

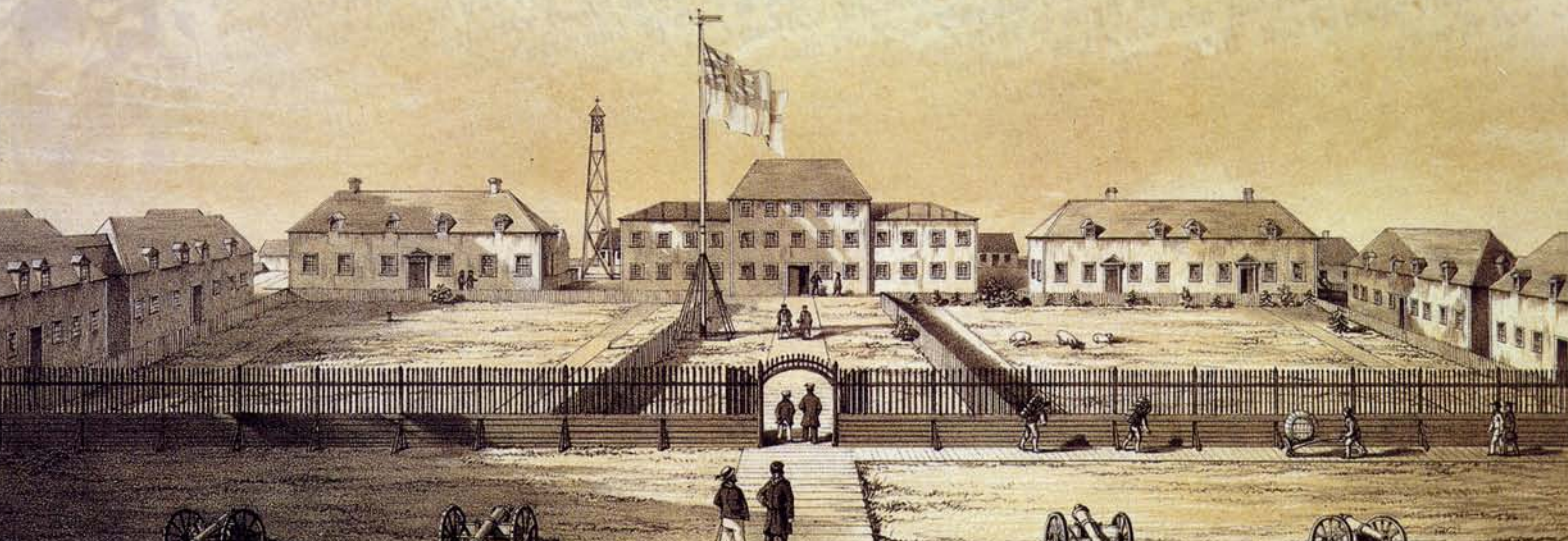
Lords & Proprietors

*A
Reader's
Guide
to the*



HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY CHARTER

Introduction by DAVID E. MITCHELL



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A Reader's Guide to the
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY
CHARTER



Introduction by DAVID E. MITCHELL
Thirty-fifth Governor of Hudson's Bay Company



When King Charles II of England awarded a royal charter to “the Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay” on May 2, 1670, neither he nor anyone present could have imagined that its parchment pages would become one of the most important documents in the history of a country called Canada.

The Charter that made the King’s cousin, Prince Rupert, and a group of English gentlemen “true and absolute lords and proprietors” of a vast stretch of North America is today on display at Hudson’s Bay Company headquarters in Toronto. As historian Christopher Moore has noted, the Hudson’s Bay Company Charter is “...a work of art, a historical source, a museum-quality artifact, a legal document, and a corporate talisman.”

In 1997, while serving as the thirty-fifth Governor of Hudson’s Bay Company, I helped to initiate, along with then Vice-President and Corporate Secretary Brian Grose, an extensive study of this precious document. We wanted the Charter to be properly preserved for future generations to appreciate. Hudson’s Bay Company funded the project, which was directed by Dorset Conservation Inc. and included the participation of the Canadian Conservation Institute. Four digitally reproduced and printed copies were made at the time, and the original was installed in a cabinet display using the most modern and effective storage methods.

All Canadian students, at some point in their education, study the significance of the fur trade and the role of Hudson’s Bay Company in the shaping of our nation. I thought it important that they, as well as any other interested person, should be able to read for themselves the text of the document that created Hudson’s Bay Company. That is why readers will discover here an accessible annotated “modern” translation of the archaic language found in the Royal Charter. Key phrases in the Charter’s text are highlighted and their importance explained in accompanying text features. The additional sidebars and illustrations illuminate the Charter’s details and provide a rich historical context for its significance.

There is no substitute for the graceful wording, lettering, and style of this magnificent historical document. It is my hope, however, that this book will lead to a better understanding of the nature of the Charter’s contents and all that it meant during a fascinating era of Canadian history.



David Mitchell with the Royal Charter at the Canadian Conservation Institute, Department of Canadian Heritage, in Ottawa in 1997

David E. Mitchell, O.C., LL.D.
Thirty-fifth Governor,
Hudson’s Bay Company
Calgary
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CHARLES THE SECOND, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, KING OF ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, FRANCE, AND IRELAND, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, ETC. ~ GREETINGS TO ALL WHO READ THIS DOCUMENT. The following men — our dear and beloved cousin Prince Rupert, Count Palatine of the Rhine, Duke of Bavaria and Cumberland, etc.; Christopher, Duke of Albemarle; William, Earl of Craven; Henry, Lord Arlington; Anthony, Lord Ashley; Sir John Robinson; Sir Robert Vyner; Sir Peter Colleton; Sir Edward Hungerford; Sir Paul Neile; Sir John Griffith; Sir Phillip Carteret; James Hayes; John Kirke; Francis Millington; William Prettyman; John Fenn; and John Portman — have, under their own direction and at their own expense, undertaken an expedition to Hudson Bay in Northwest America to search for **a new passage to the South Seas** and to find trade for furs, minerals, and other valuable commodities. As a result, they have already made discoveries that encourage them to proceed with their plans, believing that, ultimately, it will bring great benefit to our kingdom.

● *“Charles the Second”*



Charles II (left) ruled Great Britain from 1660 to 1685 and was known as “the Merry Monarch” for his pleasure-loving ways. His people were ready for some of life’s pleasures after the dour eleven-year regime of Oliver Cromwell, which had preceded Charles’s reign. His father, King Charles I, had been beheaded in 1649 after a bloody civil war during which radical Puritans led by Cromwell had seized power. After Oliver Cromwell’s death, his government collapsed and Charles II returned to England to take the throne in 1660. Theatres and taverns closed under the Puritans reopened, and the new king became known for his religious tolerance and his interest in science and new inventions. But Charles also loved to spend money freely and his treasury soon ran up huge debts. The king and the investors in “the Company of Adventurers” had seen the East India Company build a trading empire in Asia — and they hoped to do the same in North America. In granting the Charter, Charles hoped the Company would provide “very great advantage to us and our Kingdom” — and perhaps some monetary reward to him as well.

