



NATIONAL ANTHEM



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Chapter 1

HISTORY OF "O CANADA"

Many people think of Calixa Lavallée as an obscure music teacher who dashed off a patriotic song in a moment of inspiration. The truth is quite different. Lavallée was, in fact, known as "Canada's national musician" and it was on this account that he was asked to compose the music for a poem written by Judge Adolphe-Basile Routhier.

The occasion was the "Congrès national des Canadiens-Français" in 1880, which was being held at the same time as the St. Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations.

There had been some thought of holding a competition for a national hymn to have its first performance on St. Jean-Baptiste Day, June 24, but by January the committee in charge decided there was not enough time, so the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, the Honourable Théodore Robitaille, commissioned Judge Routhier to write a hymn and Lavallée to compose the tune. Lavallée made a number of drafts before the tune we know was greeted with enthusiasm by his musical friends. It is said that in the excitement of success Lavallée rushed to show his music to the Lieutenant Governor without even stopping to sign the manuscript.

The first performance took place on June 24, 1880 at a banquet in the "Pavillon des Patineurs" in Quebec City as the climax of a "Mosaïque sur des airs populaires canadiens" arranged by Joseph Vézina, a prominent composer and bandmaster.

Although this first performance of "O Canada" with Routhier's French words was well received on the evening, it does not seem to have made a lasting impression at that time. Arthur Lavigne, a Quebec musician and music dealer, published it without copyright but there was no rush to reprint. Lavallée's obit in 1891 doesn't mention it among his accomplishments, nor does a biography of Judge Routhier published in 1898. French Canada is represented in the 1887 edition of the University of Toronto song book by "Vive la canadienne", "A la claire fontaine" and "Un canadien errant".

English Canada in general probably first heard "O Canada" when school children sang it when the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall (later King George V and Queen Mary) toured Canada in 1901. Five years later Whaley & Royce in Toronto published the music with the French text and a translation into English made by Dr. Thomas Bedford Richardson, a Toronto doctor. The Mendelssohn Choir used the Richardson lyrics in one of their performances about this time and Judge Routhier and the French press complimented the author.

Richardson version:

O Canada! Our fathers' land of old
Thy brow is crown'd with leaves of red and gold.
Beneath the shade of the Holy Cross
Thy children own their birth
No stains thy glorious annals gloss
Since valour shield thy hearth.
Almighty God! On thee we call
Defend our rights, fend this nation's thrall,
Defend our rights, fend this nation's thrall.

In 1908 Collier's Weekly inaugurated its Canadian edition with a competition for an English text to Lavallée's music. It was won by Mercy E. Powell McCulloch, but her version did not take.

McCulloch version:

O Canada! in praise of thee we sing;
From echoing hills our anthems proudly ring.
With fertile plains and mountains grand
With lakes and rivers clear,
Eternal beauty, thou dost stand
Throughout the changing year.
Lord God of Hosts! We now implore
Bless our dear land this day and evermore,
Bless our dear land this day and evermore.

Since then many English versions have been written for "O Canada". Poet Wilfred Campbell wrote one. So did Augustus Bridle, Toronto critic. Some were written for the 1908 tercentenary of Québec City. One version became popular in British Columbia...

Buchan version:

O Canada, our heritage, our love
Thy worth we praise all other lands above.
From sea to sea throughout their length
From Pole to borderland,
At Britain's side, whate'er betide
Unflinchingly we'll stand.
With hearts we sing, "God save the King",
Guide then one Empire wide, do we implore,
And prosper Canada from shore to shore.

However the version that gained the widest currency was made in 1908 by Robert Stanley Weir, a lawyer and at the time Recorder of the City of Montréal. This is the version which was published in an official form for the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation in 1927, and has since been generally accepted in English speaking Canada.

Weir version:

O Canada! Our home and native land
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise
The True North strong and free,
And stand on guard, O Canada
We stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, glorious and free,
We stand on guard, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee!

Judge Routhier's original version remains unchanged.

