CANADIAN TREE

with a

DESTINY

THE STORY of a Flagpole for the White Tower of London

AST your imagination back — back through the pageantry packed pages of history, past the sunny days of Queen Victoria, beyond the marshalled might and critical days of Waterloo; Still backward past the founding of what became the world's greatest Empire, to the day when Elizabeth came to the already famed Tower of London for a second time — this time as Queen.

T was about this time that a tiny, scarcely discernible Douglas Fir seedling first broke through the overburden into the sunlight on a distant shore in a foreign land—in truth an island in the North Pacific Ocean.

Many are the years that will pass before the intrepid young British officer, Captain George Vancouver, will sail the shore of this yet unknown island and claim it from his predecessors, the Spaniards, in the name of his king and give to it, his own illustrious name.

Still more years intervene — all told, some three hundred before the country where this seedling is growing, the densely treed Alberni Basin, will achieve its renown among ship builders the world over for its straight, true and enduring masts and spars grown there.

By a curious and long forgotten accident of nature there resulted here a forest of mixed age groups. The later trees spending their strength in reaching even higher to secure their share of precious sunlight. These are the trees that grow slender, straight and tall—the ideal material for masts, spars and flagpoles.

Gone now are the days of the sailing ship and the axeman combing the forests for masts. The tiny seedling is nearly four hundred years old!—a tree now, a full 30" in diameter at the stump measuring 158 feet to its feathery tip, fine grained and perfect.

Now comes the word to John Addison, the company's chief feller to keep a sharp eye for a tree to make a flagpole for London's historic tower.

Out he sets, accompanied by two of his most seasoned fallers, George Kaloff and Pete Seradack, to a particular spot he knows on Coleman Creek. Here, six trees are felled and six rejected before the final perfect specimen is selected. Towed to Port Alberni and

safely under cover, it comes under the supervision of Joseph Kiely, an old hand at hewing spars, who goes to work with his adze. Three weeks, he and his partner Axel Thorne, chip, hew and whittle the massive 30" butt down to a precise 14" square - sighting, checking, turning, with the skilled hands of true craftsmen. When finally their axes are laid aside, this perfect forest specimen has been wrought into the magnificently graceful lines which I hope it will be your pleasure and thrill to sometime see standing so proudly on top of the White Tower of London - a Canadian tree with a destiny.

Feleglote: ROVEL ess



CONSTABLE'S OFFICE,

H.M. Tower of London,

E.C.3.

10th June 1948.

Dear Mr Prentice Bloedel,

Jack can be flown therefrom.

At 9.30.am. 2nd June 1948 the splendid flag pole, which you are most generously presenting to H. M. Tower of London, arrived at the Wharf, and it has now been safely moved into the Tower.

On behalf of the authorities of H. M. Tower of London I want to express to you my sincere gratitude for this generous gift. The existing make-shift mast on the White Tower spoils the aspect of this Ancient Monument, and moreover only the smallest Union

Your gift will strengthen the existing link between the Dominion of Canada and H. M. Tower of London. I shall ask the Ministry of Works to fix a plate to the base of the flag pole so that all can see in years to come who was the donor.

The spectators watching the arrival of the flag pole were impressed by the manner in which it had been carefully encased in cedar slats under which was oiled paper throughout its length.

I am also sending a letter of thanks to

Mr Jackson Dodds.

I hope you will express my thanks also to your personnel who worked so efficiently on this flag pole.

Should you be visiting England in the future I hope you will not fail to notify me and visit the Tower of London.

Thank you again for your most generous and valuable gift.

Yours sincerely,

Field-Marshal.
Constable of the Tower of London.

Mr Prentice Bloedel, c/o Bloedel, Stewart & Welch Ltd; Port Alberni, British Columbia, Canada. PRENTICE BLOEDEL

510 HASTINGS ST.WEST VANCOUVER, B. C.

August 3, 1948.

Field Marshall Lord Wavell, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., C.M.G., M.C., Constable of H.M. Tower of London, LONDON, E.C.3. England.

My dear Lord Wavell:

Your letter of June 10th and your cable of July 29th advising that the flagpole is finally in place and carrying the Union Jack are gratefully acknowledged.

Although I seem to have been given credit for the gift, I had but a very small part in the whole.

First of all, of course, was Mr. Jackson Dodds. Then there is the firm of Bloedel, Stewart & Welch Limited, who enthusiastically took up the project and paid all of the expenses; there is Mr. Smith, Vice-President of the Company in charge of timber operations, and his lieutenant, Johnny Addison, in whose department fell the task of the selection and the hauling of the tree to tidewater; there is the sawmill organization under Mr. Farris and Mr. Robson; and most importantly, there are the craftsmen - the fallers who felled the tree and the carpenters who hewed the tree to shape.