“a new passage to the South Seas” ●

The search for a northwest trade route from Europe to China lured many explorers including Sir Martin Frobisher, Henry Hudson, Thomas James, and Luke Foxe. In 1576 Frobisher sailed on the first of his three voyages. He searched west of Greenland for a passage, instead discovering Frobisher Bay on Baffin Island. He made a second voyage in 1577 and a third in 1578. Hudson had already made two unsuccessful attempts to find the North West Passage, when in 1610 he set out on his third. Hudson and his men spent a miserable winter in the great bay that would later bear his name. His sick and hungry crew eventually mutinied and

TO FURTHER ENCOURAGE their continued exploration, the expedition participants have requested that they, and their successors, be incorporated and granted the sole rights to trade and commerce in all waters (seas, straits, bays, rivers, lakes, creeks, and sounds) in all latitudes they explore within the entrance of the Hudson Strait — together with all lands, countries, and territories both on the coast and in the confines of all waters within the area — that are not now possessed by any of our subjects or by subjects of any other Christian prince or state.

WISHING TO PROMOTE all endeavours that are for the public good of our people and to encourage this particular initiative, we have granted, ratified, and confirmed as set out in this Charter that the above-named individuals shall be constituted as **a corporate body** called the “Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay.” These men, and their successors, will have, in perpetuity, the legal right to purchase, receive, possess, enjoy, and retain



abandoned him. Thomas James and Luke Foxe, leading rival merchants in London, both set off on expeditions to find the fabled passage in 1631. Foxe completed his voyage in one season and added much to the knowledge of the region. However, it was James who received more recognition, having survived a winter and written a more popular account of his experiences.

The idea that a North West Passage might still exist was not so easily dismissed. Its importance is shown by the fact that the Royal Charter mentions the “search for a new passage to the South Seas” ahead of the search for “furs, minerals, and other valuable commodities.” It wasn’t until 1854, when Hbc man John Rae (left) discovered the final piece of the passage, that a navigable route between Europe and Asia was found. The famous waterway was navigated for the first time, in 1906, by Roald Amundsen, who proved it impractical for commercial shipping.

“a corporate body” ●

“Corporate” comes from the Latin word *corpus*, meaning “body.” When people come together to form a corporation, in law they become one body, like a person, with legal rights and privileges and also subject to the law. The participants in this trading venture were granted a charter by King Charles II, which incorporated the business that we know today as Hudson’s Bay Company. It was also the most generous land grant ever awarded by a monarch to his or her subjects. It effectively gave Prince Rupert and his seventeen associates, referred to in the Charter as the “Governor and Company of Adventurers,” a trading monopoly over the immense area covered by all the rivers and streams that drained into Hudson Bay. Thus, the world’s oldest continuously operating trading company was born. Although the land and trade rights have been hotly contested over the years and the terms of the original Charter have now passed into history, it still stands today as the document of incorporation for Hudson’s Bay Company.

(Right) Charles II appears to be signing the Charter in this painting. In fact, no one signed the Charter. The king’s Royal Seal was affixed to it.



land, rents, privileges, liberties, jurisdictions, franchises, and inheritances of whatever kind, nature, or quality. Also granted is the right to dispose of or assign lands and inheritances and to execute all other things that may pertain. These men of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay, and their successors, may plead or seek pleas, answer and be answered, and defend and be defended, in any courts and places, before any judges and justices and other persons and officers, with regard to all actions, pleas, suits, quarrels, causes, and demands of any nature in the same manner as any other devoted follower of our realm of England. The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay will have legal rights **to use a common seal** for all business and legal issues that may arise before any officers of any court. They also have the right to change or alter the seal of the Company at any time.

FROM THIS TIME ON, one member of the Company will be elected and appointed as Governor of the Company, in accordance with the procedure set out later in this document. The Governor and Company,

LIFE AT THE FORTS AND FACTORIES

For most of Hudson's Bay Company employees, working at the Company's forts (like Moose Factory, right) was more a test of endurance than heroics. Shipped out from Britain, usually from the north of Scotland, they signed on for periods of up to five years. The vast majority of these men were not directly



involved in the trade at all, but rather supported the day-to-day operations of the posts. They were general labourers, largely responsible for heavy labour, haulage, and building and repairing. The seasons and weather defined their life. The spring and summer months were very busy. The Natives came to trade and the furs had to be shipped out and the trade goods brought in. By contrast, the winters were long, dark, and hard to endure. The only solace was food and drink.

Above the labourers were the tradesmen — cooks, tailors, stonemasons, carpenters, and sailors. This group also included the professional voyageurs, who were essentially independent and worked on short seasonal contracts. Above them in the hierarchy were the clerks and bookkeepers, who kept the Company's meticulous accounts. At the top of the pyramid were the men who actually engaged in the trading process — the traders and factors who managed the posts. Senior among these were the chief traders and factors, who had many years of experience. On par with this group were the professionals — physicians, clergymen, teachers, and sailing captains.

The hard life took its toll and many of those who voyaged to the frozen bay to earn their fortunes never returned.

in turn, may elect (according to the same process) seven members of the Company to sit as the Committee of the Company. This Committee of seven — or any three of the Committee members, together with the Governor or Deputy Governor of the Company, for the time being — shall direct the Company’s voyages, the provision of ships and merchandise belonging to the Company, the sale of merchandise and goods returned after a voyage, and all other business affairs of the Company.

WE, AND OUR HEIRS AND SUCCESSORS, grant that the Governor and Company, and their successors, shall from this point on be forever ruled, ordered, and governed as laid out in this Charter. They shall have the right to retain and enjoy all of the grants, liberties, privileges, jurisdictions, and immunities granted and expressed in this document, and no others. To this end, we appoint **our cousin, Prince Rupert**, as the first and current Governor of the Company to continue in this office from today until the next 10th of November, should he live so long, and until the Company has chosen a new Governor through the process outlined later in this document. We have chosen Sir John

● *“to use a common seal”*

The Royal Charter granted Hudson’s Bay Company the legal right to use a special seal. The seal displays the Company’s coat of arms (right). It consists of a white (silver) shield with the heraldic red cross of St. George bearing a beaver in each of the four quadrants. Above the shield is the crest consisting of a red cap with a turned-up rim that shows the ermine fur lining. A fox sits on the cap. Holding up the shield on each side (supporter) is an elk. These were originally supposed to be moose, but Europeans were unfamiliar with the animal and drew elk instead. The motto on the ribbon under the shield reads “*Pro Pelle Cutem*,” which can be loosely translated as “for furs we risk our hides” or “for the pelt, the skin.” The shield, crest, supporters, and motto form what is technically called an “achievement.”

The most common use of the Hbc seal has been as a trademark, which is the modern equivalent of a medieval coat of arms. A trademark is a mark or design governed by a registered drawing. Used for official documents of Hbc, such as financial reports, the seal has also appeared on the labels of Hudson’s Bay Company merchandise, including the famous point blanket.



“our cousin, Prince Rupert” ●

Prince Rupert of the Rhine (pictured left) was a “dear and entirely beloved cousin” of King Charles II and spent most of his life serving the Stuart kings. He never visited North America, but he gave his name to Rupert’s Land and was the Company’s first Governor, a post he held until his death in 1682. The boundaries of Rupert’s Land stretched from what is now Quebec to Alberta, north into today’s Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and south into the United States. The Rupert’s Land grant covered nearly forty percent of modern Canada, plus much of the American states of Minnesota and North Dakota. In effect, the King had created a business with an empire larger than Europe.

