

December 2nd, 1944.

Mr. William Arthur Deacon,
Literary Editor,
The Globe and Mail,
Toronto, Canada.

Dear Mr. Deacon,

A word of thanks for your rip-snorting review of my "Roger Sudden" in last Saturday's issue. I have a rosy picture of all the sixteen-year-olds in Toronto rushing to buy the book, and -- who knows? -- I may become the Frank Sinatra of Canadian literature despite the news-photo at the head of your page, which makes me as bald as any victim of Roger's scalping knife.

Yet I must quarrel with your notion that "Roger Sudden" is a "frankly escapist" yarn. My dear sir, it is an historical tract, written in what I hope is a palatable coating of fiction. I have long wanted to do a story showing what really happened in the first ten years of English settlement in Canada. A multitude of escapists from the truth, beginning with Long-fellow, have so obscured the period that no historian would recognise it. Indeed, one of the most recent novelists (no names!) went so far as to house the Micmac Indians in "tepees" made of "buffalo hides" (although "tepee" is a Western Indian word, and the buffalo were never seen east of the Great Lakes), to dress them in "deer hides" (although there were no deer in Nova Scotia at the time), and to provide them with "peace paint", "proud head-dresses", "sleds with dog teams", and a number of other things they never used. I may add that the same novelist's description of a ship in a North Atlantic storm still makes our salty Bluenoses split their sides.

This is not to claim infallibility for myself. But at least I have kept my eye on the documents. "Roger Sudden" is a fictitious character, of course; but his adventures and business methods are well in accord with certain affairs recorded by the historians. Actually it was Joshua Manger who sold the Acadian cattle to His Majesty's navy, and he engaged in other practices which I have described. Eventually he retired to England, where he died in 1770, leaving a fortune of £300,000 -- which makes Roger's haul seem very small indeed. I have drawn "Roger" to a considerable extent also from the career of Michael Francklin, a young English gentleman who came to Halifax in the early days with his pride (and little else) in his pocket, amassed a fortune and eventually became lieutenant-governor of the province.

Le Loutre, Gauthier, Father Maillard, Gorham, Jean Baptiste Koop are actual historical characters, faithfully described. Madame Ducudrai really did keep a cabaret at Louisbourg, and her husband really was the chief French spy at New York. Captain James Johnstone, the Scottish Jacobite exile at Louisbourg, was a real person, and all the details of his extraordinary career were taken from his own memoirs -- there is a translation of them (they were published in Paris) in the museum library at Louisbourg. I provided him with a beautiful sister; I'm sure his shade won't quarrel with me for that.

December 19, 1914.

Mr. William Arthur Dawson,

Mr. William Arthur Dawson,
Literary Editor,
The Globe and Mail,
Toronto, Canada.

Dear Mr. Dawson,

A word of thanks for your riposte in your review of my "Hogger Sudden" in last Saturday's issue. I have a rosy picture of all the sixteen-year-olds in Toronto wishing to buy the book, and -- who knows? -- I may become the Frank Sinatra of Canadian literature despite the new-photo at the head of your page, which makes me as bald as any victim of Roger's scapling knife.

Yet I must quarrel with your notion that "Hogger Sudden" is a "frankly escapist" yarn. My dear sir, it is an historical tract, written in what I hope is a palatable coating of fiction. I have long wanted to do a story showing what really happened in the first ten years of English settlement in Canada. A multitude of escapists from the truth, beginning with Longfellow, have so obscured the period that no historian would recognize it. Indeed, one of the most recent novelists (no names!) went so far as to name the Micmac Indians in "tepees" made of "buffalo hides" (although the word "tepee" is a Western Indian word, and the buffalo were never seen east of the Great Lakes), to dress them in "deer hides" (although there were no deer in Nova Scotia at the time), and to provide them with "space pants", "prong head-dresses", "aids with hog tusks", and a number of other things. They never read. I may add that the same novelist's description of a ship in a North Atlantic storm still makes our early fishermen split their sides.

This is not to claim infallibility for myself. But at least I have kept my eye on the documents. "Hogger Sudden" is a fictional character, of course; but his adventures and business methods are well in accord with certain details recorded by the historians. Actually it was Joshua Munger who sold the Acadia cattle to His Majesty's navy, and he engaged in other practices which I have described. Eventually he retired to England, where he died in 1770, leaving a fortune of £300,000 -- which makes Roger's haul seem very small indeed. I have drawn "Hogger" to a considerable extent also from the career of Michael Franklin, a young English gentleman who came to Halifax in the early days with his pride (and little else) in his pocket, amassed a fortune and eventually became lieutenant-governor of the province.

The Louisa, Captain Father Mallard, Captain Jean Baptiste Kopp are actual historical characters, faithfully described. Madame Inghram really did keep a capstan at Louisbourg, and her husband really was the chief French spy at New York. Captain James Johnson, the Scottish Jacobite exile at Louisbourg, was a real person, and all the details of his extraordinary career were taken from his own memoirs -- there is a translation of them (they were published in Paris) in the museum library at Louisbourg. I provided him with a beautiful sister; I'm sure his shade won't quarrel with me for that.

You speak of the stretched arm of coincidence and mention " the meeting of Mary, Roger, Wapke and Wolfe " in the Cape Breton stronghold. I know what you mean, of course; but there is an obvious implication here which is not according to the book. Mary never met Wapke or Wolfe anywhere. Roger never met Wolfe again after the brief interview in Halifax, although he caught a glimpse of him in the fight at Coronandiere. And Wapke never saw Louisbourg.

But your mention of coincidence reminds^{me} of an interesting point in the construction of my plot. Wolfe commanded the 20th Foot in the Highlands. His predecessor in the command was none other than Cornwallis ! And since Wolfe was a "man of Kent" himself there is no valid reason why he and Cornwallis could not have been travelling on leave together in the Rochester coach when Roger robbed it. Certainly Cornwallis was in the vicinity of London at that time. As you can see, this opened all sorts of possibilities for my plot, but after consideration I rejected it and made the colonel of the 20th Foot a purely fictitious "Colonel Belcher". Truth may be stranger than fiction but a fiction writer must be tender of his plausibilities.

All of which, as the lawyers say, "without prejudice".

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "J. H. R.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Globe and Mail

Toronto,
Canada

Dec., 10, 1944

Dear Mr. Raddall;

Your letter gives me a welcome opportunity to congratulate you on the fine work you are doing in fiction. I have enjoyed your three books and was glad you received the Governor-General's Award last year. In His Majesty's *Yankees*, especially, you opened the eyes of Canadians generally to a chapter almost unknown to them. Roger Sudden is another valuable step, though the English-French conflict in Nova Scotia has been better known than the situation of Nova Scotia during the U. S. war of independence. I particularly liked your short stories in *The Pied Piper*.

Your letter was so valuable, and I so busy ϕ being deputy administrator of publishing and printing and at present only literary editor emeritus) that I did not have time to consult you about the use I made of your letter. As you will see, I abstracted relevant parts and used them as an article, which is most timely and interesting. Our readers are buying the book in spectacular quantities and the information you kindly supplied should reach as many persons as possible. Accept my thanks for the contribution.

Put to that use, it was effective publicity. As an admonition to me, I regret your use of the word quarrel. If you have contracted the Nova Scotian touchiness and wish to quarrel with any reference to you in Ontario, I fear it will be a one-sided engagement. I have no wish to do battle with any author, let alone one as competent as yourself.

If I may speak both kindly and candidly to one who is my junior in years and in the craft of authorship, please consider the futility of trying to correct the misapprehensions of your readers. Having published a book, let the public, or any particular reader or reviewer, interpret it as he pleases. It is his right, and you can never catch up with what people say about your books. The business of an author is to write, to publish if possible and, having published, to leave his work to the consumers and go on with fresh work. You cannot make people think of your work what you believe they should think; it is a waste of your time to try. Stop reading reviews as soon as you can. They are not addressed to the author and seldom please him. This is a part of the operation in which you should be inactive and indifferent.

It was a great disappointment not to see you at Hamilton last September to receive your medal. We, your fellow writers in Canada, established these awards some years ago to assist authors of worthy books. We spend a good deal of time and some cash on the award system. Your friend, Lord Tweedsmuir, refused to spend a nickel on the project. It would have been gracious to appear.

