless it gets a piece of Fort York land in exchange.

This information was not made public by Metro and provincial authorities. It has prompted speculation that the politicians' real purpose in trying to move the fort is to open up its present site for development by private companies. We do not know whether this speculation is true. But we are quite sure that the public would not sanction the invasion of our most important historic site, the cradle of Toronto, for the purpose of private gain. We also know that the public has been misled, either by carelessness or design, about the cost of by-passing the fort. This is enough reason for the public's representatives to make searching re-examination of the whole question.

## Fort York Defenders Near Triumph

The first battle of Fort York was won in a matter of hours by the invading Americans. The second battle of Fort York, which has been raging nearly a year now, appears likely to end in a total victory for the defenders.

Metro Chairman Gardiner is dropping his recommendation that the fort be moved to the waterfront, and he concedes that the Gardiner expressway can be built without encroaching either on the fort or the garrison cemetery.

The Star welcomes this announcement, because recent revelations have made it clear that the case for moving the fort is something less than compelling, from the public-interest standpoint. It wouldn't save any money, for one thing, and might indeed cost a good deal more than leaving the fort alone and swinging the expressway around it.

Mr. Gardiner's reason for changing his mind is the fear of litigation which might tie up the expressway for a year or two. This is a justified fear; when the federal government deeded the fort to the city in 1909, it stipulated clearly that the site should be restored to its original condition "and preserved and maintained in such condition forever."

If the Gardiner announcement signals the end of the removal project, then congratulations are in order to the defenders of the fort, mobilized by the Associated Historical societies. Their struggle was tinged with hysteria at times, but was nonetheless sincere for that. Those who care most about the fort and its meaning to Toronto want it left right where it is, a fact which should afford some consolation to the losers.

## A Frontal Attack

If the fate of Fort York is to be settled by the deadline of March 31, no time must be lost in taking the various steps necessary before the historic buildings can be moved to a showcase site on the lakefront. Metropolitan Council must consider its Executive Committee's decision to encourage City Council in the project; City Council must consider whether to ask Ottawa for the necessary permission; and Ottawa must then decide whether to give its approval.

On all counts, and for various reasons, the answers should be in the affirmative. None of the parties concerned should be influenced by Metro Chairman Gardiner's change of heart on the subject. His decision to stop working for the relocation of the Fort is based on a hypothetical possibility; none of the strategic and historical reasons for rescuing the old bastion from oblivion has changed.

Nothing could be gained by leaving the Fort where it is, lost among the encroachments of modern civilization and entirely removed from its original context. It would be a desecration of history not to move it, as Premier Frost stated when he announced the Provincial Government's moral and financial support for relocation.

Mr. Gardiner now seems to have accepted the alternative routing of the Expressway around Fort York—although the alignment is inferior to the original one which cut across the area—and is content to leave its relocation until such time as Highway 400 is extended. That would not only necessitate adoption of the second-best route for the Expressway, but—with inflation showing every sign of continuing—would necessitate the spending of a much greater amount of money when the Fort is inevitably moved.

There is no valid reason for further stalling; all the arguments have been threshed out and nothing further can be contributed. The various bodies concerned should expedite the relocation project without delay.

The Toronto Daily Star, Jan. 22, 1959

In Toronto

## RON HAGGART

### Move Fort York? Nate Still Says Yes, But Odds Are On The Fort



TUESDAY was the day they saved Fort York—almost. But they couldn't save Nate Phillips.

It had been a bad day for the mayor all round. He'd had lunch with the Yonge-St. Clair Businessmen's association and endeared himself during his little speech by saying how glad he was to be addressing such an active organization as the Yonge-Bay-Bloor association.

He managed to get away from Aux Maxims at le Cabaret, where the St. Clair businessmen have lunch, in time to make the Metro executive meeting at two, where he scored his triumph of the day.

The others of the executive agreed to start the council meetings of alternate Tuesdays half-an-hour later than heretofore, on the mayor's plea that the press of official business is particularly onerous during the lunch hour.

### Quick Lunch

"Sometimes," said the mayor, "I get tied up at city hall and only have a minute for lunch."

Fred Gardiner helpfully obliged the mayor by extending the lunch hour of alternate Tuesday, but Gardiner was to prove somewhat less understanding a few minutes later when they came to that lingering time-bomb item: should old Fort York be moved?