Robinson, Sir Robert Vyner, Sir Peter Colleton, James Hayes, John Kirke, Francis Millington, and John Portman to be the first seven members of the Committee of the Company, from today until the next 10th of November, at which time a new Committee shall be chosen in the manner set out later.

WE FURTHER GRANT that the Governor and Company, or a majority of Company members, may from time to time hold **a meeting called the General Court,** at which they will elect one of the Company to be a Deputy Governor. The Deputy shall be sworn in before the Governor and at least three members of the Committee. The Deputy Governor may, in the absence of the Governor, exercise all powers of the office of Governor.

WE FURTHER GRANT the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay, and their successors, that a majority of members along with either the Governor or Deputy Governor are authorized to convene annually, during the month of November, a meeting to elect a new

● *“a meeting called the General Court”*



By setting out the requirement for an annual meeting (or General Court) of the Company's committee in the month of November, the Charter established the business cycle or fiscal year for Hudson's Bay Company. Committee members would meet in London in November to select a new governor and any new members, and to discuss business issues. By May of the following year, a ship would be "outfitted" or ready to sail to Rupert's Land, filled with European goods to trade with the Native peoples. In August, the ship would leave for London laden with the coveted furs to be sold for profit at auction (left). Only when the Company ceased being so closely tied to this annual cycle, did the year end change to January 31st.

“the Governor and Deputy Governor and the rest of the Company” ●

The Charter established a governor and seven-member committee, or council, to run Hudson's Bay Company. The governor was like a modern chairperson of the board and ran the Company from London, England. In fact, no governor set foot on Rupert's Land until 264 years after the founding of the Company, when Sir Patrick Ashley Cooper (the twenty-ninth Governor) made a brief visit to the posts. The deputy governor would be roughly equivalent to a present-day company president, and the committeemen appointed by the Charter were like today's company directors. The actual outposts in Rupert's Land were run by the inland or overseas governor and managers at each post. Below the post managers were the factors, traders, and clerks who conducted the trading and kept the records of the Company. Using a "factory" system, trade could be carried on from factories or outposts instead of from on board ships. This meant that Hudson's Bay Company could be in constant contact with its customers, the Native peoples.

Governor. Before the new Governor can begin to execute his duties, he must be sworn in before the previous Governor or Deputy Governor and at least three members of the Company's Committee.

THE NEW GOVERNOR WILL hold office for one year from the time of his election. Every current member of the Company, as well as others to be admitted to the Company at a later time, must be sworn in before the Governor or his Deputy and a majority of Committee members before they can trade or conduct business as a member of the Company.

WE FURTHER GRANT the Governor and Deputy Governor and the rest of the Company, or a majority of them, the authority to meet annually during November and to elect seven members of the Company to form the Committee of the Company. The members of the Committee must be sworn in before either the Governor or his Deputy and at least three members of the previous Committee. The new Committee will prevail for one year from the time of its swearing in.

THE FIRST OVERSEAS GOVERNOR: CHARLES BAYLEY

Hudson's Bay Company required an overseas or inland governor to take care of the business in Rupert's Land while the Company governor remained at the headquarters in London. The appointment of the Company's first overseas governor was a strange choice. Charles Bayley was a Quaker who had been jailed in the Tower of London for his eccentric acts, which included

sending letters of harassment to the king. But he became a changed man and was released from prison to work for Hbc. He set sail in 1670 on the ship *Wivenhoe* with orders to establish a post on the Nelson River. On his arrival at Hudson Bay, he confirmed the treaties that Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers had negotiated with the Native peoples (above). He served as governor for nine years, establishing factories along the shore of the Bay and conducting the business of the young Company with imagination and sound judgment.



MOREOVER, WE GRANT that, at any time during their one-year term, if either the Governor or Deputy Governor of the Company is not conducting himself appropriately, he may be removed from office at a meeting attended by a majority of Company members. The members of the Company, or a majority of them, will meet within a convenient time after either the removal or death of either the Governor or Deputy Governor to elect a new Governor or Deputy Governor. After being sworn in, the newly elected Governor or Deputy Governor will hold office for the remainder of the year for which the previous Governor or Deputy Governor was elected. Such elections can be held as often as is required.

WE ALSO GRANT to the Governor and Company the right to remove any member of the Company's Committee who is not conducting himself appropriately at any time during the one-year term for which he was elected. The Governor and Company have the right to elect a new Committee member and to replace any member who either is removed from office or dies. The election will take place at a meeting attended



Company man Samuel Hearne (left) carved his name in the rock near Churchill, Manitoba.

“mining of all gold, silver, gems, and precious stones”

The Royal Charter granted Hudson's Bay Company all mineral rights within Rupert's Land. But finding furs, not minerals, was on the minds of the early founders, and these rights were never fully exploited. But the Company did fund searches for copper and oil.

By 1769, stories of copper deposits far to the northwest had reached Fort Prince of Wales. Company newcomer Samuel Hearne was sent to search for the elusive North West Passage and for copper. In 1771, after two failed attempts and seven months of trekking and terrible hardships, Hearne and his Native guide reached the Coppermine River near the Arctic Ocean. Although no North West Passage or copper mines were found, Hearne claimed the river and surrounding territory for Hbc. In 1774, Hearne went on to build the first inland Hbc trading post at Cumberland House, in what is now Saskatchewan. His book *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort to the Northern Ocean* is a Canadian adventure classic.

It wasn't until the twentieth century that the company funded oil exploration. In 1929, Hbc founded Hudson's Bay Oil & Gas to develop the potential of its mineral rights. But the stock market crash later that year and the resulting Great Depression lead Hbc into leasing its treasure chest of mineral rights. After World War II, the Company revived activity in Hudson's Bay Oil & Gas with more than \$300 million invested in exploration between 1950 and 1970. Pioneering several gas discoveries, Hudson's Bay Oil & Gas grew to be one of Canada's principal petroleum producers before being sold to Dome Petroleum in 1981. Hudson's Bay Company eventually sold all its interests in the oil and gas industry in the late 1980s when the department store chain became its primary business focus.

by the Governor or Deputy Governor and a majority of Company members. Any newly elected Committee member will complete the original one-year term of the member who either was removed or died.

