

THE BATTLE OF PORT ARTHUR: A WAR OF WORDS AND IDEOLOGIES WITHIN THE CANADIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

Robb MacDonald
University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

It is my firm conviction that the Olympic Committee as now constituted, lacks the harmony and constructive idealism which alone can justify its existence and guarantee its future success.¹

In a voluminous report presented at the forty-first annual meeting of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada (AAUC) in December, 1928, the president, Dr. Arthur Lamb, chose the words of his remonstrance carefully as he expressed his discontent following a controversy that erupted at the summer Olympics in Amsterdam four months earlier. The result of his protest was dramatic and emotional, involving himself, and P.J. Mulqueen, the president of the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC). The ensuing clash between these two men and their supporters has become recognized as the Battle of Port Arthur, a conflict which ultimately affected the relationship between the two sporting bodies.

While many Canadians are familiar with the gold medal performances of “Peerless” Percy Williams and Ethel Catherwood, few are aware of the dissent surrounding the women’s 100m final, and the subsequent, tumultuous meeting four months later in Port Arthur. Although several historians have mentioned the incident, to date there has not been a thorough description of the Battle or the events which led to its occurrence. Such an investigation seems warranted, considering that, as a result of the conflict, Lamb resigned his posts as the president of the AAUC and secretary of the Canadian Olympic team. More importantly, it was because of this event that the COC constitution was restructured in 1929.²

It is the intention of this paper to examine the Battle of Port Arthur further than has been done previously. As a watershed in the evolving relationship between the AAUC and the COC, its description will help to disclose one of Canada’s early struggles to develop a strong national Olympic committee. The second purpose of this paper is to explore some of the contributing factors to the conflict. Specifically, it will focus on two factors which precipitated the enmity. First, as the Battle represented the antagonism between the two personalities of Lamb and Mulqueen, an enquiry into their relationship will be conducted, including their relative positions on the the direction of the Olympic movement in Canada. Second, a discussion of the administrative difficulties that the Union faced in light of the changing scene in the 1920s will be presented. Finally, the outcomes and ramifications of the Battle of Port Arthur will conclude the paper.

The author recognizes that certain limitations must be addressed before embarking on this journey into Canada’s sporting past. Although many efforts were employed to uncover information -- including trips to the Canadian Olympic House in Montreal, the Canadian Hall of Fame in Toronto and the National Archives in Ottawa -- the COC’s minutes from this period were not discovered. Similarly, any correspondence that existed between the officials of the two committees have not been found. Prior to 1949, the COC stood as a

standing committee under the AAUC, subsequently, much of the information for this period must come from the annual minutes of the latter's meetings.³ And finally, supplementary information has come from contemporary newspaper and magazine articles, and, therefore, possible biases and misinformation should be recognized.

Growth of The Canadian Olympic Committee

Before describing the conflict at Port Arthur, it is necessary to highlight the evolution of the Canadian Olympic Committee and its association with the AAUC up to that point. The 1908 Games were the first to warrant an organized Canadian team. For these and the following Olympics in Stockholm, temporary committees were established in the months prior to the events to coordinate the various tasks. However, in 1912, after the appointment of Sir John Hanbury-Williams to the I.O.C. as Canada's representative, it became necessary to create a permanent body that would address Olympic matters throughout the entire Olympiad, not just in the months preceding to the Games.⁴

In 1913 at the annual meeting of the AAUC a constitution was drafted resulting in the birth of the first permanent national committee. Of the articles in the constitution, those concerned with the governing of the body would become the most controversial. The newly formed Canadian Olympic Association, as it was then titled, was given the task of "promoting the participation of Canadians in the Olympic Games." The COA's activities were to be carried out by a Council. A central committee was to be made up of five members whose responsibilities would be "to have complete charge of financial arrangements of trials, selection of teams, etc.," and were to be appointed by the COA council.⁵

Although it lasted for seven years, in essence, the early COA was short lived. Soon after its inception, World War I broke out suspending the Olympic festivals for six years. In 1920 the Games were hastily resurrected in the city of Antwerp, Belgium. Performances, as might be expected, were only mediocre, but Canada managed two gold medals, one in boxing and another in the 110 metre hurdles. At the AAUC meeting held that year, the then President motioned that a permanent body was not required, and that the COA constitution should be reconstructed. At the next meeting of the AAUC in Toronto one year later, the COA ceased to exist; in its place the Canadian Olympic Committee was established, a standing committee within the AAUC. The new committee was to be formed from "a representative of each Branch and from each Allied Body directly interested in the Olympic Games, plus the President and Secretary of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada."⁶