Gardiner, as he often does when he is in troubled waters, began by speaking in the third person: "When the chairman comes to the conclusion that what he has said is no longer in the best interests of the Metropolitan Corporation—I can change my mind. In the last few days I have changed my mind."

Frederick G. Gardiner Ex-

pressway could be built without planting a pier in the grounds of Fort York and without transgressing the military cemetery; if they decided to move the fort anyway, it was now clear the historical societies would try to stop it in the courts.

Gardiner was cautiously reviewing his logic. Nate Phillips, in the chair to his left, looked pale.

They all knew by now, Gardiner went on, how long an obstructive case in the courts could take: the subway had taught them that lesson.

"The main thing I am impressed about is the threat of litigation. We have plenty of places to put Metropolitan money other than in moving old Fort York, particularly if it is going to give rise to litigation."

### Mayor Unhappy

The reporters, sensing now what was coming, tensed up, stopped doodling funny headlines and got ready for the rush to the phones. Nate Phillips looked unhappy.

Fred Gardiner had a mimeographed recommendation before the executive, asking them to move the fort to the shore of Lake Ontario.

Finally, he came to say what Nate Phillips and the reporters had sensed a few moments before: "I would like to withdraw my recommendation. I will not change my mind again. This is the last I will have to say on the subject."

And with that he took the piece of paper and symbolically tore it three times into halves.

It was obvious who the next speaker had to be. There was a pause. "Well, Mr. Chairman . . ." Nate Phillips began slowly.

Chubby Christopher Tonks, the reeve of York township, saw his workshop's predicament and laughed out loud.

Only two weeks before, Mr.

Phillips had finally taken a public position on the moving of Fort York. In his speech to the inaugural meeting of his council he had said: "We all know that a great controversy has raged around Fort York in recent months; the land it occupies is in the direct path of the Frederick G. Gardiner Expressway."

Then, in a carefully prearranged carom play, Mr. Phillips announced that the fort should be moved if the province of Ontario would pay half the cost. To no one's surprise the premier of the province announced two days later that the province would pay half the cost.

### Fred Pulls Rug

And then, on Tuesday of this week, Fred Gardiner pulled the rug. The highway could be built around the fort (and would be a somewhat better highway, with flatter curves, because of it.) Not only that—when Highway 400 is extended southerly through Toronto to the lakeshore in 15 or 20 years, the interchange with the Gardiner Expressway can also be built to miss both the fort and the graveyard.

Gardiner changed his mind. Nate Phillips refused to. "As I go around," the mayor said, "I find the preponderance of public opinion is in favor of moving the fort and the cemetery."

So they gave the mayor until March 31 to convince the government at Ottawa that it should break a covenant with the city, written in 1909, which says Fort York must be used for its present purpose "forever."

They gave Nate Phillips two months to prove that—for no good reason—forever should end in 1959. If he fails, Fort York will stay where it is.

L1 Jan 27 PM

## Metropolitan Toronto Still Stood the Fort 'Mid Changing Minds

By STANLEY WESTALL

Ford Brand was becoming irritated by the charges and counter charges surrounding the Battle of Fort York.

He had only one question to ask George Olding Grant, the Metro Roads Commissioner who was a guest at a February, 1958, meeting of the Civic Parks Committee:

"Can you build this road without touching the Fort?"

George wanted to qualify his reply but Ford required an answer on which he could base his vote. He pressed the question.

"From a technical and engineering standpoint it is impossible to locate the road farther south," he was told. With this information, Ford Brand decided he would have to ignore the pleas of the historical societies and vote for a move which would place a pier in the Fort's southwest corner.

George Grant did have an opportunity to modify his reply. The following day he was telling Metro Council the bend which would avoid the Fort could only be achieved at very heavy cost, \$2,000 per lineal foot. "Any deviation from the existing Expressway plan would increase curves to an extent that would defeat the planned speed and safety factor being built into it."

Yesterday, George Grant told his Roads Committee that engineers had to use minimum standards to produce a plan that would miss the Fort.

But it was possible. And there would be no difference in the construction cost.

On Feb. 26, 1958, just a few days after the grilling of Grant, Nate Phillips made his brave statement on the Fort York controversy: "History comes first."

But just before Christmas, Nate learned that Premier Leslie Frost was amenable to the idea of moving the Fort to the lakeshore. What was more, the Premier was willing to use Provincial tax money to pay half the moving expenses.