You might even have enjoyed it. May I say that I think you should be prepared to assume your natural place in the Canadian Authors Association, and that I think you might even be helped by making friend among your kind from other provinces. A creative writer is apt to see

himself as a unique being, wholly independent of his contemporaries. This is an illusion. The problems we face are similar. Knowing each other by sight is generally pleasant and often of practical help.

If Canada were compact, there might be a reason for avoiding herds and cliques. But we are dreadfully separated by geography and we lack means of frequent meeting. When you find it convenient to explore the central provinces, you may be surprised at the number of potential friends you have here. It is my hope that take occasion to establish contacts with the large number of gifted people in Quebec and Ontario who, like yourself, are contributing to the advance of the Canadian novel in this decade. Rest assured that a hearty welcome awaits you. Your success is a source of gratification to us all.

Of course, when a man is writing, he does it alone; but we have common interests to be served; and meeting others of one's kind often is most fruitful in ideas. Anyway, we need you even if you don't need us.

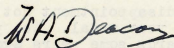
Accept my apologies for giving unsolicited advice. I have found how foolish it generally turns out to be. However, I shall continue to hope to meet you in the flesh. Otherwise this will be the end of our association because correspondence is impossible during these war years.

Being a lawyer myself, I might have written a diplomatic letter without cause of offence. Since I have not, I shall not conclude "without prejudice". You will have to take my goodwill on trust, but it is genuine.

Canadian subject matter does not bar a book from readership in other countries as you know, but inevitably it means that most interest will be displayed by your Canadian readers. I suggest this market is of primary importance to you and its importance will increase. That is another argument in favor of a postwar trip to Canada.

As journalist I was grateful for a timely word from you on my page and, if you injured by what I said (which I doubt) your remarks were the best antidote. Thank you most cordially and good luck for the next novel.

Sincerely,



W. A. Deacon

December 14th, 1944.

Dear Mr. Deacon,

My thanks for your letter and the heartwarming things you have to say about my work. I used the word quarrel in its oldfashioned "take exception, find fault with" sense, for I am far from sensitive about my work and I do not write to critics. What spurred me to write you was that the Globe's wide public had received an impression that the book was pure romance, whereas it was an earnest resume of an important phase in Canadian history albeit the cold facts were given in fiction form. I have a very deep scorn for "historical" novelists who do not trouble themselves with research and it stung me to be lumped with them, even by inference.

It was a matter of great regret to me that I could not attend the convention at Hamilton. I had made tentative plans to go but these had to be cancelled later on. My home is a long and uncertain journey from your part of the world in these days of subject-to-cancellation plane and train reservations and I found the trip impossible in view of other engagements which I had to keep. I should like to meet my Canadian contemporaries, for I live in an out-of-the-way corner and about the only writers I see are Americans who drop in on their way up or down the coast. And one day Kenneth Leslie came, with some of his poems under his arm, announcing "My God! I'd expected to see an old retired sailor with a long white beard!"

After the war I've promised myself a trip to Ontario by car and I hope then to have the pleasure of meeting you and others of the fraternity. Until then I must nurse my hopes (and my tires) like everybody else.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

Please don't bother to reply to this. I know how busy you are.

The Globe and Mail

Toronto, Dec. 18, 1944.
Canada

My dear Raddall -

Many thanks for your very forgiving letter. Fear mine was presumptuous. Feel sure you will find I was right about popularity when you get royalty cheque - hope they do not give you half royalty on Canadian sales - - - You are certainly in for a long stretch of success -

Christmas greetings!

If I get to Halifax before you reach Toronto, I'll let you know in advance - Sincerely,
Bill Deacon

and much enjoyed
write

Thomas H. Raddall
Liverpool, Nova Scotia

June 9th, 1946

Dear Deacon,

Thanks for your letters of May 28th and June 5th. I shall send on about 1000 words by air mail towards the end of this week.

I notice Kennedy has put me down for a talk on the historical novel on the after noon of the 29th, though I told him I didn't want to talk at all. It seems to me that by Saturday afternoon (and with the dinner speeches looming) everyone would be glad of a little silence.

Incidentally I shall not attend the dinner. I have never worn a dinner jacket in my life and have no intention of breaking so good a record, even for the honor of the C.A.A..

I'm looking forward to meeting you and Kennedy and the others, and the program obviously contains a lot of interesting and useful stuff for all of us. I shall have to skip one or two sessions because I want to have a long chat with my Canadian publishers and there are some friends I must look up, however that is a matter I can decide when I get to Toronto.

Had planned to stay at Whitney Hall but I notice the accommodation does not extend over Sunday so I'm asking McClelland and Stewart to reserve a room for me at the Park Plaza. As things stand I shall arrive there on the morning of the 26th, and I plan to leave on July 1st.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

Thos. H. Raddall

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[Faint handwritten signature]

86 Parkhurst Blvd., Toronto 12,
June 11, 1946

Mr. Thomas H. Raddall,
Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

(Plan to attend the banquet. The Governor-General has specially said that it is O. K. for members to wear any clothes.)

Dear Raddall;

It will be great to see you and I shall be honored to have the article.

This is a free country and you must attend as few or as many of the session as you choose.

Actually, you will be with your publishers at lunch on the Friday, and the dinner hour is blank that night for purpose of letting members attend to personal social matters. Also early mornings and late afternoons are free.

As to your address on Saturday afternoon, that is up to you and Rod Kennedy. I originally suggested to him that you had a fine speech which you had delivered in Halifax with great effect. It was my idea that you just tuck this into your bag and read it to us. At the time, I read something of it in the Halifax papers, but 99% of those assembled will not have heard of it at all.

Actually, MacLennan and Hardy are both reading lectures they have given before elsewhere. That is most satisfactory. It saves the time of the author and gives people from other regions the benefit of hearing pieces that originally were delivered locally.

Kennedy will write you, but I am sure he will agree that it is of no consequence whether you speak on Historical Novel Writing or something else. You must have the Halifax speech handy, I am sure; or you can substitute anything else you like. But I know the members will greatly desire the sound of your voice.

Come anyway. Do what you like when you get here. It will surprise me if you don't say something. After all, we are word-mongers. At worst, I could interview you orally before the assembly - ask you the things I want to know about the stories in your four books.

Regards,

W. A. Deacon

Thomas H. Raddall
Liverpool, Nova Scotia

June 12/46

Dear Deacon,

Here is the article
I promised. I've headed it "Tales
of Life" — for God's sake don't
call it "Are My Plots Real?" or
anything like that.

See you on the 26th.

Sincerely

Tom Raddall

Ms. H. A. Deacon

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From: R. S. Kennedy,
Family Herald and Weekly Star,
245 St. James St. West,
Montreal, 1.

June 15, 1946.

Mr. Thomas Raddall,
Liverpool,
N. S.

Dear Raddall:

In a note from Deacon, who is anticipating his approaching presidency by going a tremendous job of work on this coming Convention, there is a worried intimation that you are doubtful as to whether you can take the part on the program about which I wrote you some while ago.

If there are any difficulties and they are in any way my fault, I am extremely sorry. I did not mean to be ambiguous in any way, but have been greatly loaded with work connected with the Convention and with the temporary breakdown of our National Office secretarial work. All the latter is in good shape now, and the former seems to be going along without serious snags, until this suggestion arises.

I do hope there is no obstacle that cannot be overcome. We wish your presence and your contribution most warmly. You will be the only writer of note from the Maritime Provinces, and your reputation is such that our members will be genuinely eager to enjoy anything you may say.

I had gathered that the address you gave before the Haliburton Society would be perfectly suitable, and would save you the labor of preparing anything specially for this occasion. But if you do not think it suitable for any reason, I want to assure you, after years of experience with C.A.A. members and Conventions, that you only have to get up and chat in a personal way about personal experiences and problems in your writing and marketing, in your dealings with publishers and contracts, etc., in your historical studies and research, to be thoroughly enjoyed.

Something was said about the matter of dress for the Annual Dinner, but this need not be a consideration at all, with you, any more than it has been with me, in the past. I have always been an opponent of any dressiness at our meetings, national or otherwise. I have long since got our Montreal Branch dragged out of any such ideas in the local meetings. We have had nothing of the sort during the war at the Annual Meetings.

For a good many years, up to about 1939, when I achieved the dignity of Editorship, I did not have a dress suit myself. On the pre-war occasions when the Annual Dinner was semi-formal, I never felt out of place in a business suit, because there were always plenty of others.