Although the decision to create a new, standing committee was initiated in 1921, the COC was not functionally operative until 1923, at which time P.J. Mulqueen was appointed chairman, J.I. Morkin, Vice-Chairman, and F.H. Marples, Secretary-Treasurer. Despite the changes, the 1924 Canadian team suffered its worst performance to date. The strong physical contingent of eighty-six athletes managed a disappointing total of only five medals in the Paris Games, none of which were gold. The Canadian hockey team, however, asserted its dominance in the first official Winter Olympics in Chamonix by winning the gold medal with ease over the United States in the final game.⁷

At the annual AAUC meeting in September of the same year changes to the constitution were proposed by Howard Crocker in light of the poor performance in the summer. Crocker's recommendations called for the election of five additional members to the Committee from the AAUC. And in the meeting of 1925, P.J. Mulqueen moved for

changes that would enable greater involvement of the maritime provinces in the Olympic Committee.⁸

Mulqueen also proposed that the AAUC adopt a resolution that would foster the creation of Canadian championship tournaments in 1927, succeeded by an Olympic qualifying meet and training camp prior to the games in Amsterdam. In the summer months before the Games, Olympic trials were held in Montreal, Hamilton and Halifax, and were followed by a one month long training camp. The organization of these events coupled with the relatively large federal government donation of \$26,000 suggests that Canadians were serious about redeeming themselves in Amsterdam.⁹

The zealous preparations paid off. The winter Olympics in St. Moritz witnessed Canada's hockey team - the University of Toronto Graduates - dominating the ice once again. But it was at the summer Games where Canadian athletes really excelled. An incredible fifteen medals were won in what is generally accepted as Canada's hallmark performance. Two notable athletes stole the show at these Games. Nineteen year-old Percy Williams became Canada's first double gold medallist. A meagre 146 pounds, Williams won both the 100 and 200 metre races eclipsing the favoured Americans, much to the satisfaction of many Europeans. One Canadian remarked "Williams is gifted with determination that is marked at all times, possessing a driving finish which was the most powerful of any sprinter competing."¹⁰

The second athlete who received much attention was Ethel Catherwood. The "Saskatoon Lilly" - as she became known - leapt into the hearts of the fans while leaping for gold in the high jump. Her grace and poise netted her the title of "most photographed athlete." Catherwood was one of six who comprised the Canadian women's team. Others included the foursome of Fanny Rosenfeld, Myrtle Cook, Ethel Smith and Florence Bell who went on to win the 4X100 metre relay race in record time, and providing Canada with its fourth gold medal.¹¹

The many successes garnered by the Canadian team overshadowed several conflicts that developed between the Canadian and American officials. The media highlighted the protests by Mulqueen, then president of the COC. He contended that "American sprinters were allowed to use the stadium (for training), but that Canadians were emphatically turned down." Mulqueen continued his protests citing further incidents which had "annoyed the Canadians,"¹² one of which concerned the I.O.C. officials and the raising of the national flag following Percy Williams first victory. W.H. Ingram described the protest by saying that Canadian delegates were grieved because the custom of raising a "huge flag on the centre pole" had not been conducted. M.M. "Bobby" Robinson, the treasurer of the Olympic team, allegedly rectified the problem for Williams' second victory by telling Mr. Edstrom, of the I.O.C. "We know the Canadians are getting the run-around here and we don't like it. God damn it, get the big flag and have it there in two day's time, because we are going to need it!"¹³ Sure enough, Williams' victory equalled Robinson's prediction, and the large flag was on hand to be drawn up the staff.