So, on Jan. 5, in his inaugural address, Nate Phillips said he would ask the Premier to adopt this policy and pay half the cost of removal. "I shall approach Premier Frost to lend a hand," he said confidently.

This, it seems, is the difference between the men who plan and those required to put the plans into effect. George Grant had to reconcile engineering standards with political decisions; Nate Phillips had to make some decision and Fred Gardiner could make as many decisions as he chose.

For it was in February, 1958, that the Metro Chairman was pressing for a pier in the corner of the Fort. It was in March that he persuaded the Municipal Law Committee of the Legislature to take a second look at the problem and in March that he retreated, growling he would sooner handle 24 members of Metro than 24 historically-minded women.

And it was in May that FGG hit on the idea of moving the Fort, a brainwave he abandoned in November, saying, "We are interested in progress and not endless litigation." And of course, in December, having spoken to Premier Frost, he was back on the moving wagon again, only to say, in January, that he was withdrawing his demand, in the face of lengthy legal action and the \$1,000,000 cost factor.

Throughout, untroubled by engineering considerations, cost factors, esthetics or anything else but history, the historical societies have been consistent. The Fort, they say, shall not be moved. Yesterday, the Civic Historical Committee, led by former Mayor Leslie Saunders, said they would resign in a body if City Council ignored their advice and followed Mayor Phillips' lead to Ottawa with a request to vary the Fort York covenant.

"There's been enough monkeying and flip-flopping," said Mr. Saunders. "We've been kind and considerate up to now and they took it for weakness."

Meanwhile, Premier Frost, who said it would be desecration to leave the Fort in the midst of an industrial, super-highway complex, has approved the final wording of a plaque which the Government's Historic Sites Board will erect at Fort York in the spring.

(The plaque was ready last year, but was delayed expressly by the Premier, who wasn't too happy about the wording.)

It reads: "Fort York was established in 1793 by the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe. It stood on the lakeshore and guarded the entrance to York Harbor.

"This palisaded log fort, built by the Queen's Rangers, was largely destroyed by the invading Americans during the battle of York, April 27, 1813, rebuilt and fortified by earthworks, 1813-1816. It was the principal defense at York until the New Fort (Stanley Barracks) was completed in 1841. When the British troops withdrew from Canada, 1871, it was taken over by Canadian Forces and served the militia until 1933."

If you read it very carefully, you will see the plaque need not be re-cast even if the fort is moved. A plaque cannot change its mind.

SAFE FOR 10 YEARS 31 Jan

The Toronto Daily Star, Jan. 31, 1959

# Ceasefire Ends 1959 Fort York Battle

The battle of Fort York is over—for the next 10 years, anyway. The ceasefire was called yesterday when Metro council voted 15-7 to kill a proposal to shift the ancient fort to a lakeshore site.

Council, following the lead of chairman Fred Gardiner vetoed a Metro executive committee recommendation that the city be given until March 31 to clear all obstacles to moving the fort. The recommendation had passed the executive committee by a 4-3 vote.

Council's decision has the effect of ending the Fort York controversy—at least until 1969 when Highway 400 is extended south to meet the Gardiner expressway. George Grant, Metro roads commissioner, commented the best way to link the two highways would be an interchange through the fort grounds. He admitted, however, that the interchange could also

be built west of the fort if necessary.

Mayor Phillips, in a half-hour speech urging the transfer of the fort to a new waterfront site, recalled that Premier Frost had called the present location a "desecration." He declared that a majority of Metro residents wanted the fort moved.

Mr. Gardiner said that due to co-operation by Ontario Hydro and the CPR, the expressway can be "threaded through the eye of a needle" to miss both the fort and Garrison cemetery.

He said he changed his mind about moving the fort because of the bitter opposition from the Associated Historical societies, with a threat of litigation that could tie up the expressway for two or three years.

The chairman argued there are too many projects crying for Metro aid to get further involved in a controversy when the expressway can be satisfactorily built to miss the grounds.

The Toronto Daily Star, Feb. 3, 1959



—NOW THEY WANT REPARATIONS

# Historical Board set against interchange through Fort York

Toronto Historical Board raised its battle flag over Fort York yesterday and prepared to fight City Hall over a proposed Front Street West interchange with the Gardiner Expressway.

The Front Street extension west from the \$1-billion Metro Centre project would cut through the Garrison common and separate Fort York from the military cemetery.