At a National Convention, where many people have to travel from distant points, there are always plenty who bring and wear nothing but business suits, and the same will be the case this time. I certainly would not be wearing one myself, in spite of what the program says, if I were not the immediate and official host for His Excellency.

I do hope that none of the considerations which have arisen since I wrote you, will prevent you taking the full and active part in this Meeting which we have all hoped for. It would honestly be a deep disappointment to me and to many others, if you were unable to do what we had counted upon.

Yours very sincerely,



National President,
Canadian Authors' Association.

RSK/AM

c.c. to Mr. Deacon and Amabel King

Raddell

Nov., 25, 1946

Dear Tom;

Thanks for your notes, which I return special delivery.

Being a literary man and not a reporter, I did not realize a News Editor's disinclination to regard as news the details of the fighting of 150 years ago. But I have got in a third of a column.

I enjoyed your broadcast last night. Napier Moore did well for you.

Knowing how your time has been taken up, I've not bothered you with private entertaining, much as I should have enjoyed having you at the house. I'm omitting any formal leave-taking. Your visit has been grand for us all, and I hope you know how solidly you have sold yourself to this city. There has been no single word of adverse comment but all kinds of compliments.

Best luck to you for a productive winter.

I'll be in touch with you and Will Bird far in advance of my spring visit to Nova Scotia. It is my hope to see your town but I particularly don't want you to "entertain" me. I'll just look in as a reporter in search of material and as officer of your Association to put you in touch with executive developments.

With most cordial good wishes -

Private

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Thomas H. Raddall

Liverpool, N. S.

March 1st, 1947

Dear Bill,

I enclose my cheque for \$25 in response to your circular letter. I'm sorry I can't make it more, but I find a widely held illusion that a writer who has attained some prominence must be rolling in wealth, and I am being showered with requests for money from all sorts of organizations and private individuals not only in Canada but in the United States and Europe, many of them deserving. I do my best but I can't help feeling from time to time that charity begins at home and that I'd like to be one Canadian writer who didn't support his declining years on the generosity of his friends. It is now nearly twenty years -- twenty hard years -- since I began to write; I have now reached ~~with~~ the height of my powers, such as they are, and I am well past middle life; it is time I began to get an anchor down to windward in the shape of substantial annuities or other sound investments, and the only way I can do it is by a rigid policy of savings now while my work is in demand.

The other day while looking over my income for 1946 (and wondering as usual where it had gone) I drew up a list of my annual subscriptions, fees and donations of various sorts. It was literally as long as my arm. My first impulse was one of wrath, and I determined to cut out everything except half a dozen local and immediate charities. Reflection washed this out, of course; nevertheless I am determined not to add any more to the list, until I have attained some sort of financial security, at any rate.

Had I received any direct benefit from the efforts of the C.A.A. I could send you a substantial cheque with a cheerful heart; but as you know I have always fought my own battles and asked help of no one. The new contract, an admirable thing, does not embody anything that I had not wrung from my own publishers in ~~the~~ time past. The income tax ruling obtained by the C.A.A. can benefit only those whose books appear at longish intervals. This is not to decry the efforts of the C.A.A. in any way, rather it is to assert that those who derive or expect to derive actual benefit from those efforts should be prepared to pay for them. Two or three Canadian writers have attained wealth, and there is a substantial group of others who have independent means of one sort or another; these are in a position to respond generously to your appeal whether they receive benefit or not. But I do not see how the small group like myself who have achieved self-support by their own efforts, and must provide for their old age in the same way, can be expected to support the annual deficit of the C.A.A.

I know your problem, and I know your own unselfishness, but, Bill, I can't help feeling that the ship is either on the wrong tack or the starboard watch is being called upon for too much of the blood and sweat.

My best regards to Mrs. Susan & yourself

Tom

The Canadian Authors Association

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May 6th, 1947.

Mr. Thomas H. Raddall,
LIVERPOOL,
Nova Scotia.

Dear Tom :

Thank you ever so much for staying over to see me. I enjoyed our talk very much, and shall see that you get a copy of my book "The Four Jameses".

Please do not fail to let me know when you have seen your agent, and have news as to future contracts, whether with a book published or for screen rights.

Sincerely,



W. A. Deacon,
National President.

WAD/W

msd May 19/47

William Arthur Deacon
66 Parkhurst Blvd.,
Toronto 12, Canada
MOhawk 7068

Literary Editor, The Globe & Mail
President, Canadian Authors' Association
Chairman, Governor-General's Awards Board

May 12, 1947.

Dear Tom -

That was a grand visit we had in Halifax. So kind of you to stay over. Here is the book.

Gay comes first as the Ontario Champ, but I couldn't do much with him as his mind lacked consistency. McIntyre is my real contribution. His memory, alas, was dead. The Oxford Cheese Ode (p.67) is one of the most significant poems ever written in Canada. When you read it, remember that butter is now 55¢ a pound.

Anastasia Hogan was still living when I last heard.

Sorry my time was so short and that I did not get to Liverpool as I had originally hoped -

Sincerely, Bill

May 19, 1947

Dear Bill,

Just back from a fishing
trip in the headwaters of Shelburne River,
& the first thing I spotted in the
accumulated mail was the book from
Toronto — opened the package at
once, & of course there was "The Four
Jameses" with your happy inscription.
For which my heartfelt thanks.

Ever since Andy Merkel read
selections from it to a group of
kindred souls gathered one evening at
his old house in Halifax, I've tried
to get a copy. I appealed to you
as a last resort, for I detest

May 19, 1947
New Bill
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the tribe of book-hinters & book-beggars myself. There should be some form of D. S. V. effective in these cases & available to writers as a means of self-defence.

It was good to see you again, although Edith & I are disappointed that you & Mrs. Deacon couldn't make the trip to Liverpool.

The galley sheets of "The Wedding Gift & Other Stories" are here for perusal. This is a collection of short stories, my costume pieces, which appeared originally in Blackwoods, Saturday Post, etc., and which I have hitherto reserved from book publication. I had a notion of making some of them into short plays - but gave it up.

Salasms,
Tom

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Ethel Whyte

May 31st, 1949

Mr. Thomas H. Raddall,
LIVERPOOL, N.S.

Dear Tom: Confidential

I don't wonder that your Halifax, Warden of the North won the award in Creative Non-Fiction because in my own opinion it was the best Canadian book in any class in 1948. It is to me a particularly happy circumstance that we are holding our convention in your province when you will receive the honour and that you hold the office of National Vice-President at this time.

Announcement will not be made until the 11th of June and, to keep faith with the Canadian press, we are asking all persons to refrain from informing their friends before that date.

I am looking forward with great pleasure to seeing you in July and the convention will be nicer for me because you are again in the spotlight because of your writing ability.

With best wishes, I remain

Yours sincerely,

W.A.D.

William Arthur Deacon, Chairman,
Governor-General's Awards Board.

WAD/RG

*Ans
June 2/49*

William Arthur Deacon
66 Parkhurst Blvd.,
Toronto 12, Canada
MOhawk 7068

Past Literary Editor, *The Globe & Mail*
President, Canadian Authors' Association
Chairman, Governor-General's Awards Board

June 7, 1949

Mr. Thomas H. Raddall,
Liverpool,
Nova Scotia.

Dear Tom;

Thanks for your friendly note. Like many others, I am counting on seeing you at Halifax.

As to formal dress at a couple of functions, several other men share your prejudice - Kennedy and LeBourdais for two. We always impress on them that we want to see our friends and not their clothes. Therefore dress is always optional at functions of Canadian Authors Association.

Some of us do dress because the women naturally like to get into pretty gowns, which are set off by the black and white uniforms of the men. Even soldiers do not always wear battle dress. We feel, too, that case calls for freedom for the minority to wear anything and similar freedom for the majority to wear stiff fronts. Being summer, some men will turn up in white pants, others in business suits and even among the formals, some will wear tuxedos and others tails. This is far from the rules of etiquette but surely in an organization like ours each should be free to suit himself - and gracefully permit others to dress differently without going on strike.

Your good sportsmanship is appreciated. And you can extend your tolerance if you will. President Bird informs me that you have declined to speak. Probably you don't realize that a good many will be taking it for granted that they will hear you, and that you should take part in a program that ties in with the history of Halifax.

Won't you write Will and tell him that you have changed your mind ?