According to Mulqueen, one of the most contentious incidents occurred during a meeting with several of the American officials, during which the president of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States insulted the Canadian contingent:

We went into his hotel and sat around and chatted with him for about a minute. He looked around, and thought it was a good opportunity for him to play to the gallery. He picked on a gentleman (a COC official)...and told him he did not like his face.¹⁴

These confrontations merely fueled the anti-American fire. Only steps behind Bobby Robinson and Gustavus Kirby as they strolled along the inner field of the athletic stadium, Lou Marsh overheard a dispute between the two and relayed his observations back to the readers of the Toronto Star. He suggested that there was “serious trouble brewing between the Canadian and U.S. teams and between the Canadian representatives and the I.O.C.” According to Marsh, Mulqueen asserted, “If Canada continues to get the rough ride we are getting here, it might help us to decide to drop out of the Olympic competition.”¹⁵

The most critical of the protests arose from the awarding of the gold in the women’s 100 metre final to Elizabeth Robinson of the U.S. over Fanny Rosenfeld. After Myrtle Cook - the favoured going into the final - was disqualified for two false starts, Robinson and Rosenfeld crossed the line at the same time.¹⁶ Alexandrine Gibb, the captain and chaperone of the women’s team offered this comment about the race shortly after the teams returned to Canada:

I think Bobbie (Fanny) Rosenfeld won. The finish was so close that there was room for doubt. I do not think the judges were unfair, I believe they all ‘called it as they saw it. But they themselves were not agreed on the winner. The five judges at the finish were each picking one position. And both the judge who picked first and the the judge who picked second chose Betty Robinson of the United States. Ethel Smith was undoubtedly third. Then where was Bobbie Rosenfeld? In my opinion, and that of a number of others at the finish, she either won or it was a dead heat.¹⁷

The “room for doubt” that Gibb described provided room for controversy even among the Canadian officials. Led by Mulqueen and Gibb and joined by Lamb, the Canadians proceeded to launch an official protest. And it was during the course of this march across the field to the “complaints tent” that the complacency between the two key figures - Mulqueen and Lamb - disappeared. At the disclosure of the complaint, Lamb reputedly said, “I dissociate myself from this protest,” leaving Gibb and Mulqueen the task of submitting the complaint.¹⁸

According to Marsh, the strength of the protest suffered because of Lamb’s refusal to participate. The vote of three to one against the Canadians by the I.O.C. cemented Rosenfeld’s silver medal placing, while setting the stage for further dissension within the COC. It would be another four months, however, before the extent of the division between Mulqueen and Lamb and their respective supporters was fully realized.

The Battle

The domestic coverage of the dispute led many to anticipate irascible discussions even before the convention began. Upon his return to Canada, Lamb decided to resign his positions within the Union, citing differences of opinion between himself and some of the other delegates as the reason. In a letter dated November 23, 1928, Lamb informed the Union members:

It is my desire to familiarize you with my decision that at that time (at the Convention) I shall not be a candidate for any office in the Athletic Union of Canada

and also that I shall then submit my resignation as secretary of the Canadian Olympic Committee.²⁰

The Fort William Daily Times-Journal predicted “fireworks at AAUC session,” while the Montreal Gazette announced that Lamb was preparing the reasons for his resignation.²¹ The delegates were greeted by the auspicious words of the mayor of Fort William, “You may have problems to face during the next few days, difficult problems and there will be differences of opinion expressed,” but he challenged them to proceed with cool heads.²² What succeeded this prophecy over the next two days surprised not only the press, but many of the delegates as well.

Thursday, December 6th, 1928 - 10:00am.

Lamb, as president of the Union, opened the meeting with words of conviction that foreshadowed the direction of the rest of the conference. Almost immediately he set the stage for confrontation by his first speech:

Canada created two records at Amsterdam, one, the marvellous results achieved by her athletes and the other, the most deplorable reports of misunderstandings, strife, discord, discontent and bad feeling, which were sent back to this country.²³

Lamb continued by defending his refusal to participate in the protest following the women’s 100 metre final four months earlier. He denounced the actions of some of the COC members (without naming them), accusing them of possessing “a deplorable attitude of discontent, suspicion, fault-finding and pettiness.” He also criticized them for neglecting the “spirit of brotherliness” which the games had been created to facilitate.²⁴

Turning his attention to the media reports sent back from Amsterdam, Lamb said that the convention was the “time and place where such problems should be presented”, not in press interviews. He discounted many of the reports, most notably those written by Alexandrine Gibb for the Toronto Star. He corrected the reports which suggested that he backed away from the protest at the last instant, insisting that he was given the impression that the complaint had already been lodged. He pointed the finger at Robinson for neglecting to tell him that they were merely in the process of so doing at the time when he was approached (by Robinson), but apologized to the delegates for not “having had courage enough to insist it (the protest) not be lodged.”²⁵

