

A Chapter from The 2084 Report

O Canada

The Honorable Neale Fraser was the first governor of the American state of Manitoba. I spoke to him from his residential care home in the state capital, Winnipeg.

Many of my fellow Canadians consider me a quisling—a collaborator at best, a traitor at worst. That is an easy judgment for them to make, because they did not have the responsibility that I did. Canada had lost the war, further resistance would get us nowhere, or worse, and my job was to make the best of a bad situation on behalf of Manitoba and Canada. Moreover, I was under orders from Ottawa and Prime Minister Pierre Campbell. Had I refused to take office as governor of the American State of Manitoba, I would have been relieved instantly and someone less committed would have been handed the job. Now, 40 years later, I believe that history has absolved me and restored my reputation. At least my conscience is clear.

Of course I regret the loss of the sovereign nation of Canada as much as anyone. But we here in Manitoba are still far better off than 99 percent of the people in the world. We have a favorable climate, enough to eat, and are as self-sufficient as any people could be, growing and making everything we need right here. We are living the way our ancestors did in the early 19th Century and they did fine. Plus, and the importance of this cannot be overestimated, being located in the center of a continent with no hordes of climate refugees massing at your border is not just an advantage, survival itself may depend on it.

That if global warming got bad enough, America would invade Canada should not have come as a surprise to anyone on either side of the border. As the lower tier of your American states became hotter, people began to move north, toward cooler climates. There was an exodus from places like Houston and Phoenix, and many of those people moved to the tier of states just below our border. They looked north and saw our wide open spaces, cooler climate, and amber fields of grain.

Not only were temperatures in the midsection of America becoming uncomfortable for people, they became increasingly unfavorable for wheat. Agronomists had projected that a rise in temperature of 2°F [1°C] would cause wheat yields to decrease by somewhere between 5 and 15

percent, and the total temperature rise had been three times that. Already by the 2040s, the red winter wheat on which Texas and Oklahoma had depended could no longer be grown there. It was still possible to raise red winter wheat in Colorado and Kansas, but you couldn't make a profit. The red spring wheat that had once flourished in the northern tier of your states—Montana, the Dakotas, and Minnesota—could no longer be grown there at all, the climate that favored that type of wheat having migrated up here. Farmers knew that it was only going to get hotter, making it harder and eventually impossible to grow the type of wheat they had always grown. Any wheat farmer paying attention in the United States could see that his children, if they could be persuaded to try farming, would either be growing a different kind of wheat or have to give up. During the second half of the century, North American wheat farming was going to take place in Canada, not in the U.S.

As temperatures rose and crops failed, Americans began to clamor to emigrate to Canada. In the 2030s, as the pressure for immigration began to build, we closed the border and ended legal immigration into Canada.

But we could not end illegal immigration. The U.S.-Canada border was the longest undefended international boundary in the world: 3,145 miles on land and 2,380 miles on water. Most of it was through wilderness or over water. There was no way to prevent thousands of Americans from crossing into Canada each year illegally, just as thousands of Mexicans had once crossed your southern border illegally.

After the sunbirds, as we called them, got across the border, they had no trouble finding camps of fellow Americans who would take them in. These camps soon became tinder boxes of anti-Canadian sentiment, and many of them were well armed, you Americans having had by far the highest rate of gun ownership of any country. We were about to learn just how well armed.

Morris, Manitoba was a small farming and ranching town of 2,000 people 30 miles north of the border in the valley of the Red River, whose thick black loam had produced some of the finest agricultural soil in the world. Ten miles to the west of Morris was a squalid American enclave that your expatriates had nicknamed Freedom Town. At this time, we Manitobans were better off than most because of the flourishing wheat crops that underpinned our economy. But the Americans in Freedom Town were malnourished, and some were on the verge of starvation. To make matters worse, more Americans kept arriving at the camp.

The leader of Freedom Town was a firebrand who kept stirring up his people, pointing out that it was not right for Americans to face malnutrition, if not starvation, while a few miles down the road Canadians were enjoying the bounty that global warming had denied to Americans.