I'll never forget the thrill I got at the Empire Club in Toronto when I heard you tell about the Nova Scotia privateers; and I missed that aspect in your wonder Halifax book. Of course, actions took place outside the harbor and you had too much else to include. So, in my opinion, you could not do anything more acceptable than repeat and expand this same address. From your other books and conversations I know you could pack an hour with these amazing tales and hold your audience breathless as Pratt did on quite another subject for an hour at Ottawa a year ago. You have a chance to make the speech of the year and you will be well reported from coast to coast - be sure to bring two or three carbons. Joe will want it for Canadian Author and Bookman.

This is your chance. For goodness' sake speak and do us all a good turn - maybe yourself, too. Regards,

Bill

July 11th, 1949

Dear Bill,

Somebody came to me, just after the banquet, asking for a copy of my brief remarks. I had none, for of course I spoke without notes, but I promised to type what I'd said and send it in. I neglected to ask where I should send it, but I presume it was wanted for Author and Bookman, and I am sending it to you with the request that you pass it on to the proper quarter. (If it isn't required for Author and Bookman, burn the thing.)

I notice, on inspection of my medal, that the engraver has spelt my name "Randall", a silly and inexcusable error, for I believe the same mistake was made with my first Award. To whom should I send it for correction?

It was grand to see and have talk with you and Mrs. Deacon again. The convention was a great success. Will Bird and Miss Mitchell deserve every credit for a good job very well done. They must have arranged the weather along with everything else, for it was perfect. My wife was charmed with her first acquaintance with Canadian authors as a group, and we both enjoyed the whole affair. She joins me now in the best of good wishes to you and Mrs. Deacon.

Sincerely,

Mr. W.A. Deacon,
66 Parkhurst Blvd.,
Toronto 12, Canada.



Near Quebec.

July 12. 1949.

Dear Tom:

Quebec is a bad place for one of Northern Irish blood to be on this anniversary, though the Papal troops fought on King William's side at the Battle of the Boyne.

This note is to thank you for coming to Halifax. Your mere presence strengthened the convention greatly. Ever so many members remarked

(2)

on what a pleasure it was to meet and hear you, and were delighted with your affability. Will Bud, who has worked so hard for us all, was deeply gratified.

We were all extremely glad of the opportunity to meet Mrs. Raddall and to welcome her into the family. I don't know why, but the presence of the wives and husbands always creates a friendlier atmosphere.

(3.)

We who come from a distance are grateful for the Nova Scotian hospitality. Sally and I are more than ever determined to see the other shore - Lunenburg, Miramichi, St. John's Harbour, as well as Cape Breton. But we'd have to wait till we can find time & money.

:Needless to say I am more than delighted over your ever growing success. I don't believe Snider's book should stop you from writing a history of the printers. There is more general interest in the subject now and your book will be far better than his.

Best luck and kindest regards to you both from Sally and me.

Bill Deason

W.G. Deacon
66 Parkhurst Blvd, Toronto

August 2nd, 1949

Dear Bill,

Fulfilling my promise to forward any news that might be of use, here is a batch of notes from Nova Scotia. We have been holding an unexpected but delightful extension of the convention, here on the South Shore. Helen Creighton dropped in on her way to Cape Sable, where ~~she~~ she is collecting folk lore. We had a later note from her, saying that Maida French had turned up there, and they two had hired a fisherman to take them out to Bon Portage Island, where they spent a pleasant hour or two with Mrs. Richardson.

Then Leslie and Betty Bernard turned up here on their bikes. They had a cottage at Hunt's Point, a few miles from Liverpool, and we had two or three happy jaunts together -- to Port Mouton, Western Head, Eagle Head, and Beach Meadows, where we took them by car to one of my pet spots, a ~~stretch of dunes and beach far from the madding crowd, looking out across the water to Coffin's Island; had a picnic, made coffee in a black can over a fire, and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.~~ stretch of dunes and beach far from the madding crowd, looking out across the water to Coffin's Island; had a picnic, made coffee in a black can over a fire, and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. What a fine little man Leslie is! We had little to say to each other at the convention -- because we are both inclined to be reserved, I suppose -- but here in half an hour we were fast friends. I got a big bang out of showing the Bernard's the scenes of some of my tales, and I think they got as much bang out of it as I did. Anyhow they vow they're coming back next year, and already Edith and I are looking forward to it.

One evening when the ~~Bernards~~ Bernards were at our house, Arthur Mayse arrived with his wife and two charming youngsters. Art has a cottage at Broad River, a few miles to the west of here, and is staying to the end of August. He has left his family there temporarily, and gone off to take a swordfishing boat out of Louisburg, but we have planned some jaunts together when he gets back.

(Edgar MacInnes)
Tomorrow Edith and I are having dinner at White Point with Professor MacInnes (I forget his initials, but you will know; he teaches at Toronto and has done some first-rate work in history.) and his wife. We met them here last year, when they came to tea and I showed them about the town.

The Philip Childs are somewhere on the South Shore, too; they promised to drop in but we haven't seen them yet -- they may have come some afternoon when we were out.

With all this in mind, We are kicking ourselves now that we didn't urge you and Mrs. Deacon to come on here and stay with us after the convention. We thought of it at the time, but we had several engagements to perform on our return. As it turned out, you could have been quite happy here, with so much company wandering in and out, while Edith and I discharged our obligations, and afterwards we could have had all sorts of joint expeditions. Do make it a point, my dear Bill, to bring your wife down here next year. This is the new Mecca of the ~~hiking~~ craft, and you must make the pilgrimage.

Cheers,



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THOMAS H RADDALL

LIVERPOOL NS

DID YOU HAVE DINNER AT WHITE POINT WITH EDGAR MCINNIS
 AUTHOR OF THE UNGUARDED FRONTIER, THE WAR HISTORIES AND THE
 ENGLISH SPEAKING PEOPLES ^{OR} HAROLD A INNIS THE ECONOMIST AND
 AUTHOR OF THE FUR TRADE QUERY PLEASE WIRE COLLECT CARE
 GLOBE AND MAIL

BILL DEACON

719A A.S.T. AUG 11

over



W. A. Mason
Bleak & Trout
Lancaster

Arrived with Edgar, Macfarlane & ~~James~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~bank~~
author of new histories of Scotland and Wales & Normandy
Government General's Counsel

From Robert

William Arthur Deacon

66 Parkhurst Blvd.,
Toronto 12, Canada
MOhawk 7068

~~Literary Editor, The Globe & Mail~~
~~President, Canadian Authors' Association~~
~~Chairman, Governor-General's Awards Board~~

August 10, 1949

Dear Tom;

Thanks greatly for your news letter. This is the kind of thing that makes copy for The Fly Leaf, which is the most read item I turn out. Further, it educates readers that there is a Canadian literature and makes them familiar with the names of our principal writers and titles of their books. Among results are quite small libraries in little places that boast of having on their shelves "copies of every Governor-General's Award winner" or (from a school in Sarnia) "We add 50 to 60 new Canadian books each year." The Haliburton newspaper, one of the smallest and worst weeklies anywhere, takes a two-column article from Mae Burris three times a year on the newest Canadian books and puts on a book exhibit in Book Week. Marjorie Freeman Campbell on July 9th from Halifax wired The Hamilton Spectator two columns of well written report on the convention, which they ran on Page Two, well displayed. When we get away from the big literary cities and into the sticks, we are getting somewhere. (Hamilton is a big industrial city, so commercially minded as to be almost illiterate. Nearby Toronto gets all the big cultural attractions.)

Yes, you are perfectly right about Barnard. My liking and respect has grown through the years. He and I were drawn into the Association in its earliest days, when we were struggling young writers, utterly unknown but "promising". He and I are definitely products of this movement; and when I look at some of the unknowns among the membership I remember that Les was just as unknown 25 years ago. While there is still intellectual snobbery among our university writers, it delights me that practical writers like Arthur Mayse join up as soon as their heads are above water. There is not any possibility of any rival organization starting up that can pull any particular weight - nor even keep going. To keep a national organization functioning keeps too many people hard at work and costs too much money for a handful of conceited highbrows to maintain.

The main thing is the weaving of personal relations between congenial members and you, as Vice-President, have done a real job in being host to all these wanderers. Sorry you missed a visit with Child, who is a good and capable man but needs closer association with professional authors. He inherited wealth and his Harvard position etc tends to persuade him that people write better when they don't need to earn money by it. Ridiculous, yes, but we all need a good deal of tolerance and mutual understanding.