Routhier version:

O Canada! Terre de nos aïeux,
Ton front est ceint de fleurons glorieux!
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée
Il sait porter la croix!
Ton histoire est une épopée
Des plus brillants exploits
Et ta valeur, de foi trempée
Protégera nos foyers et nos droits,
Protégera nos foyers et nos droits.

Many musicians have made arrangements of "O Canada" but there appears to be a scarcity of recordings suitable for various purposes.

Chapter 2

CALIXA LAVALLÉE

Calixa Lavallée was a "canadien errant", a man who left his country for greener fields, but who nevertheless loved Canada and returned to it, returned with a reputation well earned in the United States and France to become the "national musician" of Canada. He was, in his time, a composer of operettas, at least one symphony, various occasional pieces and songs; he was a pianist and organist of considerable note and he was a teacher who wanted to found the first Canadian Conservatory.

The famous Canadian choral conductor Augustus Stephen Vogt said of him: "I became acquainted with Lavallée in the 80's of the last century, when I was in Boston as a student of music, and he impressed me as a man of extraordinary ability - not merely as a clever executant of the piano, and not merely as an adroit deviser of pretty melodies and sensuous harmonies, but as a genuinely creative artist, a pure musical genius".

Calixa Lavallée was born in Verchères, Québec, on December 28, 1842, the son of Augustin Lavallée, a woodcutter and blacksmith, who became an instrument repairman, bandleader and music teacher. Later when the family moved to St-Hyacinthe, the father worked for the famous organ-builder Joseph Casavent and led the town band. Calixa showed talent early and played the organ in the cathedral at the age of eleven. Two years later he gave a piano recital at the Théâtre Royal in Montréal.

In Montréal Lavallée met Léon Derome, a butcher who loved music. He became Lavallée's lifelong patron and friend, often coming to his aid in bad times.

About this time, Calixa tired of regular lessons and left Montréal to try his luck in the United States. In New Orleans, he won a competition which in turn won him a job as accompanist to the famous Spanish violinist Olivera. After touring with Olivera in Brazil and the West Indies, Lavallée joined the Northern army during the American Civil War.

Leaving the U.S. army as a lieutenant, Lavallée returned to Montréal where he gave piano lessons and played comet in a theatre orchestra.

In 1865 he returned to the United States to teach and give a series of concert tours. He married and began to work with Arnold de Thiers, with whom he composed a comic opera called "Loulou". The night before its first performance, the owner of the opera house was shot and the theatre closed. Lavallée, who had been conductor and artistic director of the theatre, the New York Grand Opera House, found himself out of a job.

He returned to Montréal in 1872 to a warm welcome from his friends, and had soon set up a studio with Jehin Prume and Rosita del Vecchio, well-known musicians. Success in Montréal brought him the fulfillment of a lifelong dream, to continue his musical education in Paris. A group of friends led by Derome made him a monthly allowance while he studied with Bazin, Boieldieu and Marmontel. A Lavallée symphony was performed by a Paris orchestra in 1874 and his teachers predicted a great future for him.

Lavallée decided to devote his life to the establishment of a conservatory in Canada. To prove that talent existed, he mounted a Gounod drama with an all-Canadian cast of 80. The venture was a great success and Lavallée had high hopes of interesting the government in his idea. But although the public responded warmly to his productions, official quarters gave nothing but vague promises.

Lavallée became the choirmaster and organist at St. Patrick's Church and interested himself in public causes. He produced a mammoth cantata in honour of the Governor General, Marquis of Lorne, and his wife, The Princess Louise, and collected 300 musicians to play it on June 11, 1879. The climax was a sensation - a contrapuntal blending of "Vive la canadienne", "Comin' through the rye" and "God Save The Queen", to symbolize the blending of the French and English elements in Canada.

Lavallée, now considered Canada's greatest musician, had a personal triumph but a financial disaster. The provincial government had guaranteed the performance but never came through with the deficit. Lavallée is reported to have said: "Le gouvernement Joly a reçu la Princesse. Mais c'est moi qui ai payé le violon".

It was during this Québec period, in 1880 that Lavallée composed the music of "O Canada" for the "Congrès national des Canadiens-Français". But he could see nothing ahead but routine teaching and playing, so once again he took off for the United States.