On April 30, 2046, a band of well-armed and well-lubricated Americans from Freedom Town entered Morris and seized its police station, municipal offices, and power and water plant. The Americans arrested and jailed the civil authorities in the small town. They raided Morris's supermarket and liquor store and helped themselves. Once the Americans had control of Morris, Freedom Town emptied out and its residents quickly established themselves in the small Manitoba town.

Our government had been expecting an incident that would bring conflict between Canadians and illegal American immigrants out into the open. We sent a corps of Royal Canadian Mounted Police into Morris, and a pitched battle ensued with significant losses on both sides. Our Mounties had not realized how well armed the Americans were nor how well they would fight. Many of the Americans were veterans of the various Middle Eastern wars in which America had engaged early in the century. They were now in their fifties and sixties but had not forgotten how to fight.

In the end, however, the Freedom Town fighters were no match for our professional Mounties. As they closed in on the Americans, the Battle of Morris began to turn into the kind of last stand that you Americans had made at the Alamo. Except that, this time, the embattled and surrounded Americans were able to call in reinforcements from U.S. troops stationed on your side of the border, waiting for just such an incident to give them the excuse to cross in force.

America sent an armored brigade rolling across the border and up Highway 75 toward Morris. It took your armor only two hours to travel the 45 miles and begin to rout our Mounties, who had not been prepared to engage tanks. When the smoke cleared, 35 Americans from Freedom Town and five American troops had lost their lives, but 200 Mounties and six Canadian civilians had died.

Even though communication across Canada was already becoming difficult, word of the American incursion spread quickly. Canadians demanded that their government retaliate, and on May 5, 2046, Canada declared war on the United States. Of course our government knew that

this was a futile effort, as you vastly outnumbered us and had a much stronger military. Still, honor demanded that we fight. And, our officials believed, if we fought we would be able to negotiate better terms than if we surrendered without a struggle. It seems that it never entered the minds of our leaders that they would preside over the loss of Canadian sovereignty.

Canadian fighter-bombers from 17 Air Wing left their base at Winnipeg airfield, most headed for the camps that the U.S. Army had established near Morris. But some Canadian planes crossed the border and bombed the North Dakota bases from which the armored column had come. No sooner had the first Canadian bombs fallen on American soil than the United States declared war on Canada. A squadron of your ultrasupersonic Aurora fighters took off from their base in Minot, North Dakota, quickly destroying the outmatched Canadian planes that it could find in the air, then flying on to destroy our remaining aircraft still on the ground in Winnipeg. In half a day, America had command of the skies over central Canada. But that was just the beginning.

We later learned that America had prepared several different war plans for the conquest of Canada, one of which began with just the sort of cross-border rescue mission that occurred at Morris. There is no doubt that, if such an incident had not occurred on its own, the U.S. would have provoked one.

A major goal of War Plan Maple was for victory over Canada to be as bloodless as possible. The U.S. did not intend to defeat the Canadian Army and then withdraw from our territory, as the victors in the world wars of the last century had done. Your goal was rather to incorporate Canada into the United States—to make our provinces states in your union. The more Canadian blood spilled, the harder that would be and the longer enmities would last.

We Canadians stood in disbelief at the rapidity with which you Americans moved. Squadrons of the 101st Airborne Division parachuted onto the Winnipeg airfield and onto the huge rail hub there, within hours securing both against little opposition. We had the illusion that our long border and vast space would hamper your forces and give us time to organize a resistance. No doubt the Russians had thought the same thing before Hitler launched Barbarossa.

Canada was vast, true, but all of our transportation, military bases, factories, and population were located within 100 miles or so of the border. For example, all east–west rail traffic in Canada had to pass through the big Winnipeg rail yard. Once it fell into your hands, it was no longer possible

for us to ship troops or matériel from one part of Canada to the other. You did not have to conquer and hold all of Canada, only a few strategic points.