Thanks for thinking of having Sally and me at Liverpool. As you know I've always wanted to go there and also to see Mrs. Richardson's light house. But it is too hard for me to be away more than one Saturday at a time. Later, we too shall roam, especially when we have a car that can be relied on for several thousand miles at a stretch. (I keep wondering what you and Edith with think of our placid Lake Couchiching, which we find so restful and such a refuge from this grinding, driving city of Toronto. The determining factor in location was that it is 80 miles from Toronto - two hours driving - and we can have long weekends there from April to September, incl., which is far better than two conventional weeks at a resort.

Aug, 10, '49

We shall come, be assured; but hardly next year. I am nearing 60 and looking forward to retirement -- if I can get anything to retire on; there is no pension system in our shop. It is 16 years since I published a book and for 10 years have done no writing except my newspaper routine. In 1922 I left law to be a writer and feel it is time I got back to it - my essays, more ambitious critical studies and the like. But my paper takes almost all the time there is and if I am to squeeze even one day a week into other work I can't gad about. Later, we'll come, because we want to muchly.

My request is that you keep contact by mail with congenial fellow members. As regional vice-president, you are responsible for the branches in the Maritimes. Halifax is self-sufficient but I hope you can arrange to run over to Saint John this fall or winter. Jessie Lawson and Jean Sweet are grand people and if you turned up for a visit and to give a talk at a New Brunswick Branch meeting, it would help that crowd a lot. Make a point of seeing Desmond Pacey, who will go to St. John if he knows you are coming.

Well, I've got to turn back to work but it has been pleasant to chat for a few minutes. Our warm regards to Edith. We hope to meet your children in due course. Almost my first task is to write a brief piece on my satisfaction at seeing Roger Sudden in the Reprint. It is a plus sale for you and they reported a 40% increase in membership last year whereas the big U.S. book clubs are falling off.

In business, professional and public life, the individual counts for less and less; but in Canada the writer, as an individual, counts for more and more as the years pass. In that will be your satisfaction. During the remainder of your life, every year several thousand more Canadians will be acutely conscious of Tom Raddall. Last Christmas no fewer than five members of our staff were giving your Halifax as Christmas gifts to their best friends.

Hope you are not frying as we are at 99 and
100 degrees in the shade.

Bill

William Arthur Deacon
66 Parkhurst Blvd.,
Toronto 12, Canada
MOhawk 7068

~~Literary Editor, The Globe & Mail
President, Canadian Authors' Association
Chairman, Governor General's Awards Board~~

1:30 a.m. Nov, 15, 1949

Dear Tom;

Excuse lack of ceremony. I have to go before Royal Comms'n on the Arts this morning at 10 to present the Authors' brief; and it is the busy pre-Christmas reviewing season.

A book on Herman Melville has come in. You ought to have it and I hope you will review it for me. I am mailing it. I'd like a piece 700 to 800 words, not in any case to exceed 1,000. Thanks for considering it, and keep the book whether you can do the review or not.

Give my regards to Edith. We are already looking forward to seeing the gang at Montreal at the end of June.

Say a prayer for us about the brief. We are asking for total benefits of \$32,800 a year (\$2,500 to go with each medal and scholarships for writers who have published creditable work and need some financing temporarily if they are to continue writing). This is really very modest. The painters are complaining, amongst other points, that the \$60,000 a year the govt spends on National Art Gallery is far too little. They want a new building and all sorts of additional items -- easily \$100,000 a year.

Hope you are productive -

Bill

Mailed review
Nov. 22/49

Yesterday I was listening to Marjory Payne's Harmony Harbour, as I always do and was excited because it came from Liverpool. Wondered whether you helped with it. Really, Tom, you must write about the privateers. Never mind Snider: you will do it far better.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT Bill

The Globe and Mail

Toronto,
Canada,

Nov., 28, 1949

Dear Tom;

Your Melville review is lucid and personally congenial. Since Joyce dazzled the youngsters by writing incomprehensibly, the academic critics who don't know a bloody thing about anything have been showing their superiority by making mysteries. Trouble about Joyce is that no two agree on what he meant. My life is too short to waste on such puzzles about nothing. I am glad you blasted the book.

Something funny is Wells and Klinck's joint book about Pratt. Klinck is professor in a small Ontario college and his three chapters tell about Ned's life and says almost everything that needs to be said about his poetry. The remainder of the book is written by Wells, who explains in polysyllabic words why Ned is like Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Wordsworth, etc., etc., etc., in some passages and unlike Shakespeare, Milton, Bryon, Wordsworth, etc., etc., etc., in other passages. It is the most complete balderdash you ever read; and, of course, Wells seeks hidden meanings everywhere. The shocking part of it is that Wells is head of the English department at Columbia University. Apparently, the degree of obscurity is the measure of a poet's merit now in institutions of higher learning. If you and I remain sane, there will be two of us, at least.

It is with great regret that my scale permits only a \$10 cheque for a review of this size. The paper's treasury will mail it in due course. I hope that you feel some satisfaction in having exposed fraud - fashionable fraud, alas! The fraudulent writer debases our coinage and should be exposed. You were beautifully objective. You will probably hear from this article, which I am proud to print, and will defend if it is attacked.

Warm regards to Edith. I hope you will all have a Merry Christmas.

Ever admiringly -

Bill

*W.A. Seaton
66 Parkhurst Blvd.
Toronto.*

May 25th, 1950

Dear Bill,

For your information, I have finished the novel on which I have been working so assiduously for the past eighteen months. It is called "The Nymph and The Lamp", and is scheduled for publication next Fall in the U.S. by Little, Brown & Company, and in Canada by McClelland & Stewart.

This book marks the beginning of the third (and major) phase of my work. The short story came first, naturally. I liked the short story form, felt that I knew something about it, and therefore stuck to it until 1941, when Kenneth Roberts, Roosevelt and others persuaded me to tackle the historical novel. My original intention was to write "His Majesty's Yankees" and then go on to novels of contemporary life; but Roberts and Tom Costain (who as you know was then with Doubleday, Doran) convinced me that the good reception of H.M.Y. by the critics, if not the public, was not to be passed over so lightly. Costain himself suggested that I write three historical novels before any attempt to tackle the modern novel. This appealed to me, because apart from the theme of H.M.Y. (a crack at the phony half-truths that were rammed down my neck as Nova Scotia history when I went to school), I was keen to do a book on the beginnings of British settlement and conquest in Canada, and another dealing with Bluenose privateers in the Caribbean during the Napoleonic Wars. The public received these books well on the whole. H.M.Y. (which lambasted a lot of American as well as British tyrannies and stupidities before and during the Revolution) sold about 16,000 copies to date. (It is still in print and selling steadily in Canada.) "Roger Sudden", including a book club distribution, has sold over 68,000 copies in North America and Europe, and still has a small but steady sale in Canada. "Pride's Fancy", including a book club distribution, has sold over 75,000 at home and abroad, and still has a small but steady sale. All of these in cloth editions and at the original price. With the exception of an edition of "Roger Sudden" printed last year by the Reprint Society of Canada I have refused to permit cheap editions, and I consider the pocket-book business a racket in which, unless the printings are enormous, the author is fobbed off with a pittance.

The publishers of course expected me to keep on with costume pieces, and I could have gone on with it; but that wasn't the course I'd set for myself in the beginning, and I foresaw a rut. I had written three because the themes interested me; to go on turning them out like sausages would have been profitable but I have seen too many good writers fall into that kind of literary whoredom and I wanted no part of it. The publishers thought I was quite mad, of course.

Ever since my seafaring youth I have been impressed by the drama of men and women in lonely posts about the Canadian east coast. I touched on this theme in one or two short stories which you were good enough to praise very highly. You have referred to the story "Tambour" a good many times since, and in that respect you are, I suppose, the unsuspecting godfather of the book which I am now about to set before the public. I don't say this with any desire to bespeak your sympathy. You are too independent for that, and as you know I have never cared a damn what critics in general had to say about my work. I say "never". I once wrote you an indignant letter

The Globe and Mail

Toronto,
Canada

May 31, 1950

Dear Tom;

Thanks for long, interesting letter. I hope you did not mean me to treat completion of *The Nymph and the Lamp* as too confidential for any mention at all. What I'd like to say is merely that you have completed a novel of this title for fall publication and that it will be your first novel of contemporary life. -- Until I've read it, naturally I can't go any further; but your many friends will be interested in the fact and it is a good idea to alert them now. (There is a special reason I can't go into beyond saying that a certain store is laying fall plans with special reference to Canadian titles, and I think it might mean considerable in sales if your novel were included in their program, as it won't be if they don't know it is coming.)