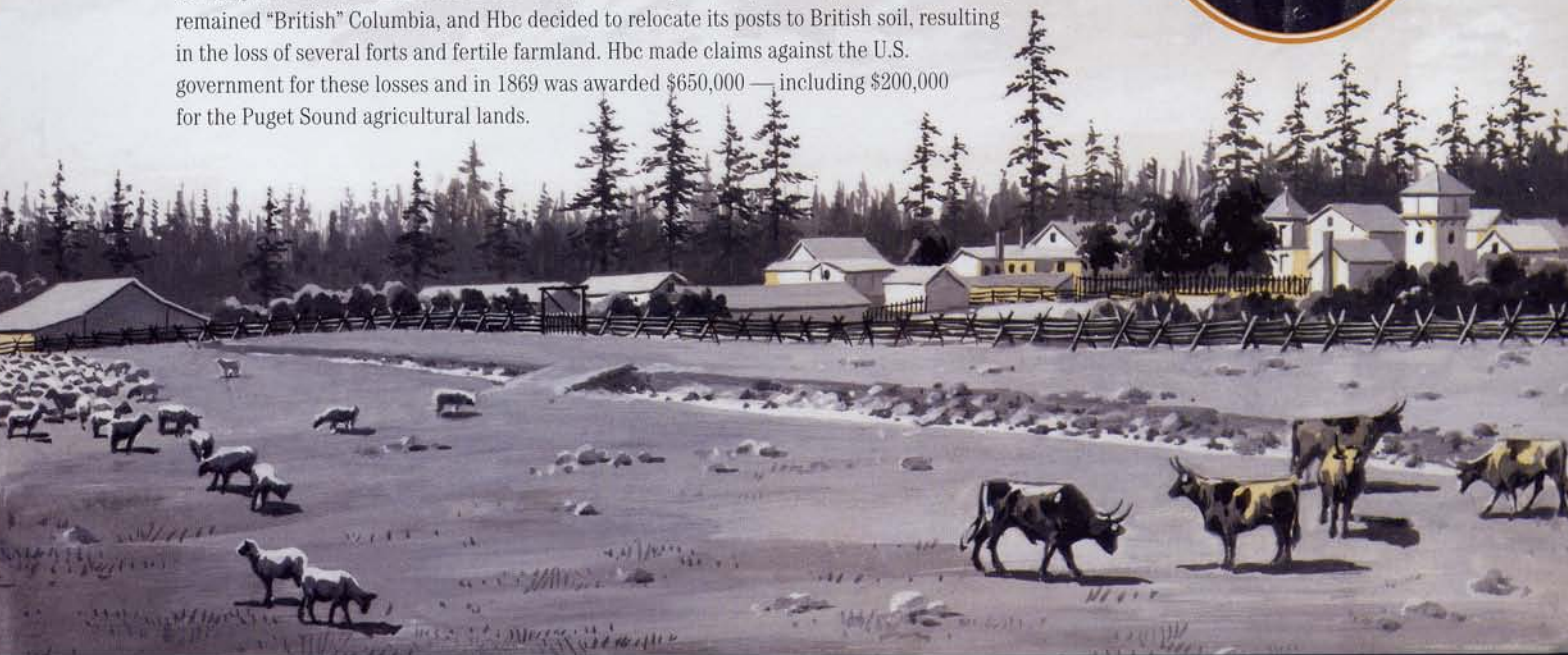
TO ENCOURAGE the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay to carry out our plans for the Company, we grant the Governor and Company, and their successors, the sole right to trade and commerce in all waters of whatever latitude that lie within the entrance to the strait commonly called Hudson Strait, together with **all lands on the country's coasts and the confines of all waters** not already owned by any of our subjects or subjects of any other Christian prince or state. This includes fishing of all sorts and **mining of all gold, silver, gems, and precious stones** found or to be found therein. Henceforth, these lands will be known as one of our American plantations or colonies and be called Rupert's Land.

FOR THE TIME BEING, we name the Governor and Company, and their successors, true and absolute lords and proprietors of the previously outlined territories, to possess and enjoy the territories and all

“all lands on the country's coasts and the confines of all waters” ●

As part of Hbc's westward expansion after its merger with the North West Company in 1821, Dr. John McLoughlin built Fort Vancouver in 1825 just eighty miles from the mouth of the Columbia River. The fertile land surrounding the fort led to successful farming operations that supplied meat, dairy products, and produce not just to the posts on the Pacific coast, but also to local settlements, visiting ships, and Russian traders in Alaska. The agricultural business was so profitable that the Puget Sound Agricultural Company (PSAC) was formed in 1840 as a subsidiary of Hbc. PSAC had essentially the same shareholders, officers, and management as its parent company. The headquarters was at Fort Nisqually at the southern end of Puget Sound (below), and Dr. William F. Tolmie (right) was appointed chief factor at the post. PSAC raised livestock and produced grains, peas, and potatoes. From the outset, the idea was that Hbc would continue to concentrate on the fur trade and PSAC would handle the agricultural business, supplying food to the Hbc posts. Fort Nisqually and PSAC's farms would help strengthen Britain's claim to the region north of the Columbia.

In 1846, the Oregon Treaty made the 49th parallel the boundary between British and American territory west of the Rockies. Once the treaty was accepted, only territory north of the 49th parallel remained “British” Columbia, and Hbc decided to relocate its posts to British soil, resulting in the loss of several forts and fertile farmland. Hbc made claims against the U.S. government for these losses and in 1869 was awarded \$650,000 — including \$200,000 for the Puget Sound agricultural lands.



other rights, jurisdictions, prerogatives, and royalties hereby granted to them. **The annual payment** for these rights shall be two elk and two black beavers, which shall be made whenever and as often as we or our heirs shall happen to enter the countries, territories, and regions hereby granted.

FURTHERMORE, WE EXPECT that the Governor and Company, and their successors, will from time to time meet at any convenient place regarding business matters for the Company. And, with the vote of a majority of Company members, the Governor or the Deputy Governor will have the legal right, for the betterment and continuance of the trade, to pass reasonable laws, constitutions, orders, and ordinances deemed necessary to ensure **sound governing of the Company**, as well as of all governors of colonies, forts, and plantations; factors; masters; mariners; and other officers employed (or to be employed) in any of the previously mentioned territories and lands and during any of their voyages. These same laws, constitutions, orders, and ordinances also can be revoked or altered as the need may arise.



● “sound governing of the Company”

To ensure “sound governing,” Hudson’s Bay Company made communication of information a business priority. Since the Company was headquartered in London, England, thousands of miles and several weeks’ travel from North America where its core business took place, the London committeemen had to establish a means of controlling operations from afar. To do this, they hired trustworthy men to run the trading posts. These men were given considerable management freedom but were expected to be disciplined and loyal and to keep the lines of communication open. A system of inward and outward correspondence was used. Each year, a letter came from the committeemen to each factor at a post, and the factors in turn sent the committeemen a detailed letter conveying the highlights of the trading year along with their daily journals (above) and financial account books. This remarkable information-sharing system helped Hbc become a successful international company long before the days of air travel and e-mail.

THE GOVERNOR AND COMPANY also will impose on any who break the previously mentioned laws, constitutions, orders, and ordinances whatever penalties the majority of them agree are necessary to ensure their observation. Any fines so imposed by Company officers may be retained for the use of the Governor and Company without any account being made to the Crown. These laws are to be observed under penalties determined, provided the penalties are reasonable and are as near as possible to the laws, statutes, and customs of the realm.

FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE GRANTED to the Governor and Company (and their successors, servants, and agents) the sole trade and traffic from all of the areas previously mentioned, as well as the entire trade and traffic to and from all inland waters and seas into which they shall find entrance or passage by either water or land from those same areas. Included also is **all trade with any Native or other peoples** who inhabit any of the areas previously mentioned and with all other nations who inhabit any of the coasts adjacent to the previously mentioned territories and

● *“the annual payment”*

One of the Charter’s most interesting stipulations was that whenever an English ruling monarch visited Rupert’s Land (or later, Canada), an annual payment of “two elk and two black beavers” was to be made to him or her by Hbc. In actual fact, owing to the relative infrequency of royal visits, this payment or “rent ceremony” was a rare event. Since Hbc’s founding in 1670, the ceremony occurred only four times. The first took place in Winnipeg on August 9, 1927, when the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) accepted two black beaver pelts and two mounted elk heads on behalf of his father King George V. The second ceremony took place on May 24, 1939, at Fort Garry Gate in Winnipeg when King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (the late Queen Mother) were on the first-ever royal tour across Canada. The third rent ceremony took place on July 24, 1959, in Assiniboine Park in Winnipeg (right) — the first time the rent was paid to our present sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II. The last time the rent was paid was on July 14, 1970, outside Lower Fort Garry. Instead of the usual beaver pelts, Queen Elizabeth received a tank containing two live beavers.



