

Transcription of Interview with Eleanor Cowans, Montreal.

[Prof. Macdougall notes her grandfather married twice.]

her father married twice.

J.R.Cowans oldest of the first family

Uncle Percy oldest of the second family.

J.R.Cowans first married an American girl.

[Macdougall cites 'fairly accessible' sources for the Cowans. Robert Cowans, the grandfather, b. Cooper, Scotland--not far from Elinburgh. He was a son of John Cowans, and a Jessie Milne.

Married first an Annie King, and an Elizabeth Parsons.]

John R. Cowans was born in 1857.

J.R.Cowans married Elizabeth Jane McLeod. second wife.

he married her when he was 45 and she was 23.
married in Feb.1, 1900. [she thinks].

her sister died 1901. Miss Cowans was born in 1903.

brothers, 1905 and 1907. [four in the family].

one sister, Margaret (died just last year), Robert and Jack.

--she thinks they moved in 1909 or 1911.

--in the "big house, right on top of the hill. And it was a lovely house...."

right opposite her grandfather's house, and the Presbyterian Church next door.

--she can remember the day they moved--them all on the front gallery, all the way to Springhill Junction.

her father: very much more like a grandfather to them. "He was a very religious man."

["Quite strict."

--a "very good man." had to be in at certain times.

"Very much head of the household."

her father died in 1946.

kept a strict Sunday--"couldn't do this on Sunday and we couldn't do that on Sunday."

"He was very much respected down there."

--she remembers how many strikes they had.

--John L. Lewis came down to unionize the miners, she says.

--'There was a strike about every year.'

--remembers having the army out 'on our lawn'

'To us it didn't mean to much, because we were too young, you know.'
OO--on the strike.--

'The army was all around the bottom part....'

choice: either to go back to Montreal or go back to Halifax.
decision up to her father.

--she became a nurse.

thinks that they were so young the question of mixing with other
children doesn't really come up. 'I think we had a life of our
own.'

--family went over to her grandfather's;

p--lovely memories of the Ottawa house.

--her Dad used to take her out in a rowboat.

--used to drive about in a carriage.

--when they came back they stayed with Aunt Amy and Uncle George K& yes.

--girls went to Trafalger Institute and the boys went to [Solon?] House

--her father bought a house in Cedar Avenue.

--her father retired at 55.

her father did voluntary work in the hospitals. he also did a lot of
church work.

--doesn't think Cowans took any loss in his finances. was 'very wealthy'
when he left Springhill.

--then he put all his money in real estate--and the war came.

--also suffered in 1929--bottom dropped out of the barrel.

--Cowans had brothers--who could help bail him out. wasn't discussed, in
front of the family.

her father went in for draughtsmanship in England--she isn't sure where
this was.

her brother lives out in Pointe Claire.

'His father wanted to give him something to do'--explanation of why
J.R. switched directions so suddenly.

he was c. 27 when he started working in Springhill. when he was first
in Springhill her mother was just a little girl.

when co. was first founded he was secty-treasurer.

not too long in England.

uncle John's son's wife lives on Bedford Basin.

and Margaret McLeod's in--her cousin--in the Guest House. Guest House
in Halifax. Roman Catholic guest house. St. Vincent's Guest House.
her sister-in-law lives on Bedford Basin.

--her father was not a teetotaler until he heard a sermon. 'And everying
was swept out of the house.'

--sermon was before she knew him. early on.

the children had their own horses!

her father never bet on anything.

different circles altogether than Percy Cowans. (Percy Cowans did well in

*stockbroking as McDougall & Cowans, stockbrockers.

on the subject of entertaining at the house:

'There were Sunday night suppers after church. They'd all come to our house.'

--the minister and all the people--Fred Langille, there was Dr. Murray, and all the people of the church.

servants....

...in Montreal they had three servants.

...had help and nurses in Springhill.

--luxurious house.

'I think everything in Springhill in those days--everything was luxurious.... It was different, as I remember it,...everything was luxurious, you know? Everybody was comfortable.'

--very happy.

--the children had tutors in Springhill.

you'd walk up half a mile--it would be all grounds. and a race track down at the bottom.

--J.R.Cowans father died betweel 1899 and 1902.

--doesn't know exact date.

Purvis McDougall is Prof. McDougall's uncle.

warm memories of the cottage at Parrsboro.

she thinks the whole family was Conservative.

the family was Presbyterian. obviously didn't go along with Church Union.

Presbyterian minister lived nearby. Rev. Scott.

she goes along with 'sheltered' as a description of her life in Springhill.

just had to go across the street to go to her grandfathers.

'I don't remember any of the other children in Springhill.'

sledding down Macfarlane Street.

--had a cook and a maid.

'I think we led what you'd call a very sheltered life.'

went out to the mine, on occasion.

'He was a lovely old gentleman.'

--her mother's family--two brothers, one sister.

story of her father meeting her mother. 'Dad walkiⁿg home to the house where he lived. Mother was skating, and Dad saw her out on the skating rink and Dad wrote a letter to her father asking him over to Sunday dinner, Sunday supper, and he was introduced to her that way.'

that story's been told many times.

--her father mainly sat down to relax. smoked a pipe or a cigar or a cigarette.

famil

company owned house at Parrsboro.

when his father returned to Montreal he retired. invested in property. pkayed the stock market on the margin.

'Dad would never send us to public school.'

'Well, it was just natural...'

--Dad and mother were married in Montreal. weren't married in Springhill.
'That's just the way things were in those days.'

--thinks they were married, up at George and Aunt Amy's home.
--1900, February 1 1900.

--birthdates of children: sister 1901, her 1903, Robert 1905,
Jack in 1907,

--she thinks he had more contact with people in Halifax than people in Montreal.

Uncle John McLeod married one of the Fairbanks girls. Fairbanks owned a hotel.

--her mother was 'very, very quiet.'

--her Dad was so much older....as her Dad got older, he didn't want to go out, her mpothor was pleased with that.

her mother wasn't active socially at all.

she kept visiting her grandfather--she went in training in 1935--
stopped visiting sometime during the 1940s.

--'She didn't notice a lot of difference.'

the children each owned a horse. but the children didn't ride them.

but he gave up horses when he came to Montreal.

they had to sold their house in Montreal.

when he was young he was quite a socialite.

he was on the hospital committee at the General Hospital.

'Really, Springhill means more to me than Montreal does.'

'We never had poverty....'

'I wasn't old enough to realize that'--she says of poverty in Springhill.
'It would never really hit me, because we didn't do anything different than any of the other children did.'

--she is unhappy to live in thisplace. she couldn't afford an apartment.

her father just liked to read newspapers. And the Bible.

'We never went to Sunday School. Dad taught us Sunday School.'

Dad was a very religious man. 'I would say very.'

her mother died in 1962, she was 86 when she died. her Dad was 89 when he died in 1946.

her sister died 15th of March, 1981.

when they came to Montreal--had a cook: Tablemaid: and house-maid.

always had three maids until they sold the house.

--'a full complement of help ' in Springhill.

--children would be put to bed before dinner.