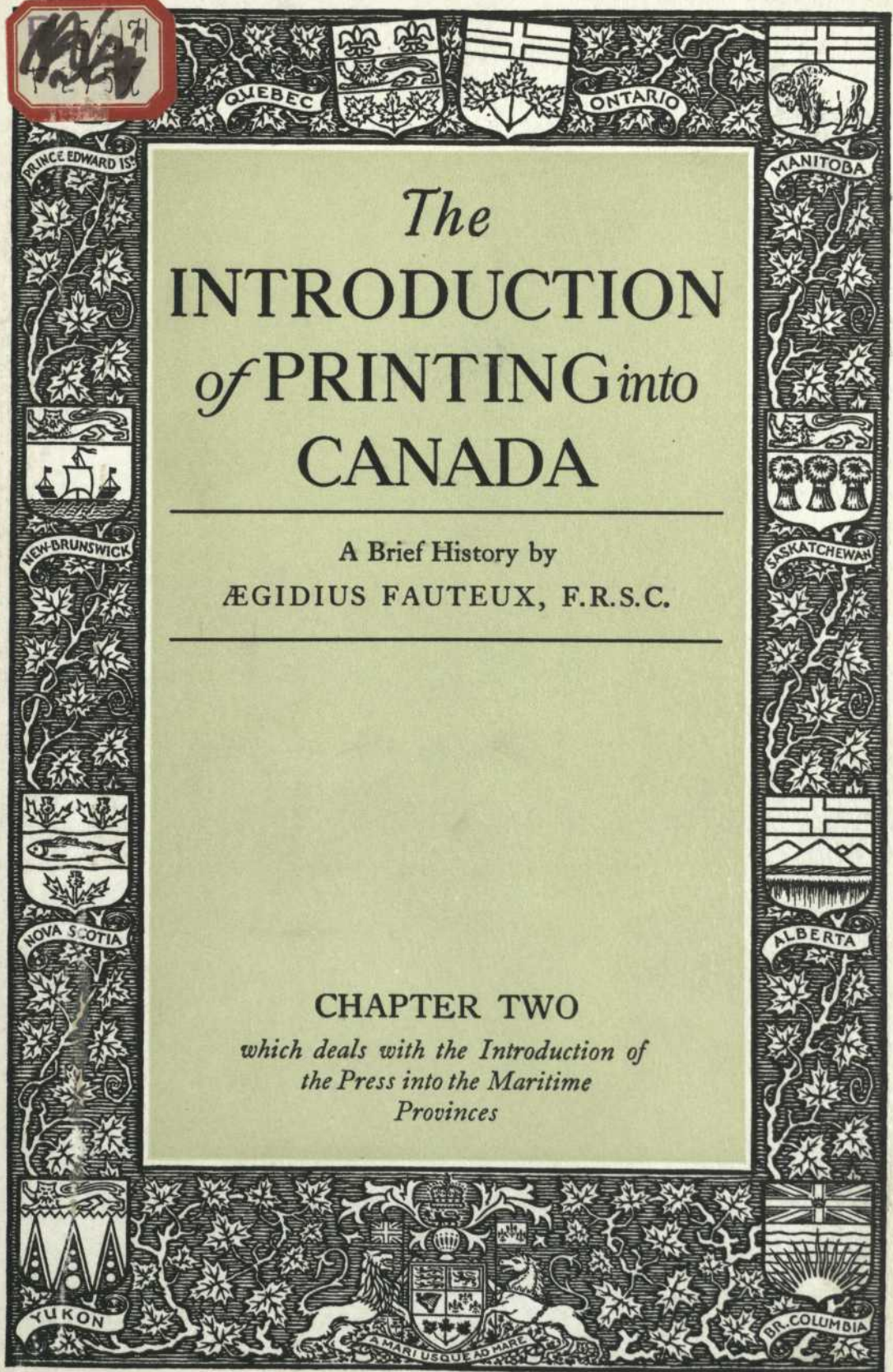




The
INTRODUCTION
of PRINTING into
CANADA

A Brief History by
ÆGIDIUS FAUTEUX, F.R.S.C.