At the London end Mr. McAdam, Agent General for British Columbia, deserves a special niche all by himself. His interest and help have been unending.

All of these had their part, and it is as a sort of trustee for them that I accept the numerous kind expressions that have been directed our way since this project was undertaken. Your own words of appreciation will be conveyed to them.

And I will take the liberty of relaying your invitation to visit the Tower of London. It will, I am sure, be most happily accepted by those of us who are fortunate enough to get to London.

Yours sincerely,

Prentes Blockel.

THE STORY of the Installation Ceremony of the New Flagpole on the Tower of London as told by CBC Reporter Jack Goulding...

ELLO, CBC, this is Jack Goulding speaking from the BBC in London. The Tower of London has a new flagpole, the gift of the Boy Scouts of British Columbia through the generosity of Mr. Prentice Bloedel of Vancouver, so I went along to report the ceremony at the installation of this new flagpole to you Canadian listeners. I went through masses of sightseers on the Tower grounds and climbed the nine hundred year old spiral staircase that leads to the roof of the White Tower, the heart of the Tower of London.

REGIMENTAL Sergeant-Major of the Guards stood checking credentials, as immobile as one of the suits of ancient armor that decorate the dank walls. As I stepped on the roof of the White Tower I could see the group of distinguished guests assembled to witness the official handing over of this 82 foot flagstaff to the Constable of the Tower, Field Marshall. Lord Wavell, as a good-will token from the Boy Scouts of British Columbia. That great soldier, Lord Wavell, stood by this majestic shaft made of Douglas Fir and next to him was Norman Robertson, High Commissioner, representing the Canadian Government. Along with them were Agent General and Mrs. McAdam of British Columbia, Mrs. Douglas Rowe, Dr. Mackenzie and his party from the University of British Columbia and many other prominent Canadians.

Field Marshall, Lord Chetwood, the former constable of the Tower, although he is almost 80 years old, was present to open the ceremony. In fact it is Lord Chetwood who is responsible for this gesture from Canada to the Tower of London. When Lord Chetwood was Constable he found the flagstaff on the White Tower deteriorating rapidly through dry rot. He applied for permission to buy timber for a new one, but it was not possible. Lack of dollars to import timber only complicated his problem for the condemned flagstaff was replaced by a tiny substitute, hardly in keeping with the dignity of the Tower of London. Lord Chetwood, who commenced the dedication service, told how he met Mr. Jackson Dodds of Montreal and what transpired from that meeting to the benefit of London.

One of Britain's most honored Field Marshalls, and there are only thirteen, Lord Chetwood said:

"At Marseilles I had the great good fortune to meet quite casually Mr. Jackson Dodds, who belongs to Montreal, and I happened to mention this and he said, "Oh, do let me see if I can't get you a pole from Canada", and he was able to tell me very soon afterwards that a Mr. Prentice Bloedel of Messrs. Bloedel, Stewart and Welch Ltd., lumber merchants in Vancouver had offered to supply us with a mast free gratis and for nothing and they went and searched their great forests and there they found a Douglas Fir which we were informed was 158' high and had been growing for 389 years, that is to say it was growing in 1559 when Queen Elizabeth reigned in this country, two hundred years before Canada became a part of the British Empire, and there it is, we hope, for a very long time as evidence of the great generosity of Mr. Prentice Bloedel and the Dominion of Canada. Mr. Prentice Bloedel has let us know that he hopes we may graciously consider the flagstaff a gift from the British Columbia Boy Scouts."

Then Lord Wavell, grey-haired and distinguished in his uniform of Field Marshall, stepped forward as present Constable of the Tower of London to say:

"It only remains for me as His Majesty's representative as Constable of this Royal Palace and Fortress of the Tower of London to accept this noble gift which will enhance the dignity of

this Tower of London and to thank all those concerned in this gift, whose names have been told you by Lord Chetwood. This Tower, which has stood for nearly a thousand years, has seen a very great deal of history go up and down this River Thames and if watched over will see a very great deal more. I will only say, in conclusion, I hope that the years during which this flagstaff will carry the flag over the Tower will be years of peace unbroken by such wars as we have had lately."

As the new flag fluttered slightly in the breeze I noticed that the old flagstaff looked like a match stick in comparison to its successor. The hush was broken as a tug boat hooted its way under the Tower bridge nearby and as sun drenched the River Thames several hundred feet below, the surpliced Chaplain for the Guards walked forward slowly to dedicate the gift.

During the brief service the Chaplain said:

"Blessed is Thy name, O Lord God that it hath pleased thee by Thy Good Spirit to put into the heart of the servant Prentice Bloedel, the desire to set up a standard of this ancient fortress. Bless, O Lord, him and his family and accept this offering in his. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you with all whom you love now and forever more."