When the Company permanently moved its head office from London to Canada in 1970, the payment of rent was one of several requirements removed from the Charter.

“all trade with any Native or other peoples” ●



Hudson’s Bay Company was granted a monopoly, or exclusive rights, to trade with the Native peoples living in the area designated by the Charter. This meant that only the governor and members of the Company, including agents and factors, could deal with the Native peoples for furs. The Company’s men set up trading posts (like the one pictured at left) at the mouths of rivers around Hudson Bay. The penalty for anyone caught infringing on these trade rights was forfeiture of all goods and ships, half of which would go to the Company and the other half to the Crown. Furthermore, offenders could be punished at the leisure of the Crown, bound to the governor until such time as they had paid £1000, and banned for life from trade in Rupert’s Land. This right to punish offenders, however, was almost never exercised.

places that are not already owned or in which the sole right to trade and traffic is not already granted to other subjects.

WE COMMAND THAT NONE OF THE TERRITORIES and places hereby granted — nor any of the islands, havens, ports, cities, towns, and places in those territories — shall be visited by any of our subjects, or their heirs or successors, contrary to the true intent of this Royal Charter. We hereby prohibit our heirs and successors, and all subjects of our heirs and successors, from either directly or indirectly visiting or trading merchandise in any other territories, limits, or places granted to the Company by this Charter. No one other than the Governor and current or future members of the Company and their agents, factors, or designates — unless with prior agreement in writing under the seal with the Governor and Company — shall trade in any of the territories mentioned previously. Any person so trading shall be subject to forfeiture of all items (goods; merchandise, and so on) brought into this realm of England or any of its Dominions. Similarly, the Governor and Company may seize **goods and merchandise** within the

DONALD SMITH (1820–1914): FROM SERVANT TO GOVERNOR

Only once in the fur-trading history of Hbc did someone rise through the ranks to become governor. That man was Donald Alexander Smith (right), who, while serving a 75-year career with Hbc, managed to concurrently serve 42 years with the Bank of Montreal, 32 years with the Canadian Pacific Railway, 18



years as a Member of Parliament, 18 years as Canada's High Commissioner in London, and 6 years as an MP in Manitoba. He became a servant of Hbc when he was hired at the age of eighteen (for £20 per year) to grade and count muskrat pelts in the Company's warehouse in Lachine. He later spent decades as a factor in remote Labrador. While there, he diversified Hbc's business, establishing a salmon fishery, exporting seal oil, and sending out rock samples for mineral testing. Under his stewardship, the area's fur-trade profits grew. In 1863 he was made Chief Factor of Labrador and in 1869 was appointed Chief Factor of the Montreal District. Finally in 1889 he was elected the twenty-sixth Governor of Hbc. The wealth he amassed enabled him to invest in the Canadian Pacific Railway. As one of its principal shareholders, the old fur trader had the honour of hammering in the last spike of the transcontinental railway in 1885 (left). In 1897, Queen Victoria named him Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.



territories mentioned, as well as any ship on which such goods and merchandise may be found. One-half of all forfeitures under this agreement will go to us or our heirs and successors, and the other half will go to the Governor and Company or their successors.

FURTHER, each and every offender will suffer such additional punishment as we or our successors deem appropriate, and they will be bound to the Governor until such time as they have paid the Governor the sum of at least one thousand pounds. Thereafter, they shall never trade or traffic in any of those places previously set down in this Charter.

WE ASSURE THE GOVERNOR AND COMPANY that none of our heirs or successors will grant anyone, without the consent of the Governor and a majority of Company members, the right to trade, traffic, or inhabit any of the territories, limits, or places specified in this Charter.

● *“goods and merchandise”*

The European fashion for beaver hats (right) drew the Company to Hudson Bay. In the seventeenth century, everyone of note wanted a beaver hat — one made of the felt from the undercoat of the beaver’s pelt. The best beaver pelts were those worn by the Natives themselves. Regular use had worn off the outer coating of fur leaving the undercoat, which was now ideal for felt making. This fine dense fur was pressed into a glossy waterproof felt that could be worked into many different styles. A “made” beaver — meaning one good-quality pelt from an adult animal — became the standard measure for doing business. The prices of all goods traded by Hbc were in made beaver. For example, a single made beaver could be traded for a brass kettle, two pounds of Brazil tobacco, or twenty steel fishhooks. The Hudson’s Bay point blanket was created in response to customer demand. Native peoples valued this large piece of ready-to-use fabric that was warm and water repellent. Other practical trade goods offered by Hbc for furs included iron- and copperware, axes (below), knives, traps, pipes, and firearms.



RIVALRY WITH THE NOR’ WESTERS

When the Charter created Rupert’s Land and all the rights and privileges of Hudson’s Bay Company, it ignored the French presence in North America. At the time, France and England were allies, but from 1686 to 1713, they were almost constantly at war. Thanks to the canoe-travelling voyageurs, the Montreal fur trade pushed farther inland than Hbc, which concentrated its business along the Bay. In 1774, Hbc decided to go head-to-head with the Montreal “pedlars” by penetrating farther inland. That year Bayman Samuel Hearne built Cumberland House, far upriver from York Factory in what is now Saskatchewan. But Montreal’s North West Company, founded in 1785, threatened to choke off the supply of pelts.

For almost forty years, Baymen and Nor’Westers struggled for control of the fur trade until a truce was finally reached in 1821 and the two companies merged. As a result, Hbc acquired control over vast new territories: the area beyond the Rocky Mountains, from California to Alaska; and the Arctic Ocean and Great Lakes/St. Lawrence drainage basins.

SHOULD ANY MEMBER OF THE COMPANY OF ADVENTURERS Trading into Hudson Bay agree in writing to contribute money toward provision or maintenance of any upcoming Company voyage, and then not pay that sum within twenty days of receiving a warning, the Governor and Company, or a majority of Company members present at any public meeting including either the Governor or his Deputy, can remove and disenfranchise him. Anyone disenfranchised or removed will not be permitted to trade in any areas granted to the Company or to hold any stock in the Company.

IT WILL BE LAWFUL for the Governor and Company, or a majority of the members including either the Governor or the Deputy Govenor, to admit into the Company all servants or factors of the Company and all others who they believe to be suitable in accordance with the orders and ordinances that govern the Company.

THE ORIGINAL INVESTORS

Who were the original investors in Hudson's Bay Company? Most were financiers, noblemen, and men active in the highest circles of business and the Royal Court. Six of the originals sat on King Charles II's Privy Council, and these members, along with Prince Rupert, made sure that the new Company had royal support. Most of the members had shared investment risks before, and all had a healthy entrepreneurial appetite.