May I say that much in print ?

You were so generous with your time last summer that I shall not press you to be at Montreal. I well remember when you made your first nest speech at table in Hart House in 1946. If it is too far to Banff in 1951, I'm sure your wife would enjoy being with us at Toronto in 1952. I think attendance about once in three years is about right for the working creative writer. I am hoping to retire in five years and hence feel I can't afford to miss any conventions during my remaining newspaper years.

If you wrote me a nasty letter after my review of Roger Sudden, it must have been a very mild form of abuse because I don't remember the incident at all. I do chronically tell authors to pay no attention to critics and recognize that part as in character. You see, I write for the public, and am not lecturing authors in the newspaper. About 50,000 read me every week out of the quarter-million who buy this paper, and I try hard to explain the book so that each of my readers will know whether he wants to read that particular book.

I quite appreciate the authentic historic background of Roger Sudden; and in using the term "escape fiction" I did not intend any insult. It is the kind of adventure story, depending heavily on plot, which is one of the most popular forms of reading. If it had been liquor instead of a novel, I might as easily and as innocently have said: "This bottle of Seagram's V.O. is a good reliable brand of rye whiskey, which most Canadians like to drink." And the distiller would not have been offended at all. Actually I wish Canadians would write more of the less rarified kind of stories, more of the old stingo in Roger Sudden, and hence more popular.

Bill Gordon of British Books, who, I believe, will become the principal Canadian publisher in the next 15 or 20 years - maybe sooner - asked me to read Sherwood's book. I said I didn't know the subject well enough and advised him to send you the script for an opinion. He represents Methuen's in London, who are very anxious to get started with Canadian authors. I also told Gordon that if he wanted a book on the privateers, you were the only man to write it. Of course you will charge a fee. For a casual reading and a plain "yes" or "no" verdict, I'd say \$25. More in relation to the detailed examination and report - minimum \$5 a page for detailed notes. This is the kind of book Methuen wants but they must have something authentic and acceptable to Canadian readers. Give Bill the

lowdown. He is square and a man of sense.

He began as a boy with Collins, Glasgow and put in 15 years working up from apprentice to export manager. Then he joined the army and worked up from private to Lt-Col. Discharged, he refused 3 of the biggest jobs in publishing to come to Canada last year and launch out for himself. Everybody likes him here except the old-line publishers, who regard him as an interloper in their private pond. He inspires confidence.

I want you to do that book on the privateers out of your knowledge; and if Gordon will publish it, I think you would be in good hands. Meanwhile give him your most candid opinion on the Sherwood effort.

Thank you for explaining the Son of the Hawk situation. I was about to treat it as the boys' version of His Majesty's Yankees when Rod said something that sounded as if you had practically committed treason. (Rod is far from himself not only a very sick man himself but driven half crazy with a wife who has long been desperately ill.) Then I began to re-read Son of the Hawk and check it with His Majesty's K Yankees, play by play. It was a long, tedious job and I gave up. Your statement will save me a great deal of trouble and enable me to go ahead with the sort of notice I had first intended.

Juveniles are becoming more important all the time in Canada. I recommend you get for your own kids The Story of Canada by Brown, Herman and Jeanneret - \$3. For yourself, I think the medicine is The Saskatchewan by Marjorie W. Campbell. In a recent lecture I compared this your Halifax, for differences and similarities. Both are important.

As for the Nymph, I'll be watching for her and only hope it comes out early in the fall. If I can get it by mid-October, I can really put the spotlight on it in Book Week (Oct 28). If you have any good informal photo of yourself, please loan me the film and I'll get my engraving made and return film -- you out hunting or fishing - maybe in a canoe, Perhaps with members of your family.

Congratulations on your record of sales. You do not mention The Wedding. I found that personally very agreeable. There was a delicacy about it which charmed me. I wondered whether you used it first as a serial - the way the episodes were strung along.

Costain strikes me as a man who understands perfectly how to make money out of his books but neither an artist nor a really important novelist. He spreads his stuff thin enough so as not to discourage the millions of readers who ~~sd~~ don't like to think and who know absolutely nothing about history. After all, he wrote successfully for the films for many years. He is a delightful man, and God knows I rejoice in the material success of any writer.

Best regards to you and Edith and I'd be grateful if you asked Stanley Salmen, whom I don't know, whether he would personally see I get an advance copy of The Nymph and the Lamp. Your Toronto firm won't give me an advance copy of anything. I think they use their advance copies for their salesmen, the principal retailers etc.

Ever cordially -

Bill
D.

June 4th, 1950

Dear Bill,

Thanks for your good letter. It will be quite alright to say that I have completed a novel called "The Nymph and The Lamp" for Fall publication, that it is my first novel of contemporary life, and that the scene is one with which I am thoroughly familiar -- life in the lonely island outposts of the Canadian east coast.

I enclose an informal photo, as you request. It was taken while deer hunting at Eagle Lake, where three friends share a hunting camp with me. The objects at my feet are a haversack and the end of a canoe paddle.

Little, Brown have the book scheduled for Oct. 23rd. I'll make every effort to see that you get an advance copy. Had a letter from Gordon, of British Books, and told him I would give an opinion on Sherwood's M/S if he sends it down.

Cheero,

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Ethel Whyte

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Ethel Whyte

June 15, 1950

Dear Tom;

Thanks for your picture, which is just right. I am running a short review of Son of the Hawk this Saturday.

Rode home last night on street car with John McClelland Junior. He told me that you had written a new novel, which is far better than anything you have done previously. He said it is not only the best Canadian novel ever published but the best novel published anywhere in the world for many years. He said it is powerful and superb.

We must, of course, allow for some salesmanship when a publisher tries to entuse a reviewer. But I was pleased that he gave me the works as it indicates some degree of confidence. While I must suspend judgment till I see the book, I am quite ready to believe good reports of anything you write.

You have ability, coupled with steadiness and capacity for application. Your record is excellent. You are at the height of your powers and have 10 to 15 very productive and successful years immediately ahead.

I agree with you that it is the rut that kills the author and, to grow, one has to tackle new things. But in any form there is just so much fuel in the tanks. If you do four or five contemporary novels - one every other year, it may be time to switch again. By that time, anything you write will sell and you should ease off by writing only what you want to write. By 1965 we shall be facing far more favorable market conditions and you ought to spend the rest of your life on reminiscence autobiography, maybe travel, perhaps history. It would be foolish, I think, to strain to be too creative after your middle 60's.

I appreciate your confidence in me as shown by explaining your plans - which I approve such to above.

I am getting very tired now and wish it were possible financially to lay off and get at my own reminiscent writing.

Our warm regards to you and Edith -

Bill

The Globe and Mail

Toronto,
Canada

Oct., 11, 1950

Dear Tom;

Today your novel came but I hadn't time to open it.

At a buffet ^{house} supper given by Dent & Sons a few after getting the book I was talking to Jack McClelland when somebody said: "You know this is the book you suggested to Raddall that he write." I denied it -- not knowing the subject of the book; and a McClelland and Stewart salesman you know well but whose name I forget because I see him seldom, blurted out: "Oh yes you did. I was present and I heard you say it."

As God is my Maker I have no knowledge of this charge. It is true I have persuaded Frank McDowell, George Wrong and others to write specific books. I should be eternally honored to think any fleeting word of mine had influenced you in any manner; but the only book I ever tried to get you to write was the non-fiction history of the Privateers of 1812-14. You said McC & S would not consider it as it clashed with Snider's.

I went into this with Jack McClelland. He said I was quite wrong. Snider's book is about the Great Lakes naval engagements and there would be no clash. I asked him if he would accept from you a factual book about the fighting privateers along the Atlantic Coast and he said he would be delighted.

So, if you are open for any advice, why not throw in this non-fiction thing, full of the old stingo of anecdote and character, between this new novel and the next one.

Jack says your new novel is the most wonderful ever. This does not surprise me. I am going to read it at my leisure and make it the leading feature review in the special Canadian Book Week issue of the Book Department on Oct 28th -- probably a three-page effort.