Things took a turn for the better. He was appointed an organist and choirmaster; he toured with the famous Hungarian soprano Etelka Gerster; he increased his composing. Many of his works were performed including "Tiq", a "melodramatic musical satire" on the Indian question and his comic opera "The Widow". As a member of the Music Teachers' National Association, he organized a number of very successful concerts, and finally, in 1887, was elected president.

In 1888 Lavallée represented the professional musicians of America in London and introduced American compositions in London where the Lord Mayor gave a dinner in his honour.

Lavallée's health had been poor for some years and after his return to Boston became much worse. By the autumn of 1890 he was bedridden and in financial straits. He died on January 21, 1891, at the age of 49, leaving some 60 works, only about half of which have been found.

Lavallée was buried near Boston but his body was brought back to Canada in 1933 and now rests in Montréal Cemetery Côte-des-Neiges.

Chapter 3

SIR ADOLPHE-BASILE ROUTHIER

Adolphe Routhier (1839-1920) was a distinguished lawyer who, like many members of his profession, was active in the community life of both his profession and his co-religionists. He was appointed a judge in 1873 and was a founding member of the Royal Society of Canada. He was probably better known as a poet than as a judge, and it was natural that the Honourable Théodore Robitaille, Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, should turn to him to write the words of a hymn for the great "Congrès national des Canadiens-Français" of 1880. Since Routhier was president of the Congress at the time, a happier choice could hardly have been made. His poem for "O Canada!" was widely praised on its first presentation.

Routhier, who wrote under the name of Jean Piquefort, was later Chief Justice of Quebec until his retirement from the Bench in 1906.

Chapter 4

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT STANLEY WEIR

Robert Stanley Weir (1856-1926) was born in Hamilton, in what was then Upper Canada. He took all his higher education in Montreal, and was qualified for both teaching and the law. He chose law and rose rapidly in the profession, becoming in due course, like Routhier, a judge first as Recorder of the City of Montreal and later to the Exchequer Court of Canada (now the Federal Court of Canada). He wrote both learned legal works and poetry, and his fame as a writer won him election as a Fellow of the Royal Society which Routhier had helped found.

Weir had been a Member of the Quebec Legislative Assembly for Argenteuil from 1903 to 1910, during which period he served in the Parent and Gouin Ministries as Minister without Portfolio, Minister of Public Works or Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Chapter 5

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION

By the time the World War broke out in 1914, "O Canada" was the best known patriotic song in Canada, edging out "The Maple Leaf Forever" and others less well-known today.

1924 - The association of Canadian Clubs passed a unanimous resolution recommending the Weir version as suitable for use at Club meetings.

Since then the I.O.D.E. and the Canadian Authors' Association endorsed it and in 1958 the Native Sons of Canada found favour in it.

1927 - An official version of "O Canada" was authorized for singing in Canadian schools and for use at public functions.

1942 - July 27. The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable William Lyon Mackenzie King, was asked if he did not think this an appropriate time for proclaiming a national anthem. He replied that "There are times and seasons for all things and this time of war when there are other more important questions with which Parliament has to deal, we might well continue to follow what has become the custom in Canada in recent years of regarding "God Save The King" and "O Canada" each as national anthems and entitled to similar recognition." He said further that this was his opinion, his government's opinion and he had no doubt it was the opinion of most people in the country. Some years later, his successor as Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Louis St-Laurent made a similar statement.

1964 - A government resolution authorized the formation of a special joint committee to consider the status of "God Save The Queen" and "O Canada".

1966 - January 31. The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, placed a notice of motion on the order paper "That the government be authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to provide that "O Canada" shall be the National Anthem of Canada while "God Save The Queen" shall be the Royal Anthem of Canada.

1967 - March 15. The special joint committee "unanimously recommends that the government be authorized to adopt forthwith the music for "O Canada" composed by Calixa Lavallée as the music of the National Anthem of Canada with the following notation added to the sheet music: With dignity, not too slowly.