The historical board served notice that it will strongly oppose construction of the interchange. "We have had various attacks on the fort property and they have been defeated by the people of Toronto," said A. D. Tushingham, chairman of the board.

Board members recalled during a special meeting called to deal with the Front Street extension that in 1958 they were successful, with assistance from other groups, in having the Gardiner Expressway re-designed to avoid the southwest corner of the fort.

"We don't want another attack," the board chairman told members. Hamilton Casels Jr., board member, said someone was trying to hit the fort "below the belt."

J. A. McGinnis, managing director of the historical board, said a city committee wants its officials to report within two weeks on the proposed Front Street extension.

The high level Front Street extension, as proposed, would loom over the battlements to the north and west of Fort York. Mr. Tushingham said it would have the effect of tightening the highway noose around the historic site and buildings.

Mr. McGinnis said the report dealing with the roadway extension came to his attention inadvertently after City Council had accepted the route in principle. "City offi-

cial made no attempt to communicate with board officials," he said.

Mr. Tushingham said he is not certain that City Council wanted the historical board to say anything. He said the Front Street-Gardiner Expressway interchange should be built west of Strachan Avenue. This would place it across part of Exhibition Park.

Alderman Thomas Wardle, who is also the Conservative MPP for Beaches-Woodbine riding, tried to soothe the board members by saying that the extension would not be built for 10 years. He said no details for the Metro Centre development, including road layout, have been examined by the city.

Mr. Tushingham pointed to an enlarged outline of the Front Street extension placed before the board. "The City Council hasn't repudiated this route," he declared. He suggested that the board was not moving too soon to object.

Mr. McGinnis said the west entrance to the fort would be destroyed.

"We must remind people that we exist," Mr. Tushingham said. He told the board developers and governments are engaged in planning that could infringe upon historic sites.

W. J. Beaupre, vice-chairman of the board, said it was awkward for board members, when appointed by City Council, to oppose the policy of council.

Thomas Warrington, a board member, said the fact they are appointed to the board by City Council should not remove their ability to oppose the city on certain issues.

"But we must do it in a quiet way," argued Mr. Tushingham. He added "if we really want to oppose the city we can all resign."



TORONTO



JOHN BARBER

TORONTO -  
**Fort York**  
*BUILDINGS -*  
**defenders**  
*FORT*  
**ambush**  
*YORK*  
**developers**  
 APR 26 1994

**D**RESSED in tall paper hats and armed with wooden muskets, 200 schoolchildren charged across the remains of Garrison Common yesterday, driving their outnumbered opponents back inside the low stone walls of Fort York. They were re-enacting the Battle of York, when a force of 1,700 American troops overwhelmed the fort's defenders and went on to burn down the village that later became Toronto.

The battle took place 181 years ago today.

Yesterday's re-enactment was spirited but, for reasons beyond the combatants' control, it was less than historically accurate. The real Americans battled along the Lake Ontario shoreline, but Fort York today is hundreds of yards from the lake, and the creek that once ran below its rampart disappeared into a sewer long ago.

In 1813, there were no railway tracks or concrete plants hemming in the fort on either side, there were no giant billboards advertising Asian electronics rising above it and there were no diesel trucks droning along a six-lane expressway elevated 18 metres above the field of battle.

Still, it was nice to see somebody actually using the beleaguered old fort. Arguably the most important historic site in Toronto, founded 201 years ago and the home of the oldest buildings in the city, Fort York today is a forgotten redoubt in the industrial barrens. Most Torontonians probably couldn't find the place with a map, and those who did might wonder why they ever bothered. Military history buffs across the continent cite Fort York as the perfect model of botched preservation.

The fort's bleak neighbourhood will change if the two corporate titans that own most of the land on its southern border have their way. Molson Breweries and the Weston family are eager to transform it with new residential and commercial development. After four years of work, the city's planning department has offered them a design that will result in the highest-density downtown district west of the financial core.

**BLISS**  
 City politicians and the quiescent Toronto Historical Board approved previous versions of the plan without much debate. But when it arrived at the land-use committee last week, a cunning ambush blew it to smithereens.

The ambush was organized by a hastily marshalled group of irregulars who call themselves The Friends of Fort York, and the weapon they used to such devastating effect was a simple model. For the first time, the politicians actually saw a physical representation of the neighbourhood they were creating. They were shocked and refused to approve it.