I used the hunting picture to illustrate my review of the juvenile version of His Majesty's Yankees. So now, if you have anything else that is informal and clear, please send it along. Perhaps Edith can help you pick one out - or pose you to look good. That hunting pose was swell of your boots but the face was not clear. If you have one taken -- say in your study at your typewriter, or surrounded by your family, or hanging head-down from the branch of a tree, we'd probably get better results if you loaned me the film, which our photographers will enlarge before our engravers get at it. This gives better detail.

It is going to be a big book season, meaning a lot of first rate books - and one helps to sell another - and a far more optimistic attitude in the trade and among the book-reading public.

I'm glad you've been so steady a craftsman. Your name is well made now and during the next 20 years you ought to build up a tremendously valuable property in your published works. They tell me steady royalties from reprints are the most important source of revenue.

All kinds of greetings - Thanksgiving, Armistice Day, Christmas and New Years -

Bill



The Globe and Mail

Toronto,
Canada,

Oct., 23, 1950

Mr. Thomas H. Reddall, novelist,
Liverpool,
Nova Scotia.

Dear Tom;

I bow low to you.

You have far exceeded anything you have done in fiction in the past. What you have done is so fine and powerful that you will have difficulty beating your own record.

My review of *The Nymph and the Lamp* is now going down the chute to the lino-typers and will be my leading review for Canadian Book Week issue, Oct., 28th.

Frankly, Tom, I don't know how good your book is. It is in the top rank of Canadian novels, of course; but I'll not know till I've cooled off, weeks hence, whether it is slightly above or below A, B or C. Things like this need time to digest; but I'm a disciple of POWER, and this is strong.

I'm particularly pleased because I have always wanted a living picture of Sable Island and now I've got it -- complete with a cast of characters.

Please keep me informed about developments, such as what the English think of it, whether you sell movie rights, etc. A stage play would restrict the action, too much, I think; and some of the erotic scenes could not be filmed either.

Of course, as literature, it's miles ahead of most novels published anywhere. Follow your own course, man; you know how to write them.

My humblest and heartiest congratulations -

Beit

Nov. 1, 1950

Wednesday Night

My dear Bill -

I'm not writing to thank you for that heart-warming review, for that would be impertinent, but I do want to tell you it did just that - it warmed my heart. I've just been looking at my diary. Typical entry, last Feb. 14th. - "Working 8 to 10 hours a day on my novel but it still goes slowly, every sentence literally wrenched from my mind, & then mull'd over carefully." Again, four days later, "Working on the novel 9 hours, & thinking about the next chapter as I took my afternoon walk to Milton. I am seldom to bed before midnight, sometimes at it till 1-30."

Finally, on April 1st (an odd day to finish so long & serious a labor) there

2
is this: —

"Saturday. I worked all day & towards five in the afternoon wrote the last word of my novel, which I began in November '48. Think I shall call it 'bestways' or 'One Fair Spirit'. It will take about a month to type clean copy for the publishers & do the last-minute polishing. There won't be much of the latter, for my work is all edited & much re-written at the close of each day. Now that the novel is finished the ~~plot~~ plot seems simple, even trite, & the characters in no way distinguished, yet it is the product of the longest & most arduous labor I have yet performed — deliberately refusing to 'dash off' so much as a paragraph, & spending an hour sometimes over a single phrase. It is a romance of course but I think

I have sketched faithfully life in an isolated wireless station as I knew it 30 years ago, & a glimpse of Halifax & the Annapolis Valley in the hectic post-war days of '20 & '21. "

There you see my state of mind at the finish ~~the~~ - exhausted & despondent but clinging to my faith in the tale as something worth doing well. And perhaps you will see what such a review as yours can mean when the last step has been taken & the book is irrevocably out. Notice that I later changed my mind about the title. "bastaways" sounded too much like an adventuring tale for juveniles. "One Fair Spirit" is of course taken from the lines of "Solitude" that Barney recites on p. 159. But the practice of lifting titles from lines of verse is often by the crudest of Caesarian

operations & ⁴ dismally contrived - has become so banal that nowadays I'm suspicious of any book bearing such a label, & so I chucked it out.

When after much thought I hit upon *The Nymph & The Lump*, which said everything & was fresh & clean, I wrote it down & knew at once that nothing else would do.

The movies are enquiring - four of the leading companies have asked for copies of the book - but of course that means nothing. The British publishers will probably be Hurst & Blackett, but I'll let you know. Little, Brown are releasing the book on Nov. 23rd, & we'll see what the Americans have to say.

All things good to
you from Edith & me

Sincerely,
Lorn

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Ethel Whyte

66 Parkhurst Blvd.,
Toronto 17,
3 a.m. - Nov. 7, 1950

Dear Tom;

Just in from work and shall chat with you a few minutes before getting into bed to read Phyllis Bentley's Quorum, a novel. Hope to get to sleep by 5 because I must be up by noon.

Thank you for taking me into your confidence about the long strain of the writing of The Nymph and the Lamp and the diary entries. I quite understand because, though you may think it odd, The Four Jameses nearly drove me crazy because I never knew where I was going. No objectives when I began any chapter nor even paragraph. When I began a sentence I never knew clearly what I wanted to say in it. They say hard writing makes easy writing. Your Nymph is a proof of that.

You ought to make a fortune off that book because I tell you it is immortal. Hope you have some royalty arrangement for spreading payments to you so Income Tax does not swallow all the profits. Some authors are taking their pay in equal payments over ten years.

As a professional critic, it is my business to read and review books. I don't do it as a favor to authors, even when they happen to be friends of mine. But when I have obviously taken a book very seriously and done my damndest to write a competent piece, I appreciate very much having the author express pleasure. Even admiration of my poor efforts to interpret him, since he is the only person on earth who really knows whether I have done a satisfactory job. Nobody else knows whether I have caught your intent correctly - taken the meanings you put there. I try very hard to live myself into a book to understand it from the inside.

Writing out of the author's own experience is what I constantly teach. I met Foster of McClelland & Stewart on the street and asked him when and where I was supposed to have advised you on this theme, because he had said at Dent's: "This is your book, the book you told him to write." When I demurred, he replied: "I was present and heard you say it."

Foster tells me now that when you were at the Carlton Club in Toronto, I suggested that you take the

Tambour situation of the isolated operator, use the Sable Island scene and build it up into a full-length novel. You will have forgotten, as I have; but it is just the thing I would say because that thought was clearly in my mind. It is a pretty obvious thing to think of.

And I should like to add that probably you have other short stories that can be similarly translated into novels, not by padding but by working up. I remember Arthur Stringer telling me that he got all his ideas in his first ten years of unsuccessful writing. Stories he handled badly and others so badly they never got sold at all, did contain real germs. In his maturity he went over these early efforts and frequently saw where he could recast, improve, till it came out an altogether new and infinitely better product. Possibly you, now, can go through your notes and early published short pieces and discover how to make them into novels.

I shall not be content until you do a non-fiction book on the privateersmen of 1812-14. It would not take you long as you have this dope at your tongue's end. Jack McClelland will take it and the sandwiching of non-fiction between novels is a fairly shrewd program.

On titles I agree completely. Often I wish novelists would drop the silly words ~~xxx~~ and use numbers instead - 21,327. In newspaper work, we speak of "label" headings, meaning words that describe plainly, bluntly what the piece is about :: Lumbering in Northern Ontario, or Horse Show Disappointing. Readers like it.

Discerning and discriminating readers in both the States and Britain are going to admire and be moved by *The Nymph and the Lamp*. I do not profess to know how many such readers exist; but there will be enough of them to keep this book in print indefinitely. As to the mob, that is always a sheer gamble. This may be the most popular thing since Forever Amber and Kitty, or sales may be limited. Only God knows. But Janey Canuck, my mother in craft, used to say: Write for the writers because, if you please them, they will in time take your book to everybody else.

That is certainly true to you and me. I am off tomorrow to Guelph to lecture at the Ontario Agricultural College. It is the only degree-granting institution in Canada that has a compulsory course on Canadian literature. I shall be taking to these aware people from the platform and in discussion groups about *The Nymph and the Lamp* as well as your Halifax -- both great books.

Presumably you have caught your breath and are on the next job. Seems to me that you found the right method 1948-50, slow steady patient concentrated labor.