Lamb then addressed his second most critical decision at the Games - the vote against future female participation. At a meeting of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) at the Games, national athletic association delegates assembled to vote on the future involvement of women in the Olympics. Lamb was one of six representatives out of twenty-two who voted against women participating. However, later in that day, Mulqueen convinced the IAAF to grant Canada another vote - this time by a woman of the Canadian Women’s Amateur Athletic Federation (WAAFC) - after he argued “We have as (many) good women executives in Canada as we have athletes.” According to Gibb, that was sufficient to convince the IAAF members.²⁶ Lamb defended his position, commanding “I would remind you that it was the AAUC, and not the Olympic Committee which was being represented...and at the IAAF meeting, I did not hesitate on behalf of the AAUC to express the opinion against their participation.” He told the Union he voted against their involvement because he feared that the women would lose control over their own athletic affairs.²⁷

Second Session - December 6th - 2:15pm.

The meeting had adjourned for a restless lunch break. At its resumption, the delegates took up other matters of concern, but few were concentrating on these less compelling elements of discussion. The media at the convention labelled Lamb's opening remarks a "pyrotechnical display" and "a staggering verbal explosion (which) left delegates tense and on the edge of their seats."²⁸ At the day's end, the matter of Lamb's attacks had not been resolved, but few doubted that the following day would be subsumed with more of the same ambivalence and disunity.

Friday, December 7th. 1928 - 9:00 am.

The long awaited report of the president was distributed to the Union members and the press reporters in attendance. Four thousand words in length, the document was a combination of questions and a barrage of accusations in the form of an indictment directed at Mulqueen and Robinson. The first few pages dealt with the various incidents at the Amsterdam Olympics. Lamb quoted various headlines from both the Canadian and foreign presses which highlighted Mulqueen's and Robinson's controversial comments, most notably the threat to not participate in the 1932 Olympics slated for Los Angeles. For Lamb, their actions were "incomprehensible and must indeed have been as discouraging to you (AAUC members) as [they were] to those who saw it and who failed to stem its distinctly unhealthy trend." He closed his report with a list of twenty-five questions "the satisfactory answers to which would doubtless clarify many points about which much confusion rests at present."²⁹ The division between Lamb, and Mulqueen and Robinson appeared complete, demonstrable by the former's prepared attack.

December 7th - 11:00am.

"The president of the Union had delivered his charges in a deliberate, quiet manner," said one reporter. In contrast, at Lamb's conclusion, members were busy trying to calm a distraught and visibly upset Mulqueen. They advised him to deliberate and present his reply in a like fashion. He protested, however, shouting "Now or never!" and threatened to leave the meeting.³⁰

Following several minutes of discord, J. Jackson, the chairman of the meeting, agreed to Mulqueen's demands. After refusing to answer the first question, Mulqueen referred the blame back to Lamb for many of the cited accusations. For instance, in response to the question "Why did Mr. Mulqueen evade responsibility in connection with an incident in rowing?", Mulqueen answered, "Evade responsibility? No, Dr. Lamb did." He continued by saying "I don't say you should use anything but proper methods, but if you have a case, press it to the limit."³¹

The COC President left many of the questions unanswered in anticipation that M.M. Robinson would respond to them in his prepared report the next day. He concluded by defending the role he assumed in Amsterdam as necessary for "creating better conditions for Canadians."³² With tempers barely held in abeyance, the meeting once again adjourned for the day, but without an end to the dispute.

Saturday, December 8th -

Having prepared his report for the morning session, Robinson submitted it to the delegates and said, "Dr. Lamb has given his version and Mr. Mulqueen has given his, now I will give mine." Like Mulqueen, Robinson answered the questions posed by Lamb in front of the members, but first he contended, "it seems to me that these meetings are not concerned so much with the activities of the people they govern (athletes), as with the petty quarrels among ourselves." In a less violent counter-attack than that of Mulqueen, Robinson outlined his position in the events that had transpired in Amsterdam. It is clear that Robinson held many of the same views as Mulqueen. At one point he said "Dr. Lamb felt I was going too strong, and I felt I was not going strong enough."³³

