

NOTES BY -3- JOSEPH BOURGEOIS

91 ON NOV 27 1940 SAINT BONIFACE
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Finishing the City Hall in Montreal, I went to Quebec City, where I worked on the first unit of the Quebec Parliament Buildings. I started the excavations and found there skulls and bones, as this was the historic site of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. I also took charge of the Masonry and Cut Stone for this the First Unit of the Quebec Parliament Buildings.

I made plans for and built two stone cottages for the Honorable Mr. Garneau, on the Grande Allee.

Finishing my work in Quebec, and work at that time being at a standstill in the East, as I had been hearing talk about Winnipeg and the West, I journeyed west through St. Paul, in 1880. My train arriving at St. Paul on Sunday and not leaving until Monday, I enquired my way to a French Church where I attended High Mass. Here I met a Stone Contractor who told me I would find no Cut Stone work in Winnipeg. However, I came on, only to find that he was right; the only stone work going on was the Piers for the Louise Bridge. I was given one of the Stone Ice Breakers. I finished this, and then wrote my friend in St. Paul who advised me to come to St. Paul. I worked with him for three years. My one and great drawback was that I could not speak English. I learned it the hard way: through a French and English Dictionary, my Newspapers, a lot of reading, and desperate attempts to hold conversations with my fellow-workmen. About two years of this and I could speak and read and write enough, as I thought, for my business.

I worked for Lauer Brothers who had a quarry and stone-cutting Plant, taking charge of their work, and during the twelve years that I was associated with them, we erected many fine buildings in St. Paul. The last year that I was with them, the peak of the 1892-1898 depression, I decided

to leave them, as I did not feel that I could draw a salary from them without working for it - and there was no work. They objected to my leaving, pointing out that they had earned their money with me, and that they would spend it with. This I could not do.

I started a Yard in Duluth and things were very good there for a few years, more or less on account of the growing Iron Ore developments on the Iron Range, but before long the depression hit there too.

Then in 1896 the State Capitol Building in St. Paul was proposed. I wrote Lauer Brothers and proposed figuring the building for them, but could not come to terms with them. I then wrote Buttler & Ryan, Contractors, who were figuring for the General Contract, and I finally signed up with them to figure the work, and if successful in our tender, to carry on the work for them. The first contract was for the exterior only, in Georgia Marble.

I made working drawings and lists for stone-cutters, a tag for every stone. I had a young man helping me, making the tags. This is the only help I had; I was alone for all the other work. Every day I had to spend an hour in the mill to oversee the Stone Cutter Foreman, and also to instruct the Mill Foreman which Blocks were to be sawn, and what for. In the afternoon I spent an hour on the Building inspecting the setting of the stone and looking after the work in general. This left me eight hours, out of my ten-hours' day to attend to my office work, and a full day's work it was!

Mr. Buttler asked me if I could spare a few days to go to Providence, Rhode Island, where they were erecting a Capitol Building similar to the one

under construction in St. Paul; he wished to compare working schedule and see if any improvements could be made on our methods of work.

I went and found that a Superintendent of Building was in charge and he had a staff of draftsmen and clerks to make tags and lists. In fact I found no improvements over our working methods, but I did find that their methods were very costly and much more expensive than ours. All of our work, - stone-cutting, planing, rubbing bed work - all of it was going through in workmanlike manner. Mr. Buttler was pleased with my report, and we continued without any change.

I managed all the granite and white marble work to the top of the Dome. This was certainly the most complicated and the finest work that I have ever had the pleasure and opportunity to carry out.

From the St. Paul State Capitol I went to Winnipeg to open a Stone Yard in partnership with Mr. Lefevre. At that time there was no stone-working machinery in Winnipeg. I built a stone mill, under the name of The Winnipeg Stone Company, Ltd., and later when we had started the work on the St. Boniface Cathedral, after the excavations were completed, owing to some differences, I decided to leave and sold my interests in the Winnipeg Stone Company. Sometime later I built a Mill and Shed and started operating same under the name of The Western Stone Company Ltd., in St. Boniface.

At this time, in partnership with four Cut-Stone Contractors, we purchased a quarry in Garson, Manitoba; the other partners were Oliver & Manson, Menzies & McIntyre, The Winnipeg Stone Company and ourselves, The Western Stone Company. This amalgamated Company was operated in the name of the Tyndall Quarry Company, Ltd., of which I was named Manager. The property was purchased from Mr. William Henry.