"God Save The Queen" was found to be in the public domain as the Royal Anthem of Canada, but for "O Canada" the committee deemed it "essential to take such steps as are necessary to appropriate the copyright to the music providing that it shall belong to Her Majesty in right of Canada for all time. This provision would also include that no other person shall be entitled to copyright in the music or any arrangements or adaptations thereof."

The committee recommended further study of the lyrics. It discarded an otherwise acceptable bilingual version as being difficult for other ethnic groups in Canada to accept. It suggested keeping the original French version and using the Weir English version with minor changes - that is replacing two of the "Stand on guard" phrases with "From far and wide" and "God keep our land".

There was no trouble with the music copyright which had by now descended to Gordon V. Thompson. They were willing to sell for \$1, but the heirs of Judge Weir objected to the changes in the original version. Since Judge Weir died in 1926, the Weir version would not come into public domain until 1976. There was some doubt that the Weir family had legal grounds for objection since Thompson's apparently held copyright on both music and English words. However the committee preferred to settle the matter amicably if at all possible. The Government acquired the rights from G.V. Thompson in 1970.

The version recommended by the committee:

O Canada, our home and native land
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise
The True North strong and free,
From far and wide, O Canada
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free
O Canada we stand on guard for thee,
O Canada we stand on guard for thee.

- 1972 - February 28 - The Secretary of State of Canada, the Honourable Gérard Pelletier, presented a bill in the House of Commons proposing the adoption of "O Canada" as the National Anthem of Canada. The recommendations of the 1967 Committee are incorporated in the bill, which did not receive further study in Parliament and died on the order paper. The same legislation was reintroduced by Mr. Pelletier's successors at further sessions of Parliament; no action was ever taken.**
- 1980 - June 18 - The Secretary of State of Canada, the Honourable Francis Fox, presented a bill, similar to previously presented bills, on "O Canada", fulfilling a promise made earlier in the House that "O Canada" be proclaimed as Canada's national anthem as soon as possible in this year of the centenary of the first rendition. The bill was unanimously accepted by the House of Commons and the Senate on June 27; Royal assent was given the same day.**
- July 1 - The Governor General, His Excellency the Right Honourable Edward Schreyer, proclaimed the Act respecting the National Anthem of Canada, thus making "O Canada" an official symbol of the country. A public ceremony was held at noon on Parliament Hill in front of thousands of Canadians. Descendants of Weir and Routhier were on the official platform, as well as the successor of Robitaille, the Honourable Jean-Pierre Côté.**

Chapter 6



CHAPTER N-2

An Act respecting the national anthem of Canada

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the *National Anthem Act*. 1980-81-82-83, c.5, s. 1.

National anthem

2. The words and music of the song "O Canada", as set out in the schedule, are designated as the national anthem of Canada. 1980-81-82-83, c.5, s. 2.

Public domain

3. The words and music of the national anthem of Canada are hereby declared to be in the public domain. 1980-81-82-83, c.5, s.3.

CHAPITRE N-2

Loi concernant l'hymne national du Canada

1. Titre abrégé: «*Loi sur l'hymne national*». 1980-81-82-83, ch.5, art.1.

2. L'hymne national du Canada est «O hymne Canada», dont les paroles et la musique sont reproduites à l'annexe. 1980-81-82-83, ch. 5, art. 2.

3. Les paroles et la musique de l'hymne national du Canada appartiennent au domaine public. 1980-81-82-83, ch.5, art. 3.

Titre abrégé

Hymne national

Domaine public

NATIONAL ANTHEM / HYMNE NATIONAL

O CANADA

O Canada! Our home and native land!
 O Canada! Ter - re de nos aï -

True patriot love in
 Ton front est ceint de

With glow - ing hearts we
 Car ton bras sait por - ter l'é -

see thee rise, The True North strong and free! From
 pé - é - e, Il sait por - ter la croix! Ton his -

far and wide O Can - a - da, we stand on guard for thee.
 toire est une é - po - pé - é - e Des plus bril - lants ex - ploits

God keep our land glo - rious and free!
 Et ta va - leur, de foi trem - pée,

O Can - a - da, we stand on guard for thee.
 Pro - té - ge - ra nos foy - ers et nos droits.