In 1665, Pierre-Esprit Radisson and Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers, accompanied by Colonel George Cartwright, whom they had met in Boston, arrived in London seeking backers for their proposed fur-trading venture to Hudson Bay. Cartwright introduced the two to a number of influential men. Among these were Sir George Carteret and Robert Boyle.

Carteret was a self-made millionaire whose fortune had been built on the profits of piracy during the English Civil War. After the restoration of the monarchy, he was Vice-Chamberlain of the King's Household, Treasurer of the Royal Navy, Commissioner of the Board of Trade, and MP for Portsmouth. Boyle, a pioneering physicist, was a founding member of the Royal Society, an association of scientists. He was also the son of the Earl of Cork, one of the wealthiest men in the country, and extremely rich in his own right. He would eventually buy into Hbc to gain access to the scientific information gathered by its servants. It is unclear which of these two men arranged to take Radisson and des Groseilliers to Oxford where the Royal Court had relocated as a result of the bubonic plague outbreak that struck London in the spring and summer of 1665. There they met King Charles II.

The proposed northern trade route caught the King's imagination and he put Radisson and des Groseilliers on a weekly salary, placing them in the care of a young banker named Sir Peter Colleton. Colleton escorted the Frenchmen back to London where he introduced them to the rest of the men who would become their initial backers.

Sometime in 1666 plans came together to finance a speculative voyage to North America to test the viability of the sea route and the potential for trade. But Dutch domination of the seas precluded any voyage that year. The following year saw some progress but still no vessel set sail for Hudson Bay. Without a company structure yet in place to support such a venture, it was left to various individuals to advance seed money to keep the project afloat. In October 1667, Francis Millington, a London customs commissioner, advanced money that was later credited toward the purchase of a share. So did his relative by marriage, Sir Robert Vyner, Controller of the Mint, Lord Mayor of London, and a leading merchant banker of the day. John Fenn, Paymaster of the Royal Navy, started to contribute money in December 1667, and more came from John Portman, a prominent banker.

By 1668 a company was starting to take shape. Ledgers exist from that time, and the initial expenses and investments are recorded. Great men of the Court joined these financial men of the city. Prince Rupert himself began to pay for a full share in June 1668, by which time the *Nonsuch* had already departed London. Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Ashley (later the first Earl Shaftesbury), made his initial investment in August. Chancellor of the Exchequer and member of the Privy Council, he was a

WE FURTHER GRANT to the Governor and Company that, for all elections to be held and for all by-laws to be passed by the General Court of the Company, every person will have **one vote for every £100 of stock** he owns. Any persons who have less than one hundred pounds of stock may combine their respective sums of stock to make up one hundred pounds; they will then have one joint vote among them.

WE FURTHER GRANT to the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay that all lands, islands, territories, plantations, forts, fortifications, factories, and colonies where the Company has places of trade that are, or shall be, within any of the ports and places previously stated shall be immediately under the power and command of the Governor and Company and their successors. And that the Governor and Company shall have full power and authority to appoint and establish local Governors and all other Officers to govern them. And that these local Governors and Councils in all



Various trade tokens issued by the Company for use in trade

close friend and business partner of Prince Rupert. Lord William Craven, was another Privy Councillor and an investor in the colonies. Henry Bennet, Baron Arlington (later the first Earl Arlington), was Secretary of State and an MP. George Monck, Duke of Albemarle, Lord of

Trade and Plantations and Privy Councillor, had helped restore Charles to the throne. Sir James Hayes, personal secretary of Prince Rupert, contributed money as well his deft organizing ability. Hayes was a barrister and MP with numerous investments, but functioned primarily as financial adviser to the prince. Hayes would end up Deputy Governor of Hbc and its largest single shareholder with a twenty percent stake.

Other investors included Hayes's brother-in-law Sir Edward Hungerford; Sir John Robinson, Lieutenant of the Tower of London; Sir John Griffith, a professional soldier and city magnate; Sir Paul Neile, a member of the Royal Society; William Prettyman, a merchant; and Sir John Kirke, the only investor with firsthand knowledge of the North American fur trade.

The *Nonsuch* returned to London in October 1669 — almost four years after Radisson and des Groseilliers first arrived there. But it had been worth the wait. The value of its cargo and the influence of the men who had backed the voyage led directly to the granting of the Royal Charter in 1670.

Today's shareholders in Hbc are a large and varied group of people from different backgrounds and financial situations. These investors vote at shareholders' meetings to influence decisions made by company management. In turn, Hbc issues reports to the shareholders to keep them well informed.

*“one vote for every
£100 of stock”*

Hudson's Bay Company was created as a joint stock company, a type of commercial or business organization that was popular in Britain in the late 1600s. A joint stock company is an association of capital or investment. Investors contribute money to the company in exchange for stocks or shares in the corporation. Shares are transferable and can also be traded and exchanged on the open market. The Charter created voting shares (one vote for every \$100 of stock), meaning that the shareholders had a right to vote at the meetings of the Company. Foreign trade was the natural sector in which joint stock companies such as Hbc flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, since the high costs and risks involved in developing overseas trade were too much for private individuals operating alone. Other joint stock companies in existence around the time of Hbc's birth included the British East India Company, the Dutch East India Company, the Levant Company, the Virginia Company, and the African Company. Hudson's Bay Company, however, is the only joint stock trading company from this era to have remained in continuous operation.

places where the Company has plantations, forts, factories, colonies, or places of trade will have the power to judge — in all civil and criminal causes and according to the laws of England — all Company members and others who live under their jurisdiction and to execute justice accordingly.

IF ANY CRIME OR MISDEMEANOUR is committed in any of the Company's plantations, forts, factories, or places of trade as previously stated where jurisdiction cannot be executed due to the lack of a local Governor and Council, the Chief Factor of that place and his Council will send the party, together with details of the offence, to another plantation, factory, or fort where there is a local Governor and Council. If it is thought to be more convenient, they can send the party to England, where justice will be served and the person will receive appropriate punishment for the offence.

MOREOVER, WE GRANT the Governor and Company the right, should they believe it necessary, to send warships, men, or ammunition into any plantation, fort, factory, or place of trade

FORT LANGLEY ON THE PACIFIC COAST

As a result of its merger with the North West Company in 1821, Hudson's Bay Company acquired new territory including the area beyond the Rocky Mountains. George Simpson, Hbc's new Governor of the Northern Department, took charge of expansion operations. On June 27, 1827, a party of twenty-one under the command of James McMillan left Fort Vancouver (in what is now Washington State) to establish a new fort on the lower Fraser River. The site was near the junction of the Salmon and Fraser Rivers, about fifteen miles from the Strait of Georgia. The fort, the very first on the coast of British Columbia, was named after

Thomas Langley, a member of the London committee, Hbc's governing board.

Fort Langley's development differed from that of the more typical fur-trading posts. The fur trade alone could not sustain the fort, so Hbc concentrated on developing secondary commercial activities. Farming and salmon fishing became more profitable than trading furs. At the time of the Fraser Gold Rush in 1857, Langley was the only settlement of any size in the area and established itself as an important supply depot for the miners. Retailing then became the foundation of the fort's economy. Langley's history heralded the changes in the Company's focus that were soon to follow the Deed of Surrender in 1869.