CHAPTER TWO
*which deals with the Introduction of
 the Press into the Maritime
 Provinces*



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Published in the interests of the printing craft by
ROLLAND PAPER COMPANY
LIMITED
MONTREAL - CANADA



"Hereby, tongues are known, knowledge groweth, judgment increaseth, books are dispersed, the Scripture is read, stories be opened, times compared, truth discerned, falsehood detected and with finger pointed, and all (as I said) through the benefit of Printing."

Fox's Martyrs.

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CHAPTER TWO

The Introduction of the Press into the Maritime Provinces



ANADIAN PRINTING is the lineal descendant of American Printing, and its birth dates from almost the middle of the 18th century. Throughout the one hundred and fifty years prior to 1763, during which it flourished on this continent, French civilization had many glorious achievements to its credit, the happy influences of which are yet felt; but in the study of these many brilliant manifestations of its vitality, we are nevertheless conscious of an amazing deficiency. Even until the beginning of the English regime in Canada, and at a period when other civilized races were awakening, beneath the pressure of progressive growth of ideas, to the need of new means of expression, the French colonies in North America had nothing with which to express their feelings and thoughts except a limited language and rudimentary handwriting. It was reserved to Anglo-Saxon genius, more audacious, more

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enterprising, and more free from hampering bonds, to bring to America the printing press, that supreme achievement of modern times.

By 1750, Printing was already long-rooted in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and, most firmly of all, in the Puritan colony of Massachusetts. Zealously watched over with tender solicitude, and watered by the generous perspiration of several generations of brave-hearted artisans, it had effectively weathered the strong winds which buffeted it, had endured the tyranny and misery of the times, and, henceforth a perennial plant, it began to disseminate more widely the seeds which more than filled its fertile stamens.

It was thus in this epoch that a little of this pollen dust was blown from the flower gardens of Boston, and, borne on a favorable breeze, sheered off to sea in place of seeking the interior. After having floated hesitantly above the crests of the waves for some time, it ended by casting itself upon the shore of Nova Scotia, the first land to beckon to it during its flight, and planted itself there for a new germination. Such is the law of Nature to which Printing owes its transplantation from New England into what is to-day the Dominion of Canada.

Halifax had just been founded, and in one tremendous migration three thousand colonists had flocked there in the train of Cornwallis. Behind this movement there was more than a promise of establishing a permanent settlement, and from all sides people gathered to take part

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in the enterprise. The fascination exercised by the venture was felt particularly in Boston, situated directly opposite and only a few days' travel from the Nova Scotian shore. A goodly number of Boston's more industrious artisans left it for the new settlement, and among them the least interesting was assuredly not Bartholomew Green, Jr.

Son and grandson of printers, he belonged to that illustrious Green dynasty which played so brilliant a part in the history of American Printing, and he himself had naturally embraced the ancestral calling. Trained as he was in such a good school, he yet had to endure in Boston the bitter rivalry of his fellow printers; and at the age of fifty years, he had the sublime daring to betake himself and his press to Halifax in order to begin his life anew in a field less encumbered with competitors. But Providence willed that he should die only five weeks after his arrival, in the autumn of 1751. His premature death on the very threshold of the new life of which he had dreamed prevented him from leaving any other trace in the history of Canadian Printing, but in consideration of his having been the first to attempt to endow our country with the inestimable gift of the printing press, he certainly deserves an honoured place in these pages.

Happily, printers are somewhat in the same position in the arena of life as the couriers of Lucrece occupied in the Roman arena. When one among them has reached, exhausted, the

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finish of his career, there is always another ready to receive the flaming torch from his failing hands and spring forth on the course in his place. Thus it was that the heritage left by the vanished Bartholomew Green was immediately picked up by John Bushell, one of Green's old associates in Boston.

More fortunate than his predecessor, Bushell had time to found his modest establishment with more or less solidity. As early as the first week of January, 1752, he had opened his shop at Halifax and had inaugurated the printing era. "He was a good workman," Thomas tells us, "but had not the art of acquiring property, nor did he make the most economical use of the little which fell into his hands." The historian of American printing, by this euphemism, evidently wished to convey the impression that Bushell was not among the first rank of citizens. The legal archives of Nova Scotia, in fact, reveal that he was prosecuted for debts too often, and that in his regular purchases from the grocer the liquid element overbalanced the solid. This deplorable habit, joined with the smallness of his clientele in this initiatory epoch, sufficiently explains Bushell's failure to achieve brilliant prosperity. He was just about able to exist for the ten years of his career at Halifax, during which he was aided greatly by his daughter, Elizabeth, who had become an expert compositor, and also by some official orders which the local government doled out to him stingily.