O Can - a - da, we stand on guard for thee.
 Pro - té - ge - ra nos foy - ers et nos droits.

Chapter 7

TRANSLATION OF FRENCH VERSION

1. O Canada! Land of our forefathers
Thy brow is wreathed with a glorious garland of flowers.
As in thy arm ready to wield the sword,
So also is it ready to carry the cross.
Thy history is an epic of the most brilliant exploits.

Ch. Thy valour steeped in faith
 Will protect our homes and our rights
 Will protect our homes and our rights.
2. Under the eye of God, near the great river,
the Canadien grows in hope,
He is born of a proud race,
Blessed was his cradle;
Heaven has noted his progress
In this new world.
Always guided by His light,
He will guard the honour of his flag,
He will guard the honour of his flag.
3. From his patron saint,
harbinger of the true God,
He wears the fiery halo on his brow;
Foe of tyranny,
But full of loyalty
He wants to maintain in harmony
His proud liberty.
And by dint of his genius,
On our Soil is erected the truth,
On our Soil is erected the truth!
4. Sacred love of throne and altar
Fills our hearts with his immortal spirit.
Among foreign races
Faith is our guide;
Let us learn to be a nation of brothers,
Under the yoke of law;
And let us repeat like our fathers
The victory cry: "For Christ and King"
The victory cry: "For Christ and King"

Chapter 8

ORIGINAL POEM BY WEIR

Originally "O Canada" was a patriotic poem by Sir Adolphe-Basile Routhier, a Québec judge. Calixa Lavallée, the well-known Canadian composer, was commissioned to set it to music, and it was first sung in 1880 during a national convention of French Canadians in Québec City. Many English versions have appeared, but the one which was widely accepted was written in 1908 by another judge, Robert Stanley Weir, in honour of the 300th anniversary of the founding of Québec City. It was also published in an official form at the time of the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation in 1927 and during the Royal visit of 1939. A slightly modified version of the first verse of Weir's poem was proclaimed as Canada's national anthem on July 1, 1980.

1. O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise
The True North strong and free;
And stand on guard, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.

Refrain

O Canada! Glorious and free!
We stand on guard, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada! We stand on guard for thee.

2. O Canada! Where pines and maples grow.

Great prairies spread and lordly rivers flow.
How dear to us thy broad domain,
From East to Western Sea!
Thou land of hope for all who toil!
Thou True North strong and free.

Refrain

O Canada! Glorious and free! etc.

3. O Canada! Beneath thy shining skies
May stalwart sons and gentle maidens rise
To keep thee steadfast thro' the years
From East to Western sea,
Our own beloved native land,
Our True North strong and free!

Refrain

O Canada! Glorious and free! etc.

4. Ruler supreme Who hearest humble pray'r,
Hold our Dominion in Thy loving care.
Help us to find O God in Thee
A lasting rich reward,
As waiting for the better day,
We ever stand on guard.

Refrain

O Canada! Glorious and free! etc.

Chapter 9

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

1. God save our gracious Queen
 Long live our noble Queen,
 God save the Queen:
 Send her victorious,
 Happy and glorious,
 Long to reign over us:
 God save the Queen.

2. O Lord, our God, arise,
 Scatter thine enemies,
 And make them fall:
 Confound their politics,
 Frustrate their knavish tricks,
 On thee our hopes we fix:
 God save us all.

3. Thy choicest gifts in store,
 On her be pleased to pour;
 Long may she reign:
 May she defend our laws,
 And ever give us cause
 To sing with heart and voice
 God save the Queen.

Chapter 10

GOD SAVE THE KING

1. **God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King:
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save the King.**

2. **O Lord, our God, arise,
Scatter his enemies,
And make them fall;
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On him our hopes we fix;
God save us all.**

3. **Thy choicest gifts in store,
On him be pleased to pour;
Long may he reign:
May he defend our laws,
And ever give us cause
To sing with heart and voice,
God save the King.**