James Douglas prepares to leave Fort Langley after having been sworn in as Governor of the new mainland colony of British Columbia in November 1858.



previously mentioned to maintain their security and defence. Further, they are granted the right to choose Commanders and Officers to whom they can give power and authority to either make peace or continue war (whichever most benefits the Company) with any non-Christian prince or people in, or adjacent to, any places where the Company has plantations, forts, or factories. They also have the right to extract compensation for themselves from the goods, estates, or people at whose hands the Governor and Company sustain any loss of or damage to their trade as granted by this Charter. The Governor and Company may **build castles, fortifications, forts, garrisons, colonies, or plantations,** towns, or villages within the limits granted by this Charter and supply them with necessary clothing, provisions, food, ammunition, and implements from England, paying all necessary customs duties. They also may transport to these areas the number of men required to govern these areas in a legal and reasonable manner and to inflict **punishment for misdemeanours** or impose fines for breach of orders as expressed earlier in this Charter.

● *“build castles, fortifications, forts, garrisons, colonies, or plantations”*

The Red River Colony was the original settlement in what are now Manitoba and North Dakota. It was founded in 1811 by Thomas Douglas, Lord Selkirk (below), a Scottish nobleman and Hudson's Bay Company's majority shareholder who sought a new home for farmers forced off their lands in Scotland. At that time, Hbc controlled the land in this area and sold a huge portion of it to Selkirk for his colony. Lord Selkirk called it Assiniboia, but it is commonly known as the Red River colony.

The colony provided several challenges for the Company. The first occurred before the settlement could establish itself. The colony straddled the North West Company's route to Montreal and the Nor'Westers reacted angrily. At Seven Oaks in 1816, the colony's Governor, Robert Semple, and twenty settlers were gunned down by allies of the Nor'Westers.

A thriving community did eventually develop in spite of the hardships. The Scottish settlers, along with the Métis (French-speaking Roman Catholics) and “mixed bloods” (English-speaking Protestants), wanted freedom to trade and rebelled against Hbc control. The turning point for the colony,

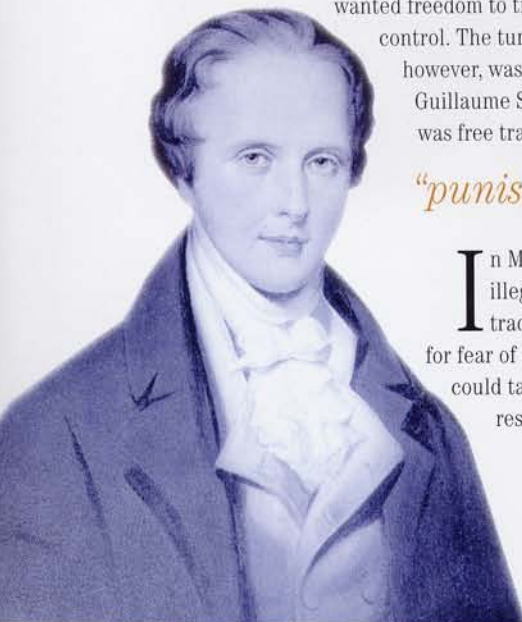
however, was Hbc's prosecution in 1849 of Pierre-Guillaume Sayer for illegal fur trading. The result was free trade for the Métis.



Selkirk's settlers arrive at Red River in 1812.

“punishment for misdemeanours” ●

In May 1849, Pierre-Guillaume Sayer, a Métis of the Red River settlement, was charged with trading illegally in Rupert's Land where, according to the Royal Charter of 1670, only Hbc was permitted to trade for furs. Though the jury found him guilty, Sayer was allowed to go free without punishment for fear of an uprising. The other traders of Red River viewed this as a victory for free trade. Although Hbc could take rival traders to court, as stipulated in the Charter, the Company instead chose to use its vast resources to force its competition out of business.



WE GRANT the Governor and Company full power to seize and send to England all English or other of our subjects who sail into Hudson Bay, who inhabit any areas granted to the Governor and Company without first having obtained their approval, or who disobey their orders. All English subjects who are employed in any way by the Governor and Company in any of the locations previously outlined will be liable and will suffer, for any offences committed by them, whatever punishment the President (presiding officer of the court) and Council for the Governor and Company deem appropriate. Should any person convicted and sentenced by the President and Council of the Governor and Company appeal the sentence, the President and Council or factors or agents may seize him and return him to England as a prisoner of the Governor and Company. There he will receive whatever punishment is appropriate according to English laws. For the better discovery of abuses and injuries, it may be lawful for officers of the Governor and Company to examine upon oath in a manner acceptable under laws of the realm.

WE HEREBY CHARGE and command all of our admirals, vice-admirals, justices, mayors, sheriffs,

“executing the promises of this Charter” ●

In the 1730s, an ambitious Irish politician named Arthur Dobbs (right) launched the most concentrated attack ever mounted against Hudson's Bay Company. Dobbs believed in the existence of a North West Passage and concluded that either Hbc had found it and was

keeping it a secret for its own benefit or the Company wasn't living up to its Charter obligation to search for the fabled route to the Orient.

Dobbs managed to convince Hbc to mount a couple of unsuccessful attempts to find the passage. One, led by Christopher Middleton in 1742, ventured farther north in Hudson Bay than any other European expedition to date, reaching and naming Wager Inlet. Dobbs persisted in his belief of an Hbc conspiracy, and eventually seventeen petitions questioning the Company's Royal Charter reached the British Parliament. A special committee headed by Lord Strange was set up to hear the complaints. The committee ruled that there was no case for annulling the Charter or interfering with Hbc's trade position. The parliamentary members realized that even if a passage were discovered, the climate and conditions of Hudson Bay would likely make such a route impassable. Dobbs gave up his campaign. In 1754, he was named Governor of North Carolina and he died there in 1765. While Dobbs's challenge of the Charter failed, the unwelcome publicity generated by his criticisms of the Company, forced its committee to renew efforts for expansion.



THE DEED OF SURRENDER

When the Constitution Act, 1867, was passed, provision was made for the eventual inclusion of Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories into the new Canadian confederation. In 1869, almost two hundred years after receiving its Royal Charter, the Company gave up its territorial domain and trade rights in North America to the new government of Canada in exchange for £300,000 and generous land concessions. This agreement, known as the Deed of Surrender, was signed on April 9, 1869 and went into effect on December 1st of that year. The Company was no longer the governing body that it once had been, instead becoming the purely commercial business that some of its original shareholders had envisioned.

constables, bailiffs, and all other officers, ministers, liege men, and subjects to assist the Governor and Company and their successors and deputy officers, factors, servants, designates, and ministers in **executing the promises of this Charter**, on both land and sea, whenever you may be required to do so. Notwithstanding any statute, act, ordinance, proviso, proclamation, or restraint, we previously had made, set forth, ordained, or provided — or any other matter, cause, or thing whatsoever to the contrary.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, we have caused
these our letters to be made patent.

WITNESSED by myself at Westminster,
the second day of May, in the 22nd year of our reign.

BY WRIT of Privy Seal,
Pigott.