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His death in January, 1761, ended his inglorious career.

In addition to having been the pioneer printer on Canadian soil, Bushell's principal title to consideration in history rests upon the fact that he laid the foundations of Canadian journalism. It was to his spirit of enterprise that we owe the establishment of the *Halifax Gazette* in January, 1752, the first, in point of time, of all our periodicals. From its beginning, this leaflet, despite its pitiable appearance, was pregnant with future power, inasmuch as it contained the seed of one of our most powerful social institutions; and the humble worker who first breathed life into it, even though he could hardly have foreseen the potentialities of his action, was not on this account a less productive pioneer, and his name deserves to be religiously remembered by us.

Anthony Henry, the successor of John Bushell, had a long and fruitful career of more than forty years, and was one of the most remarkable personalities in the history of printing in the Maritime Provinces. Henry was originally from Germany, and it is believed that he served as a fifer in one of the regiments which took part in the siege of Louisburg, in 1758. Shortly after the siege he resumed practice of the profession in which he had served an apprenticeship in his native country, and he entered Bushell's employ as assistant printer. On the death of the latter, in 1761, he was ready to succeed Bushell. In the judgment of Isaiah

A
SERMON

Preached at HALIFAX, July 3d, 1770,

At the ORDINATION
OF THE
Rev. Bruin Romcas Comingoe,
To the Dutch Calvinistic Presby-
terian Congregation at Lunen-
burg,

By JOHN SECCOMBE,
of Chester, A. M.

Being the First preached in the Province of No-
va-Scotia, on such an Occasion.

To which is added
An APPENDIX.

We find no Evil in this Man: but if a Spirit or an
Angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight
against GOD. *Act* 23. 9.

I have appear'd unto thee to make thee a Minister.
Act 26. 16

Would GOD, that all the Lords People were Pro-
phets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit
upon them. *Nam.* 11, 29.

Halifax: Printed by A. HENRY, 1770.
(Price One Shilling.)

Cover page of an *Ordination Sermon* printed by Anthony Henry,
the first religious work produced in Nova Scotia.

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Thomas, who worked under him, he was not in the first rank as a printer, but he was otherwise of an ingenious disposition. In truth, he appears to have been one of those for whom the end justifies the means. To assure himself of the wherewithal to purchase Bushell's property he did not hesitate, first, in 1761, to marry a negress who possessed some resources, and, so the story goes, on becoming a widower fifteen years later, at the age of forty, he married for the same practical reason a more than mature old lady, about 96 years of age!

Anthony Henry had been working with scarcely any renown when adversity furnished him with an even better opportunity to display his ingenuity, and, still more, his energy. This was in 1765, at the time of the widespread agitation in the Thirteen Colonies engendered by the Stamp Act. The *Halifax Gazette*, which already had printed some scarcely veiled criticisms of the new fiscal decree, dared to appear one day in October, 1765, without the customary stamp. The loyal authorities of the Government of Nova Scotia were greatly scandalized, and it was in vain that Anthony Henry, protesting his own innocence with more or less sincerity, endeavoured to minimize the incident by ascribing it to a foolish escapade on the part of his young apprentice, Isaiah Thomas, who, not being able to suppress his revolutionary sympathies, had on his own account mutilated the entire stock of stamped paper which had been expressly imported from England.

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The authorities, having virtual control of the *Halifax Gazette*, by reason of the official patronage which they could extend, took the newspaper away from the guilty printer in the following year, 1766, and entrusted it to a printer named Robert Fletcher, who had recently arrived from London with a complete typographical outfit. But Henry was one of those who never know when they are beaten. Rather indolent up to then, he now summoned all his energy to brave this first rival, and he entered the fight with determination. In the beginning of 1769, he daringly set up a newspaper of his own, which he called the *Nova Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser*, in opposition to Fletcher's official newspaper, now appearing under the name of the *Nova Scotia Gazette*. The new journal, soon became more popular than the older paper, because it was offered for an appreciably lower price and was the expression of a more liberal opinion, and not more than a year later Robert Fletcher definitely retired from the field, convinced that he had met more than his match. Left without a rival, in 1770, Anthony Henry regained his old title of King's Printer, and took control again of the official organ, which he continued to publish until his death, in 1801, under the title of *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*.