The council continued with several officials' accounts of the election process that saw Lamb appointed to the presidency of the Union in Edmonton the year before. It is apparent that a can of worms was opened up in this discussion. The tension remained high as Mulqueen condemned Lamb for accepting the nomination after he had allegedly indicated that he would not be able to serve on the executive. The matter remained unresolved, forcing the chairman to conclude the session.³⁴

A six-member committee led by Jackson was appointed to consider the validity of Lamb's submission and the subsequent responses from some of the members. The jury deliberated for most of the afternoon and determined that Lamb was within his right presenting the report, and that further discussion would not serve any practical purpose. The committee concluded its findings by saying:

It is clear that mistakes have been made, but it is also evident that Mr. P.J. Mulqueen, Dr. AS. Lamb, Mr. M.M. Robinson, and all other officials- at the Games were inspired by an earnest desire to advance the interests of the Canadian team at all times.³⁵

The press congratulated Jackson for his efforts in restoring order and tranquility to the proceedings. The Battle of Port Arthur, after being waged for two days, had come to an abrupt conclusion at the hands of a judicial sextet. Lamb's resignation was tendered with dismay from some of the AAUC delegates, and no doubt with relief from others. His departure was not permanent, however, and in 1932 he resumed his patronage with the AAUC.³⁶

ANALYSIS - The Preludes to War

The controversies at the Amsterdam Olympics may have triggered the dissension in Port Arthur, but upon closer inspection it is clear that other factors were influential prior to the Games. Stidwell has argued that the Battle represented the two different attitudes prevalent at that time toward amateur sport in Canada. He suggests that Lamb was more concerned with the promotion of athletics for the sake of competing, a traditional and British approach to sport. Conversely, Mulqueen, Robinson and Gibb adhered to the ethos of winning, which, as Lansley has argued, was the result of American influence. If such was the case, the factionalism that developed may have been rooted in these divergent ideologies. For Eaton, however, the rift between Mulqueen and Lamb was more personal and developed after the 1927 Union meeting when Lamb accepted the position of president.³⁷ Manifestly, both of these theories deserve merit and subsequently demand further examination-

It would appear that prior to the 1927 meeting Lamb and Mulqueen possessed compatible attitudes toward the function and direction of the COC, as well as toward each other. After the rather dismal performance of the Canadian team in 1924, Lamb supported Mulqueen's appeal for the creation of a national championship meet prior to the Games in Amsterdam, while also recommending that Canada host more inter-provincial and international meets. Moreover, it is evident that Lamb was just as concerned with winning by his recommendation in 1925 that further thought be given to "the desirability of sending no one to the Games unless chosen on merit of the Olympic Committee", based on their performance at the Dominion Championships.³⁸

In addition, the two leaders agreed that James Merrick, the Canadian representative on the I.O.C, was responsible for the poor showing. They felt that he had not complied with his responsibilities for informing the team of changes in the schedule and meetings; Mulqueen went so far as to suggest that he be replaced as the national representative.³⁹ However, the two men did express mutual satisfaction for each other's efforts following the 1924 Games. In the Olympic report, Mulqueen commented:

The work of Dr. Lamb, of McGill University, overseas cannot be adequately appreciated by any except those who were there to see for themselves. He worked night and day bringing his splendid training and ability to the use of every individual on the team.⁴⁰

Several pages later Lamb returned the encomiums:

This report would not be complete without special reference being made to the work of the chairman of your committee, Mr. P.J. Mulqueen, who was untiring in his efforts to have our country properly represented.⁴¹

The amicability between the two appears to have remained intact throughout the next year and into the convention of 1926. However, the minutes from the meeting reveal that the two men may have been developing opposing opinions regarding the issue of amateurism. In the opening address of the AAUC meeting in Saint John in 1926, the then president, J.A. McVicars informed the delegates that he and Mulqueen had travelled across Canada examining the problem of amateur athletes playing with professionals. McVicars called for a more lenient approach to reinstating one-time professionals, drawing upon the analogy, "We do not say 'Once a criminal always a criminal.'" He concluded that those professionals who wished to be reinstated should be given the opportunity. Mulqueen concurred with McVicars, asserting that some of the one-time professionals should be reinstated, or at least be given consideration. As part of the Secretary's report, Lamb vehemently denounced the notion of reinstating professional athletes. He argued that the "spirit of amateurism must prevail and the regulations be adhered to rigorously"⁴²