TWO NEW CHARTERS FOR HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

May 1970 was a significant month for Hbc for two reasons. First, May 2 marked the 300th anniversary of the original granting of the Royal Charter by King Charles II of England. Second, May 29 marked the signing of two supplemental charters for the Company.

With the Charter of 1970, Queen Elizabeth II revoked all the provisions of the previous charters except the incorporation section of the original 1670 Royal Charter. On the same day, the Canadian Charter was witnessed in Ottawa on behalf of the Queen by Governor General Roland Michener (right, seated in centre). It continued the Company as a corporate body, subject to the laws of Canada. Among the provisions of the Canadian Charter was one exempting Hbc from including "Limited" in its name, and one specifying that the governor, deputy governor, and at least two-thirds of the directors must be residents of Canada or the United Kingdom. The terms of the Charter were modernized. The proprietors were now referred to as shareholders and the general court became a shareholders' meeting.

Also in 1970, Hbc moved its corporate headquarters from London, England, to Hudson's Bay House in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The old headquarters, Beaver House, with its offices, archives, fur storage, and auction hall, remained to represent the Company in England until it was demolished in the mid-1980s. In 1987, the headquarters moved again, this time to Toronto, where it is now located in the Simpson Tower on Bay Street.



The Royal Charter Examined

In 1997, at the instigation of then Hbc Governor David E. Mitchell and Corporate Secretary Brian C. Grose, an extensive examination of the Charter was conducted by the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) and the National Research Council (NRC). The Charter was studied, analyzed, and preserved. The late Kenneth Lockwood, then president of Dorset Conservation Inc., a private company, developed and oversaw the project on behalf of Hbc. He also designed and constructed the new display case in which the Charter was placed in April 1997.

The document was taken to CCI's research laboratories in Ottawa to record its current appearance and state of deterioration. The Charter was photographed using special lighting and close-ups to record scratches, stains, smudges, and erasures. Special X-rays of the Great Seal were taken and revealed where pins had been used to repair breaks. The scientists were also able to use state-of-the-art laser-scanning technology developed by NRC to help create the baseline record of the first page and the Great Seal. Any future images taken of the Charter can then be overlaid with the baseline image to record any changes in appearance.

The report from CCI declared that the "current condition of the Charter reflects well on three centuries of storage." To realize Hbc's goal of properly preserving its document of incorporation, Lockwood designed and built a display case using the latest in aerospace technology. The Charter is now displayed in a sealed aluminum box with a tempered glass window on top. It is filled with nitrogen instead of air and kept at a proper humidity level to prevent or slow down any further damage. A wooden case covers the box and its doors can be closed shut to minimize light exposure.

For travelling exhibits and special events, four replicas of the Charter were made.



A CCI conservator (left) and a scientist (right) examine the Royal Charter using a stereomicroscope.

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TIMELINE

1660 Radisson and des Groseilliers travel among tribes in Great Lakes and return to Montreal with furs. They propose exporting pelts via Hudson Bay but find no backers.

1668 Radisson and des Groseilliers leave England for Hudson Bay on a speculative expedition that enjoys royal backing. Radisson's ship is forced to turn back. Des Groseilliers, aboard the *Nonsuch*, makes it to the Bay where the crew builds the first fort in this region. The group spends the winter trading for pelts.

1670 Charles II grants the Royal Charter creating the Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay.

1676 Hbc exports British goods worth \$650 and returns with a profit of £19,000.

1682 Hbc loses four of its five forts on the bay to the French.

1713 Treaty of Utrecht returns control of Hudson Bay area to England.

1821 Hbc merges with its major rival,

the Montreal-based North West Company. The resulting enterprise dominates the fur trade in North America.

1838 British government extends Hbc's monopoly for another twenty-one years.

1867 The Constitution Act, 1867, makes provision for the eventual inclusion of Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories into Confederation.

The Appearance of the Royal Charter

This historic document consists of five large sheets of parchment (very fine animal skin) containing approximately 7,000 words of handwritten text. Each sheet is about 65 cm wide by 80 cm high. The calligrapher is unknown but was probably a chancery clerk who could produce the standard calligraphy known at the time as “court hand.” The first page of the Charter lies flat while the others are rolled up at the bottom. The first page is also very ornate: a portrait of King Charles II has been worked into the “C” of his name and the top and side margins are adorned with illustrations of lions, unicorns, shields, and other images. The decoration was applied as a separate piece of art after the writing was completed. The remaining four pages bear the calligraphy but no artwork, although there is room for decoration along the borders. It may simply have been too expensive to decorate the entire document. The Great Seal of King Charles, a large green-tinted wax disk, is fixed to a silk cord that, in turn, binds the five pages together. Neither King Charles nor the Crown Clerk, Richard Pigott, actually signed the Charter: the Seal is the mark of the king’s authority.



A Glitch in the Seal

The two images used on the front and back of the Great Seal — King Charles II on his throne and on horseback — were mistakenly rotated about ninety degrees from each other when they were stamped into the wax. This is the only known example of a production error in a charter from this time period.



Where Has the Charter Been Since 1670?

For most of its first three hundred years, the Royal Charter was kept at Hbc’s headquarters in London, England, housed in special metal cases. In the Company’s very early years, the Charter was locked away in an iron chest kept in Prince Rupert’s apartments in Windsor Castle. Records of the Company reveal orders for it to be kept in a succession of trunks, iron chests, and black boxes. A creditor of the Company once held the Charter for a year as security for his loans. For generations, it was even hidden to keep its terms a secret. When the Company’s headquarters moved to Canada in 1970, the Charter became a Canadian document and was housed in Winnipeg, before being moved to its present location in Toronto.

1869 Deed of Surrender. Hbc yields sovereignty of Rupert’s Land to the Crown, which transfers it to Canada. Hbc retains territorial rights but loses licence to exclusive trade.

1870–1900 Early Hbc posts evolve into retail stores in growing western cities.

1920 Hbc celebrates its 250th anniversary.

1925 Hbc opens Beaver House, the world’s largest fur auction house, in London.

1929 Hudson’s Bay Oil & Gas Company formed.

1960 Hbc acquires Morgan’s department stores.

1970 Hbc celebrates its 300th anniversary by becoming a Canadian corporation and relocating its corporate headquarters to Canada.

1973 Hbc acquires a controlling interest in Markborough Properties Ltd.; five years later it owns 100%.

1978 Hbc acquires Zellers and Simpsons.

1987 Hbc sells its Northern Stores and Wholesale Departments, its fur auction houses, and oil and gas interests and becomes a department store chain.

1990 Markborough Properties Ltd. is spun off to Hbc shareholders.

1993 Hbc acquires Woodward’s.

1998 Hbc acquires Kmart Canada.

1999 Hbc launches Home Outfitters.

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SPECIAL WALL
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IT WAS ONLY FIVE PAGES OF PARCHMENT...

But it made a group of English gentlemen “true and absolute lords and proprietors” of almost half of North America. The Royal Charter that England’s king granted in 1670 to “the Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay” is one of the most significant documents in the history of Canada. Today, it is carefully preserved in a display case at Hudson’s Bay Company headquarters in Toronto.

Now readers can experience this remarkable artifact for themselves in an accessible translation of the Charter’s archaic language. Annotated features plus a host of fascinating sidebars and illustrations bring to life the story of the Charter and the fur-trading company that became a nation.

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