It was not to be expected, however, that Anthony Henry could continue always to enjoy a monopoly of printing in the growing Maritime Provinces, and at the time of the

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American Revolution, in 1776, he was already prepared to see his domain invaded by quite a number of printers from New England, who were forced by their loyalty to the Crown to go into exile.

Margaret Draper, that heroine of American journalism, who had courageously published her newspaper, the *Newsletter*, up to the very day that Boston was evacuated by the British forces, was the first to arrive in Halifax with her printing outfit. She only remained a few months in that city, however, before she returned to England, where she died; but she left behind her the young John Howe, whom she had brought with her from Boston, and this deed is enough to make her short stay in the capital of Nova Scotia a memorable one.

John Howe was for many years the leading printer in the Maritime Provinces, dominating his professional associates for a long time before he succeeded Anthony Henry as King's Printer in 1801, and he continued to occupy the leading place in the art until his death in 1835. As fruit of his long career, he left many monuments which give testimony to his typographic skill and his ability as an artisan, but his greatest contribution remains, without fear of contradiction, his son, the Honourable Joseph Howe, who, after having been a printer himself, became one of the great parliamentarians and journalists of his native province.

Contemporary with John Howe, or a short time after him, there came William Minns,

A
B R I E F V I E W
O F T H E

Religious TENETS and SENTIMENTS.

Lately published and spread in the Province of NOVA-
SCOTIA; which are contained in a Book, entitled

“TWO MITES, on some of the most
important and much disputed Points
of Divinity, &c.”

A N D

“In a SERMON preached at Liverpool,
November 19, 1782;”

A N D, IN A PAMPHLET, ENTITLED

“The ANTITRADITIONIST:”
ALL BEING PUBLICATIONS OF
Mr. HENRY ALLINE,

W I T H

Some brief Reflections and Observations :

A L S O,

A VIEW of the Ordination of the Author
of these Books :

T O G E T H E R W I T H

A D I S C O U R S E on external Order.

By JONATHAN SCOTT,
Pastor of a Church in YARMOUTH.

*JUDE, verse 3. Beloved, when I gave all Diligence to write unto you
of the common Salvation: It was needful for me to write unto you,
and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which
was once delivered unto the Saints.*

HALIFAX:

Printed by JOHN HOWE, in BARRINGTON-STREET.

MDCCLXXXIV.

One of the many works from the Press of John Howe,
father of the famous printer and statesman,
Hon. Joseph Howe.

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Nathaniel Mills and James Humphreys, who each contributed to the widening of the sway of Printing in Nova Scotia. These new and valuable recruits distinguished themselves by their remarkable activity and, to give the reader some idea of their enterprise, it is enough to say that in the city of Halifax alone, around the year 1786, there were appearing three newspapers whose long existence proved how solidly they were established. These newspapers were: the *Nova Scotia Gazette*, of Anthony Henry; the *Halifax Journal*, of John Howe, and the *Weekly Chronicle*, of William Minns. At the same time, the little town of Shelburne—which was then on a fair way to become an important centre, but whose meteoric glitter was soon extinguished — found the means of supporting three other newspapers: the *Royal American Gazette*, the *Port Roseway Gazette*, and the *Nova Scotia Packet*.

In Halifax chiefly, the radiancy thus imparted has never been dimmed. Its inhabitants could claim that at the beginning of the 19th century, with the entry on the scene of John Howe, Jr., E. Gay, James Bagnall, Edmund Ward, and Anthony Henry Holland particularly, Printing had for a certainty passed its infantile stage in Nova Scotia and was rapidly travelling the road to maturity.

Before passing on to another chapter, we should give at least a little space to the productions themselves of the Nova Scotian printing shops. Especially in the beginning, these pub-

lications were neither numerous nor important, and the oldest ones are to-day extremely difficult to trace. Bibliophiles have only been able to locate a few titles in spite of the most diligent efforts. Of many, only a single example now remains either in public or private collections, but a greater number have totally disappeared.