The following year, both Mulqueen and McVicars had changed their attitudes. Apologetically, Mulqueen said "I want to plead guilty to having been a party to a very foolish action at St. John." He lamented that his recommendation for reinstating one-time professionals was perhaps a mistake, as many more of them used that opportunity to proclaim themselves amateurs than had been anticipated. He concluded, "no more class 'A' men will be given consideration."⁴³

But was this reason enough for him to reverse his decision? At first glance, it seems that he had made a complete tergiversation from the year before. However, it is unlikely that Mulqueen was ever a missionary for the professional athlete seeking re-instatement. His devotion to the Olympics was foremost, and being fully aware of the strict policies of the International Olympic Committee, he knew that it would be impossible for athletes who did not meet these criteria to compete at the Games. Therefore, it is credible that he was more in favour of promoting an amateur definition in accordance with that of the IOC.⁴⁴

The two men also held similar views on broken-time payments for athletes. Again Lamb was firm in his condemnation of such practises, proclaiming that if stipends were granted, the AAUC would be “doomed to failure.” In a less vociferous speech, Mulqueen informed the delegates that the COC would, where possible, provide funds to assist athletes in their travelling expenses, but cautioned the Union branch members, “it may be necessary to guard yourself against the over-enthusiastic fellow” who would be seeking more than he deserved.⁴⁵ Similarly, the COC expressed its displeasure with the IOC’s decision in 1927 to support the International Football Association’s article which permit players to be compensated for lost-time from work.⁴⁶

It was in the same year, however, that noticable tensions arose between the two men. In 1927 Lamb was allegedly elected president because of the disarray within the AAUC. He was persuaded to stand for the position by several of his colleagues who felt that the Union required someone of his administrative strengths to prevent the disintegration of the entire organization. By agreeing to their request, Lamb set in motion the first of a series of disputes between himself and the President of the COC.

At the conclusion of the AAUC meeting, the delegates seemed to be satisfied with the outcomes. The Edmonton Journal reported “the meeting was most harmonious.”⁴⁷ Indeed, there appeared to be no rifts between Lamb and Mulqueen, nor anyone else for that matter. Regarding the election of Lamb as the manager of the Olympic team, one reporter conveyed the following sentiments of M.M. Robinson:

In his (Robinson’s) view, a view that was concurred with by all present, Dr. Lamb was the best man in Canada for the position, fitted in every way to do honor to the team and country.⁴⁸

But alas, all was not as it seemed. Eaton has indicated that prior to the meeting Lamb had intimated that he would not run for any office, but did not give a reason for this decision.⁴⁹ One year later the incident in Edmonton was reincarnated. According to a written report prepared by two of the AAUC members and confirmed by Lamb, during the train ride up to Edmonton, Mulqueen had urged Lamb to continue his position as secretary, but to no avail. He had also sought Lamb’s support for the election of Professor Loudon as president, and this time his request was met with success. Some of the delegates on the train endeavoured to convince Lamb to run for the presidency, believing that he was being “squeezed out” of the position. Again, Lamb refused to accept the nominations for either the presidency or the secretary.⁵⁰

Mulqueen was perturbed because Lamb would not continue as the secretary, and refused to discuss the matter with him. According to the report, on the last day of the meeting further attempts were made to recruit Lamb for leadership of the Union. One delegate insisted he must in “order that peace and harmony might be preserved in the Union.”

Lamb finally agreed to have his name stand after it was believed that another unnamed delegate might otherwise be elected.⁵¹

It is not clear why Mulqueen was so distressed by Lamb's refusal to accept the secretarial position, nor is it understood why he was angered by his subsequent election to the presidency. It is unlikely that Mulqueen sought the leadership for himself, but it is possible that he was in favour of another delegate's candidacy. By convincing Lamb to remain as secretary, he perhaps anticipated that Loudon would run for presidency and win or be defeated by someone he favoured. But whom? Unfortunately, it is impossible to answer that question at this time.

