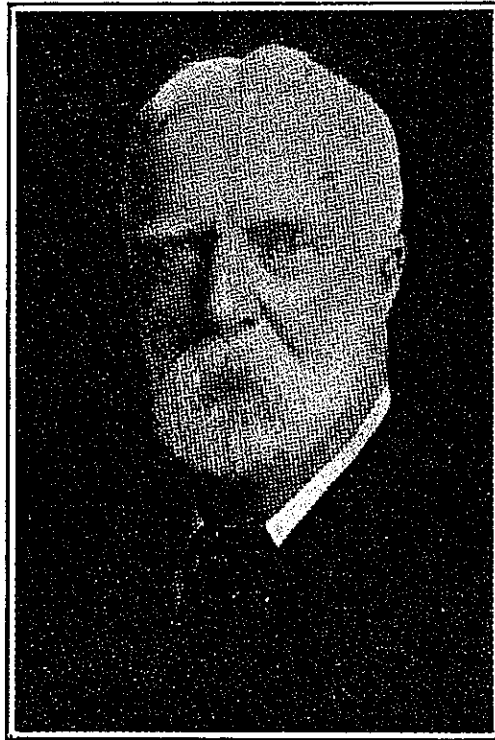


HENRY J. CAMBIE, O.L.S., B.C.L.S.

Henry J. Cambie, son of Charles Cambie, was born in Nenagh in the County of Tipperary, Ireland, on October 25th, 1836. The Cambies were Huguenots and came to England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The first of the family that much



is known about was Colonel David Cambie, who commanded one of the British ships that fought against the Spanish Armada. This Colonel Cambie went with Cromwell to Ireland and eventually secured a grant of land at Nenagh in the County of Tipperary, and it was there that Henry J. Cambie was born on October 25th, 1836. He was the youngest son of Mr. Charles Cambie, was educated at a school in Leicester and came to Canada with his parents and brother in 1852, via New York; thence by boat to Albany; by the New York Central Railway to Buffalo; by ferry to Chippewa; by a horse-drawn railway to

Queenston and thence by boat to Toronto. Arriving in Toronto a youth of sixteen, he entered the office of the Toronto and Guelph Railway in 1852. From 1853 to 1859, he was with Gzowski & Co., contractors for the construction of the western part of the Grand Trunk Railway, serving in various junior capacities. For two years after 1860, he did surveying and exploring work for the Upper Canada Government (then the Government of the Province of Ontario). He qualified as a Land Surveyor in Upper Canada on the 8th of July, 1861. The Cambie family lived in the City of Quebec for some time on and off between 1859 and 1864.

Surveys and explorations for the Intercolonial Railway in Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia occupied him from

1863 to 1866. During the next two years, he was engaged in locating and constructing the Windsor & Annapolis Railway in Nova Scotia. There he married Miss Helen Fay, who predeceased him twenty-eight years ago. During the succeeding three years, 1869-71, he was in charge of some of the most extensive works on the Intercolonial Railway, both in New Brunswick and Quebec.

British Columbia had entered Confederation in 1871, one of the conditions being that a Transcontinental Railway should be undertaken. In 1874, with an established reputation as a railway builder, Mr. Cambie was employed by the Dominion Government on explorations and surveys generally and his work resulted in the discovery that Burrard Inlet could be made into a suitable deep-water harbour and that a railway could be made through the Fraser River Canyons. In 1875, he explored the Chilcoten Country, seeking a route for a railway to Bute Inlet and thence over Seymour Narrows to Vancouver Island.

In 1876, Sanford Fleming, Chief Engineer for the Dominion Government, began a four-year leave of absence. Mr. Marcus Smith, who was in charge of surveys in British Columbia took his place and Mr. Cambie was put in charge of surveys in British Columbia and continued in charge until 1880.

In 1876, Mr. Cambie and Dr. G. M. Dawson, representing the Geological Survey, retraced Sir Alexander MacKenzie's route from Bella Bella, to the Fraser River. In the next year, he directed the survey from Yellowhead Pass to Fort Moody and the information gathered on that survey practically determined the selection of Burrard Inlet as the terminal of the new railway.