As in all the new-born colonies of America, where Printing had at first been a governmental, rather than a popular need, in Nova Scotia it was not able to subsist in the early stages of its growth except by the official patronage which it received. The government's primary interest in Printing was as a means of promulgating its different proclamations or of publishing its laws. During long years at Halifax, John Bushell and Anthony Henry himself had scarcely anything except official publications with which to feed their presses. Except for the *Halifax Gazette*, the oldest printed document of which we know to-day is precisely one of these official publications, "*An Act for the Relief of Debtors with respect to the Imprisonment of their persons.*" This earliest effort of John Bushell's dates from December, 1752, and although he worked until 1761, nearly ten years longer, we have not been able to find more than one other product of his press in addition to his newspaper. This is dated 1753, was published in both English and French, and is entitled: "*Treaty or Articles of Peace between His Excellency Peregrine Thomas Hopson*

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. . . and Major Jean-Baptiste Cope, Chief Sachem of the Tribe of Mickmack Indians."

But these publications, like the others which Bushell must have printed and which have all been lost, were only brochures of a few pages, eminently perishable by their very nature. The first work of any importance printed in Nova Scotia seems to have been the volume printed in 1767 by Robert Fletcher: "*The Perpetual Acts of the General Assemblies of H. M.'s Province of Nova Scotia.*" This is a collection of laws edited by Judge Belcher and runs to not less than two hundred and seventy-five folio pages.

Following the publication of the laws, and conforming to the rule observed by all newly established printing crafts, there ordinarily came publications of a religious character, and these were not wanting in Nova Scotia. The first of the kind was an ordination sermon delivered by the Reverend J. Seccombe, a Calvinist minister, and published by Anthony Henry in 1770.

Religious controversies perhaps furnished the greatest amount of work to the printing shops in Halifax in the early days. Anglican bishops, Presbyterian clergymen, Calvinist ministers, and Catholic priests entered the lists one against the other, keeping the presses of Henry or John Howe running busily, and it can be said that it was writings of this kind that formed the major part of the printing done in Nova Scotia around the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. To "*Two*

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Mites," by Henry Allen, an itinerant preacher, which was published in 1781, the Reverend Jonathan Scott replied in 1784 with another tract not a wit less weighty: "*A brief view of the Tenets contained in the Two Mites.*" In 1804 a work by the Abbe Burke, later Catholic bishop of Halifax, entitled "*Letter of Instructions*," aroused an even sharper controversy which lasted some years, and was waged between the author on one hand and the Very Reverend Charles Inglis and the Reverend Sanster on the other.

We should like to go on to deal with political tracts and purely literary works, some of which are of the highest interest, but both time and the space at our disposal forbid, and it is necessary that we now turn our attention to New Brunswick, the second of the Maritime Provinces.

The history of Printing in New Brunswick is a quarter-century shorter than that of Printing in Nova Scotia. This is not, however, a sufficient reason for disposing of it as summarily as was done by Isaiah Thomas in his classic work, where he contents himself with saying, "After the peace in 1784 printing found its way into the Province of New Brunswick." Furthermore, even if it be true that New Brunswick was not constituted a province until 1784, the date when it was detached from Nova Scotia, it is not correct to say that Printing had not commenced by that date in the territory

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which was to constitute the province. Nearly two years previously, in 1783, a Loyalist printer by the name of John Ryan, had already established a press in conjunction with William Lewis in Parr-Town, which is to-day part of the city of Saint John, and begun the publication of a newspaper: *The Royal St. John's Gazette*. Lewis returned to the United States almost immediately, but Ryan continued to practice in the province for nearly a score of years afterwards. Meanwhile the new government had been organized, and when it was necessary, according to the usual tradition, for the authorities to assure themselves of the services of an official printer, their choice did not fall upon John Ryan. The good pleasure of the authorities fell upon Christopher Sower, another Loyalist printer. Sower, third of the name, was German by origin, but a native of Pennsylvania. He was conducting a printing shop at Germantown which he had inherited from his father and grandfather, when, after the conclusion of peace in 1783, he chose to remain loyal to the Crown and removed to Saint John in 1785. He was immediately named Printer to His Majesty, and in the same year, he established, with official support, a newspaper: *The Royal Gazette and New-Brunswick Advertiser*. Ryan's sheet continued to exist, nevertheless, under the changed name of *The St. John Gazette*.