"In this plan there are property lines literally climbing the walls of the fort," says Rollo Myers, a professional model maker and leader of the Friends. In his view, the proposed development transforms what should be a "proud monument" on a prominent site — as it was in 1813 — into a pit. "This is the birthplace of the city, it's not just some damned hectares in the middle of nowhere," he says. "It's an important place."

The developers and the planners are furious with Mr. Myers and his newly won political allies. They question the accuracy of his model, they point out the many fort-friendly features of the plan and they express contempt for politicians who complacently approved earlier versions but now vehemently oppose it.

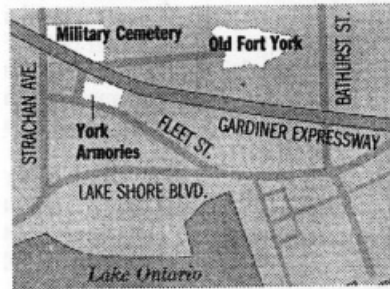
Most of all, I suspect, they're angry that somebody noticed. That's just not traditional in Toronto, a city that approved construction of a slaughterhouse right on top of the fort two weeks after acquiring the site in 1903. The fort has been in such sad shape for so long, how much worse could another wall of buildings make it?

Mr. Myers and the Friends are posing a different question: How much better can we make it? That's such a novel approach, it deserves a hearing.

## Reviving Fort York

Fort York, at the foot of Bathurst St., is our oldest remnant from the past. Within its walls are buildings that date back to the War of 1812 in which men died defending this city from American invaders. Sadly, it is also our most neglected historical treasure.

Most people — residents or visitors — only have the vaguest



notion of its location, cut off as it is by the Gardiner Expressway to the south and the rail lines to the north.

As a result, annual attendance stands at a pathetic 40,000 — about 100 a day. Kingston's Fort Henry, in contrast, gets four times as many visitors.

Opportunity knocks, however. The fort's main neighbors, Molson and Wittington, owners of an abandoned brewery and an old Loblaws warehouse, respectively, are pressing ahead with plans for redevelopment. The combination of condos, offices and stores would no doubt revitalize the area.

The problem, in the eyes of a group called Friends of Fort York, is that the development — including a new road that runs through it — would overshadow the fort. The friends want more parkland to give the fort more "breathing space."

That would come at the expense of Wittington, which is already being asked to give up more than half its land for roads and open space. Understandably, it's reluctant to give up more, at least not without compensation (which the city can't afford). Wittington has threatened to go to the Ontario Municipal Board, if pushed.

The city's land use committee will consider these opposing views at a meeting tomorrow.

There has to be room for compromise here. For example, is the new road, Bremner Blvd., really necessary? If it is cut out, could the fort get more elbow room, at no extra cost?

It is in everyone's interest that the land around the fort, now derelict, be developed. It is also in everyone's interest that the fort, now moribund, be revived.

A little leadership from city hall — not usually forthcoming from the present mayor or the council — is what's called for.

The Toronto Star, May 13, 1994

# Plan to build near old fort put on hold

BY JANE ARMSTRONG  
CITY HALL BUREAU

A planned redevelopment of the area surrounding Fort York has been sent back to the drawing table because its tall buildings overshadow the historic site.

The City of Toronto's land use committee rejected the plan after a four-hour meeting yesterday that pitted the developer against a group of passionate historical advocates bent on adding more parkland around the 200-year-old fort.

The committee eventually sided with history and ordered city staff to begin negotiations to acquire the parcel of land south of the fort in order to give the historic collection of buildings more breathing space.

That land could cost the city tens of millions of dollars.

The decision angered that land's owner, Wittington Investments Ltd., which planned to build a large supermarket on the site, most of which sits under the Gardiner Expressway, just west of Bathurst St.

Allan Leibel, the developer's lawyer, said after the meeting that his client might appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

"They (the committee) wasted a lot of taxpayers' money for no purpose," Leibel said, noting his client has worked for years with city staff developing the plans.

Leibel said current plans call for a 1.6-hectare (four-acre) buffer "the size of four football fields" just south of the fort, which he said was sufficient to maintain the integrity of the fort.

But historical advocates were adamant that the proposed development was inappropriate, their main fear being the mixture of highrise condos, commercial office buildings and pedestrian-level stores would fence the fort in too tightly.

"This is probably the greatest historic site in the province," said Bill Archer, a former city councillor and member of the Toronto Historical Board.