Sally and I are sorry you and Edith did not get to Montreal last July. From standpoint of the numbers of able writers present and platform program, this was the best show ever. Hospitality was liberal but of course Halifax is remembered as supreme. We meet in Banff in the first week of July '51. As you have never seen the West, cannot you two plan to be present? There will be general demand for you and we are getting board and rooms at School of Fine Arts for \$5 a day. You could see Vancouver on same trip.

We trust the children are all right and feel badly it has to be so long between visits.

Cordially,

Bill

November 13th, 1950

Dear Bill,

I've been hunting again, and just got out of the woods last night. (Got a fine buck deer in a maple swamp near Eagle Lake, a running shot in the dusk, and right through the heart -- which, in those conditions, was pure luck, not marksmanship.) Your letter dated 3 A.M. Nov. 7th was awaiting me. (The time was like my own nocturnal habits.)

It is just four years to the day since I left home for that busy speaking tour in Ontario and Quebec, and I've been refreshing my memory from the brief entries in my logbook. Foster is right in his recollection that you mentioned at the Carleton Club a notion that I should not devote my work entirely to the historical, and that I should make use of my observations and experiences in the coastal radio service. I can't recall that you mentioned Sable Island specifically, although you must have known (from the jacket blurb of TAMBOUR) that I had been there. What impressed me there, and again at the meeting with the Toronto Branch, CAA, was that in conversations aside you urged upon me the same point -- that I should not let the success of PRIDE'S FANCY blind me to the strong human value of tales of my own time, using material of the kind that I had revealed in the short story "Tambour". You kept referring to "Tambour" then, and later on, in the hasty notes and scattered conversations we have had since. This chimed with my own feeling, despite the well-meant efforts of publishers and many friends to convince me that the historical novel was my forte and that I should forget everything else. Therefore, as soon as HALIFAX was published, and despite the misgivings of the publishers, (especially the U.S. publishers) I began to write THE NYMPH AND THE LAMP. I had broken with Doubleday, and my agent's efforts to secure a contract and cash advance from other publishers in the U.S. failed. They all said the same thing -- I had built up a reputation in the costume novel field that was highly promising, and a contemporary novel now would be a wild gamble. The result was that I had to finance myself during the whole eighteen months I was writing it -- a very considerable mental burden added to the strain of so long and careful a piece of work.

At the end of February, '49, when I had been working on the book for four months, and was still feeling my way doggedly along the thread of my story in a most profound darkness, I got a wire from Stanley Salmen saying that he was catching a Furness liner at Halifax on his way to England, and would like a chat. I went up and had dinner with him and his wife, and afterwards a long talk in their cabin aboard the ship. I told them, so far as I was able, what I was trying to accomplish. They looked very grave, and said that a novel about a man of 46 and a woman of 30 would be a very difficult thing to bring off. The worst of it was that I couldn't describe the story with any clarity because of course at that stage I couldn't see it clearly myself. However I talked about the life on "Marina", the oddly romantic nature of the work itself in such a place. I'm not much

of a hand at talking, but a couple of drinks loosened my tongue, and I went on about it for quite a bit -- parrying the keen criticisms that Salmen and his wife had to make from time to time. I suppose I came completely out of my shell. At any rate I must have revealed my own passionate faith in what I was doing, for when I stopped there was a little silence, and Mrs. Salmen exclaimed, "I believe you can do it!" Salmen was noncommittal, but he got me to promise that he should see the completed manuscript before anybody else.

So I went home and went on with it. When I met you in Halifax in the summer of '49 I mentioned briefly what I was doing, and you were enthusiastic, mentioning again the impact that "Tambour" had made upon you. That Fall, when I had been working on the book roughly a year, the eternal groping paid off, for suddenly the whole shape of the thing became apparent. It still had to be worked out, chapter by chapter, even paragraph by paragraph, to say exactly what I wanted to say. I knew that I had a great theme, and the difficult thing was to tell it with the proper restraint. The path to Hell may be paved with good intentions but what takes a writer there is emotion on the loose. What might have been magnificent then becomes the merely maudlin and the simple humanity of the characters becomes drowned in a slobber of words.

The Nymph may or may not become a classic of its kind, but of this I am sure -- it is a piece of life, of authentic Canadian life and earth and sea, in which every word has meaning, and no one could have written it but I, myself. It is as much a part of me as my hand, fiction or no fiction. For as you may have guessed, the tale is not entirely fiction, and in the happy-go-lucky "Sargent" you have in all his cocky glory a Portrait Of The Author As A Young Man, not quite the fool he seemed, even to himself in those days, but very eager for the taste of life and noting every detail of it.

Our best to you and Sally.

Sincerely,

Mr. William Arthur Deacon,
66 Parkhurst Boulevard,
Toronto 12.

William Arthur Deacon

66 Parkhurst Blvd.,
Toronto 12, Canada
MOhawk 7068

Literary Editor, *The Globe & Mail*
~~President, Canadian Authors' Association~~
~~Chairman, Governor-General's Awards Board~~

Nov., 15, 1950

Dear Tom;

Congratulations on the buck. Only don't ask me to believe it was all luck any more than when you write a book that goes right to the heart.

Thanks for clearing up my foggy memory re Sable Island story. It's true I admired Tambour so much I wanted a whole novel on that theme of the isolation of an operator. Also I'd been fascinated by the "graveyard of the Atlantic" - though I knew next to nothing about it - and it would have been natural for me to ask for this selection. I never hesitate to ask an author to write a book just because I want to read it. They all don't do it, but some do with excellent results.

Am glad also to know your psychological difficulties in the struggle to write it. That stoppage is often a good thing, prevents facile emptiness.

The whole circumstance reminds me of my senior friend Louis Blake Duff who, 25 years back, used every year to write an elegant, informative and interesting essay of about 10,000 on some unusual topic then bind up 200 printed copies rather elaborately and give them to his friends at Christmas. I once asked him why he went to so much trouble. He replied: "I don't mind making ~~32~~ \$30,000 a year from the Welland Tribune and my printing business; but once a year I feel I must do something non-commercial to save my soul."

Tom, whatever the financial results of *The Nymph* and the *Lamp*, I feel you have "saved your soul" by it, just as you did when you wrote *Halifax: Warden of the North*.

Both are great books. The others are good books, very good; but now you have power, you move people.

Of course a writer must eat, but I don't think it does any harm to have some modest successes or even the rare failure. Better that than be tied to one sort of product - every good another packet of craft cheese. Think of the bloody slavery of turning out another and another and another of the same. Take Sir Philip Gibbs. I've always thought his life must be stupid, grinding out such patterned and uninspired stuff. Of course they sold well, but --

Here is a practical angle. Mass reading taste changes from time to time and often inexplicably. Suddenly the public is sick of exactly what it has been consuming for years on end. Once there was a terrible rage for Hergesheimer, but who reads him now? Haven't heard his name mentioned in 10 years. Looks like a case of a man who could only do one thing.

You are at the height of your powers. If there is anything you yearn to do, do it now.

Another thought. As writing becomes more and more routine, it is harder and harder to change to something else. But vering taste may compel you to change some day; and therefore I'd like to see you mentally limber enough to undertake and carry through something of a kind you have never tried.

No harm whatever in filling in with an historical romance. You ~~must~~ must have many more good ideas along that line. And they would doubtless earn you money, which you could use handily.

But your only chance of real growth is in new territory. For 20 years Mazo wrote a Jalna book every other year, and filled in the off years with all sorts of miscellaneous efforts. Unfortunately, none were really successful. My idea about your career is that you will do your greatest work outside the historical novel, though I hope we'll get more of them, too.

So I return to my fixed idea about the history of privateering in your pet period and by those Bluenoses.

If you're to keep mentally alive and alert, you must break new ground from time to time. Suppose now you are at work on another contemporary novel -- perhaps a sailor's story -- and you come out with a string of four or five. Fine, but what next? What after that?

At the end of story you will only feel badly about the books you never got around to writing.

So, in your place, I'd think hard - decide which 5 or 6 books you want most to do. Then see that all of them get out in the next ten years. After that stretch you will be so firmly established that anything with your name on it will sell, even though it's hellish dull, though I doubt whether you ever achieve the idiocy of Galsworthy's last three novels.

I wish to God I had carried a recording machine when you were with me around Halifax Harbor. I can't remember a quarter of the fascinating things you told me. Maybe a history of some sort is inside you. But whether it is poetry or whatnot, DO IT, get it down. This is the era of your great production.

Admiringly -

Bill