In 1878, the Macdonald Government having just returned to power was not in a position to proceed with the construction of a transcontinental railway at once. To gain information with reference to the country and possible routes, they sent Mr. Cambie to determine the feasibility of a line by the Skeena Valley and Peace and Pine Rivers east of the Rockies. Mr. Cambie selected Port Simpson as the proper terminus for such a line.

Mr. Cambie, accompanied by Dr. G. M. Dawson, of the Geological Survey of Canada; Henry MacLeod, an engineer of high standing, and Rev. D. M. Gordon, until recent years

Principal of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, went by canoe up the Skeena River; then by way of Babine and Stewart Lakes to Fort St. James and then on to Fort MacLeod. The party divided there and Cambie, MacLeod and Gordon patched up an old boat which had been abandoned by the Hudson Bay Company and drifted down the Parsnip and Peace Rivers to the Rocky Mountain Canyon. There they met a family of Indians hunting, who helped them portage round the canyon to the Hudson Bay post, known as Hudson Hope, where they made a raft and drifted about 130 miles to Fort Dunvegan.

At Dunvegan they had lost sight of the Rockies, and to find out where they were, hired horses and went south for sixty or seventy miles across a fine stretch of rolling country. Some time was spent in a trip across country to Lesser Slave Lake, crossing branches of the Smoky River. Returning to Dunvegan by Hudson Bay trails, they there met Dr. Dawson, who had taken the pack train through the Pine River Pass. At Dunvegan the party scattered, Dr. Gordon going to Winnipeg, Dr. Dawson and Mr. MacLeod going to Edmonton. Mr. Cambie, with two men, took a sweep to the north of the Peace River in order to acquire as much information as possible. Mr. Cambie retraced his course to Hudson's Hope and examined the waters of the South Pine. When he arrived at Victoria he learned that the Fraser route had been selected for the railway and that the contract had been awarded to Andrew Onderdonk. Mr. Cambie's long and arduous tasks in explorations and surveys were over and the work of construction was on.

Mr. Cambie's record in the eastern provinces in railway construction was not forgotten and he was placed in charge of construction in the Fraser Canyons. The work was very difficult and dangerous, but was carried to a successful completion. Mr. Cambie was present when the last spike in the Canadian Pacific Railway was driven on November 7th, 1885, at 9.30 a.m., at Craigellachie, by Donald A. Smith, afterwards Lord Strathcona, in the presence of Sir Wm. Van Horne, Sanford Fleming and many others. Mr. Cambie appears in the picture so often reproduced of that historic ceremony. The occasion was the consummation of years of intense mental strain.

After the opening of the line in 1886, he was appointed engineer of the western division of the Canadian Pacific, and

in 1902 became consulting engineer, which position he retained until 1920, when he retired from active service, but his services were retained to the last by the company in an advisory capacity. His office was always ready for him.

Mr. Cambie died after a brief illness in Vancouver on April 23rd, 1928, at the age of ninety-one years and six months. His wife, Helen Fay, predeceased him in 1900. He is survived by four daughters, Mrs. R. G. Tatlow, widow of the late Captain R. G. Tatlow, former Minister of Finance for British Columbia; Mrs. Neville Townsend, Mrs. Sidney McGaffin and Miss Geraldine Cambie, and one son, Harry, manager of the Bank of Montreal, Chilliwack. He is also survived by four nephews, David, Jack, George and Charles Cambie; a grandson, Kenneth Tatlow; and two granddaughters, Helen and Margaret Tatlow; and a cousin, Jeffrey Cambie.

A series of four articles under the pen of Noel Robinson, entitled "Blazing Trails in B.C.," appeared in MacLean's Magazine of December 15th, 1923, to February 1st, 1924, in which much of the story of Mr. Cambie's adventures are told in his own words and give a great deal of authentic information on the construction of Canadian railways. Commencing in Ontario in the early fifties with the Grand Trunk Railway, west from the city of Toronto, in Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia with the Intercolonial Railway, and his last work in the province of British Columbia with the Canadian Pacific Railway from its inception until the completion of the main line in the year 1886, and its works of expansion until the time of his death.

The obituary notice appearing in the June, 1928, number of the "Engineering Journal" of the Engineering Institute of Canada contains reference to the active part he took in its affairs, serving on its council during the years 1892, 1896, 1901, 1904 and 1910.