There does not appear to have been a very lively rivalry between the two typographers.

JOURNAL
OF THE
VOTES and PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OF THE
PROVINCE of NEW-BRUNSWICK:

From Tuesday the 3d of JANUARY, to Wednesday the 15th of
MARCH, 1786.



ST. JOHN:

Printed by CHRISTOPHER SOWER, Printer to the
KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY. 1786.

The work of Christopher Sower, a loyalist from Pennsylvania,
appointed the first King's Printer in New Brunswick in 1783.

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More than once we come across their two names as joint printers of the same work, and in 1787, as well as in 1788, at a time when Sower was still King's Printer, it was John Ryan who, substituting for him probably during an absence, published in Sower's place the Journals of the Assembly. When Sower died of apoplexy in Baltimore, in 1799, while on a journey, it was the same John Ryan who succeeded him in the official position. Ryan departed for St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1807, and his place was taken by his brother-in-law, Jacob S. Mott.

All this time, Printing was extending itself beyond the limits of Saint John, and invading other towns, among them being Fredericton and St. Andrew's. In the first years of the 19th century, New Brunswick possessed a veritable group of excellent printers, who were worthy rivals of their fellow craftsmen in Nova Scotia, and perhaps the most noteworthy amongst them were Michael Ryan, William Durant, William Reynolds, Geo. K. Lugin, and Henry Chubb. With the advent of these master workmen Printing in the newer Province reached maturity.

As in Nova Scotia, the first printers in New Brunswick had to depend almost entirely upon official patronage. For a rather long period mostly all their work was confined to the more or less regular publication of one or two periodicals and the annual printing of the Assembly Journals. Even until 1800 the entire output of Saint John's presses consisted of the inevitable

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annual almanacs and of a certain number of religious publications, funeral sermons, petitions, episcopal orders, etc.

The earliest precursor of the book published in New Brunswick seems to have been an almanac printed by Christopher Sower at the end of 1785. It is entitled "*An astronomical Diary and Almanac for 1786 . . .*" by Julius Scaliger, Jr.

As for the religious publications which, with the legal and parliamentary documents, monopolized the whole of the New Brunswick press until the commencement of the 19th century, the series was opened by a rather curious sermon of the Reverend George Bisset, published in 1787: "*The Pleasures and advantages of Brotherly Love; a sermon preached before the 5th Regimental Lodge of the Free and accepted Masons.*"

Political and literary activity became naturally more intensified in the first years of the 19th century, and in New Brunswick Printing rapidly entered upon a flourishing period which, unfortunately, is outside the province of this discussion.

We have yet to deal with the third of the Maritime Provinces, Prince Edward Island, whose unassuming motto *Parva sub ingenti* is applicable even to its Printing.

Lieutenant-Governor Fanning was responsible for the introduction of the first press into Charlottetown, and official records show that

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he did not achieve this without trouble. On the 6th of December, 1788, Fanning wrote to Sydney, the Secretary of State, that he had invited a printer named Robertson to set up a press in Charlottetown, since he had learned that there had never been a printing press on the Island; that the assembly records and the acts had never been published; and that certain of the latter had even been lost. He went on to say that Robertson was already at work and had begun to print a complete collection of the laws, and requested that Robertson be named King's Printer with the same stipend as the King's Printer in New Brunswick.

Grenville replied to Fanning on the 20th of October, 1789, and clearly stated that he had no objection to Robertson being named King's Printer, but that he could not attach any salary to the position.