Making that easier for you was that all our major seaports were located either along the St. Lawrence River or inside the Juan de Fuca Strait, the latter providing access to the big ports at Victoria and Vancouver. All you had to do was to use your warships to blockade the entrances to the St. Lawrence and the Juan de Fuca Strait, and Canada could no longer supply itself by sea. With transcontinental rail traffic shut down, without access to the sea, with our airports under U.S. control, not only was Canada sealed off from the outside, it was largely immobilized inside. Then you waited for our government to capitulate.

We Canadians had always been a peaceful people, never aggressive toward our neighbors—America was our only neighbor! We had served in the great world wars and other conflicts when called and given a good account of ourselves, but, as the twenty-first century proceeded, with no enemies in sight, we had turned our swords into plowshares, to quote from the Book of Isaiah. We had only a handful of modern fighter planes, and those we bought from you, so you knew their strengths and weaknesses better than we did. Most of our aircraft were for transport, search and rescue, and the like. Once we might have been able to mount a credible fight against your forces, though we would have lost in the end, but by the 2040s we were a mouse to your elephant. Our only option was to try to get the best deal for Canada.

With all this in mind, a delegation from Ottawa, headed by Prime Minister Campbell, flew to Washington, D.C., to discuss peace terms. We asked that American forces withdraw from Canada and in return offered to grant joint citizenship to any Americans who applied, whether they had particular skills or not. American corporations would be chartered in Canada just as they are in your country. These were extraordinary concessions, a mark of the disparity in the might of our two countries. We never imagined that the United States would not accept terms so much in its favor. But you had another plan in mind and turned us down even though we told you that it would mean further armed conflict. You allowed our delegation to land back in Ottawa. Then the final stage of the war began.

Our three most important Eastern cities are Montréal, Toronto, and our capital, Ottawa, all less than an hour's drive from the U.S. border. War Plan Maple laid out the rapid American takeover of each, and you followed that plan exactly. Auroras from your Niagara Falls Air Reserve

Station took only 15 minutes to reach and destroy our 8 Wing at Trenton, halfway between Toronto and Montréal. We had not a single airworthy fighter left at Trenton. American paratroopers closed Highway 401 between those two cities and Highway 417 between Montréal and Ottawa so that we could not transfer supplies between those cities.

Armored tank columns rolled around the western end of Lake Ontario and entered Toronto, meeting only light resistance from our weakened forces. Elements of your 1st Armored Division roared up the short 30 miles from the border and into Montréal, quickly securing it as well. Another U.S. force advanced up Canada Route 416 and into Ottawa, where it met stiff resistance, our government having decided that we were honor-bound not to surrender our capital without a fight.

The Battle of Ottawa lasted 11 days. Even though we knew we could not possibly win against American might, our soldiers elected to go down fighting. Not only did they battle to the end, Canadian civilians rose up in the kind of insurgent guerrilla warfare that you had experienced early in the century in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Venezuela. Losses on both sides in Ottawa were heavy, but, since you could bring in unlimited reinforcements and we could not, the outcome was a foregone conclusion.

Once you put down the insurrection, you presented your terms. You would maintain military bases at various points in Canada of your choosing for the indefinite future. As soon as both sides signed the peace treaty, American troops would withdraw to those bases from Canadian cities. The sea blockade and the rail closure would end at the same time. The U.S. would grant American citizenship to all natural-born Canadians, and we would do the same for your citizens.. All immigration restrictions would be dropped since everyone in both countries would then have dual citizenship. The border would be open in both directions, just like the borders between two of our provinces or two of your states. Canadians could move to the U.S.; Americans could move to Canada. Then came the kicker.

Within 12 months, each Canadian province would conduct a plebiscite to determine whether it wished to become an American state. In the first plebiscite, all Canadian provinces other than the Maritimes—New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island—elected to join the United States. A year later, the Maritime provinces held a second plebiscite; this time they voted

overwhelmingly to join the U.S. Thus by 2050, Canada had ceased to exist as a nation, each of its provinces now one of the United States of America.

Naturally, hard feelings among Canadians lasted for years; even today, some old-timers are bitter. It is hard to forget the images of our CC-277 Globemasters, with red maple leafs emblazoned on their fuselages, going up in flames at CFB Trenton. But people born after 2050 have never known anything but American citizenship and are proud of it.