The original fort was built in 1793 to provide for the defence of the town's naval arsenal. Attacked twice during the War of 1812 by Americans troops, it was restored in 1934.

Former mayor John Sewell said the fort has been treated shabbily over the years mainly because it sits isolated and underused on an inaccessible patch of land between the Gardiner and the western railway tracks.

Sewell said it would be a crime to lose an opportunity to develop the land, but cautioned that it must be done right.

"Now that we are finally paying attention, let's get it right," he told the committee.

Most councillors were in full agreement, saying they shouldn't feel bullied to approve the current proposal simply because of Wittington's threat to take the matter to the OMB.

The Toronto Star, May 14, 1994

## THE SATURDAY STAR

May 14, 1994

# Why are we hiding the Incredible Shrinking Fort?

Once again, the money grubbers are nibbling away at the Incredible Shrinking Fort. That's Old Fort York I'm talking about the only remaining visual record we have of the founding of Toronto in 1793.

The Fort is being squeezed so tightly by proposed development and landfill that its historical significance — already badly damaged by 150 years of neglect and greed — is being lost.

The newest proposal, the so-called Bathurst-Strachan Plan (II), would allow an unrelieved wall of a commercial building up to the height of the Gardiner Expressway, planned as a Loblaw's Superstore, to be erected along Bathurst St. on the Fort's southeastern rim.

A new thoroughfare, Bremner Boulevard, created on landfill, is planned to hug the southern edge of the Fort. As high as the Fort's own walls, it will partially conceal it.

Tall buildings to the south, some 22 storeys high, will cut

Toronto grew up in the shadow of the Fort. Without it there would be no city. Had John Graves Simcoe preferred a naval bastion at Kingston or Hamilton, one of those cities would be the Toronto of today. Fort York — far more important than Fort Henry — ranks with the citadels of Halifax and Quebec as a national landmark.

Yet it attracts fewer than a quarter of the tourists that visit the others. Why? Because over the past century and a half the Fort has been neglected and squeezed between superhighways and railway corridors. You can't see it; you can't find it; and you have trouble getting to it. Now, instead of making it an accessible tourist attraction, the city wants to hide it even further behind walls and an elevated boulevard.

Over and over again citizens' protests have saved the Fort from total destruction. In 1890, The Grand Trunk Railway wanted to tear down some of its

walls to extend its rail line. In 1893, the CPR wanted to demolish it to make way for its rail yards. That, fortunately did not happen.

In 1909, the City of Toronto got the military reserve from Ottawa and promised to preserve the Fort and the military cemetery. It took just two weeks for politicians to renege on that pledge.

The city allowed a private firm to build a slaughterhouse on the site and to demolish the guard house, destroy the southeastern bastion, and cut down the eastern rampart.

Two years later the city decided to demolish more buildings to build a streetcar line. A citizens' protest stopped that. But during the Great War the city allowed the north defensive walls to be destroyed for another streetcar route. The railways immediately gobbled up the space north of the line and Fort York shrank. It has not been

and Dufferin Streets. What's left covers just 5.6 acres.

As the Friends of Fort York and the Garrison Common point out, "further hemming in and the effective burial of Fort York, Garrison Common, and the Armouries by modern transportation corridors and tall buildings, using every available scrap of land, continues a regrettable process started over 150 years ago."

Fort York is a major historical and archaeological treasure. Some 250,000 artifacts have been dug from the same soil. Fred Gardiner wanted to cover with asphalt. Why hide it? Why not open it up for tourists and for our own children?

Here is a revenue-producing, job-creating gem in the heart of Toronto. The people have always known that: what's now wanted to save the Incredible Shrinking Fort is some commitment and imagination from politicians.

possible, as a result, to rebuild the original defensive wall where it was supposed to be. It stands south of its original location.

It wasn't until 1934 — Toronto's centennial — that pressure for job creation impelled the city to restore the Garrison as a historical museum. A second restoration took place in the early 1950s and the Garrison was known as Old Fort York.

But less than a decade later, the newly-created Metro tried to push the Gardiner Expressway directly through the Fort. The idea was to move the whole shebang to the lakeshore "where it really belonged." As I wrote at the time, that was like moving the Plains of Abraham to a more convenient location. Once again, a public protest stopped that act of vandalism.

Now the squeeze is on again. The original Garrison enclosure covered 900 acres, bounded by the Lakeshore, Queen, Peter,