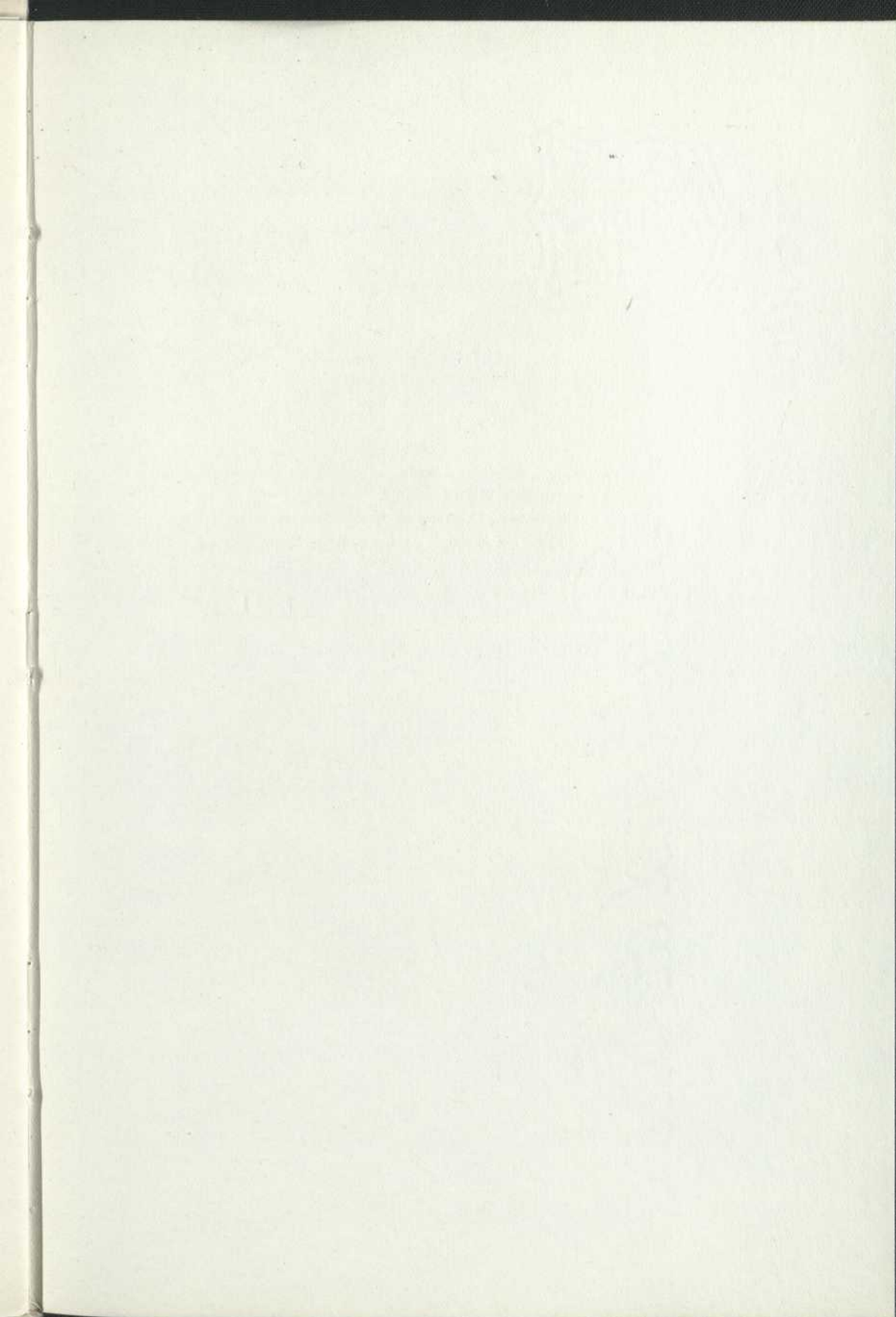
Robertson had already transferred to Charlottetown his newspaper, *The Royal American Gazette*, which he had first of all printed in New York and later in Shelburne, Nova Scotia. In spite of the scarcely encouraging reception accorded him by the Minister, he nevertheless accepted the post which Fanning wished to confer on him, and he occupied it uncomplainingly for several years. He was not, however, able to hold out beyond 1798. We learn that in this year Fanning informed Lord Portland that the printer having left the island, he was afraid that the publication of the laws would be delayed in the future.

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We know of no printer in Charlottetown after Robertson until the arrival, about 1814, of John Bagnall, who had previously practised his profession at Halifax.

Such is the history, necessarily abridged, of the origin of Printing in our Maritime Provinces. The early stages in each case were difficult ones, but the flowering seasons which followed the slow periods of germination have been the richer and more fruitful. There was no other section of Canada wherein intellectual activity was more intense than in the Maritime Provinces. These provinces have given to our national literature the greatest number of glorious names, and it may be said that the Press, which they were the first to welcome, has repaid them liberally in glory and renown for their generous hospitality.

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