What is clear, however, is the animosity Mulqueen felt toward Lamb because of the election. In one of the accusations directed at him Lamb asked why there was "so much political intrigue in connection with Olympic affairs." Mulqueen retaliated by saying "Who knows better than Dr. Lamb and Howard Crocker that they played politics at Edmonton last year and led up to this condition?" He later said to Lamb regarding the same incident, "You double-crossed me"⁵²

According to Lamb, attempts were made by himself and others to mollify the situation with Mulqueen during the early months of 1928. He read from a copy of a letter he sent to the COC president on May 1, 1928, "I am very sorry if I have hurt your feelings in any way, and I would be glad to have you wire me tomorrow." He read from two other letters which had also been forwarded to Mulqueen, indicating that he sought an amicable resolution, but he received no reply to any of them.⁵³

The acrimonious election process in Edmonton indicates that the problems that developed between Mulqueen and Lamb were very personal. However, other indications suggest that the elections were a catalyst which accelerated the demise of conditions that had already begun to erode. Specifically, we may look to the rise of both the Olympic movement and professional sport, as well as the internal struggles that the Union was enduring during this time for a more comprehensive understanding of the circumstances which contributed to this disunity.

The increased emphasis placed on the Olympics during the 1920s, both in Canada and the rest of the world, may have been perceived as a surreptitious threat to the AAUC's omnipotence. Lansley has argued that the maturing interest in the Olympics was largely responsible for elevating the AAUC into its position as the predominant athletic organization in Canada.⁵⁴ It is perhaps not surprising that James Merrick recommended that the COA be replaced with a more subservient standing committee within the Union in 1921. Stidwell argues that the new constitution of 1923 may have been an attempt by the AAUC to assert a position of dominance over the COC.⁵⁵ In 1922 Mulqueen suggested that the Union's most important undertaking over the succeeding two years would concern the Games in Paris.⁵⁶ Four years later Mulqueen once again proclaimed the significance of the Olympics. He suggested that the AAUC members approach their "local governments and ask them to give to the Canadian Olympic Committee a grant and not to (their) local branch" for funding of the 1928 team. Perhaps in response to this plea, another attempt (albeit an unsuccessful one) was made by the AAUC in 1928 to protect its authority with the proposal that all government grants for Olympic matters be directed toward the Union and not the COC.⁵⁷

The Union was also competing for attention with the growing world of professional sport. By 1927 the National Hockey League was operating with ten teams, while the seed of professionalism was also being sewn in sports such as football, lacrosse, cycling and even swimming.⁵⁸ From a pecuniary perspective, this symbolized a decline in revenues for the Union, most of which were generated from dues and gate receipts. The increased popularity of professional sports detracted from these sources as more people turned their attention - and dollars - to hockey and football, while the costs for sending the Olympic teams continued to escalate. The Treasurer's report for 1928 indicated that the Union was short nine hundred dollars. He reported "I do not know where that money should come from but the Union certainly needs it"⁵⁹

Financial problems were not the only concern of the Union. The central executive committee was plagued by difficulties with the provincial branches, most notably those in the West and the Maritimes. In 1926, J.A. McVicars scorned the delegates, "out of the fifty or sixty representatives...there are some forty or fifty who assume their duties lightly and simply for the publicity and honor incident to the office."⁶⁰ The following year he reiterated his views on the discord between the central organization and the branches, specifically those in the East. He noted that "since our last Annual Meeting there was an attempt on the part of officers of the Union in the Maritime Provinces to usurp the powers of this Union."⁶¹ Outside of Quebec and Ontario, the number of these representatives on the executive was small, and despite their efforts, many central Canadian delegates felt that their demands were unwarranted.⁶²

This division was not focal in the dispute between Mulqueen and Lamb, as both were from the central Canada area, with the former being from Toronto and the latter from Montreal. Moreover, it is difficult to ascertain the respective positions of the two men concerning this dilemma. Mulqueen apparently favoured increased representation from the West and the East on the COC, but repeated complaints from these area representatives and the overwhelming presence of Central officials on the Committee indicates that reaction to these complaints was limited. And while Lamb did not appear to have encouraged their involvement, neither did he discourage it.⁶³

The administrative difficulties were complicated further by the process of conducting business. The geographic distance between the officials dictated that most of the communication had to be processed through the mail. As the secretary of the AAUC in 1927, Lamb was responsible for issuing 5000 letters during the year, the responses to which were often not received.⁶⁴

It is clear from the Union meeting of 1928 that the duties of the officials were also in question. Many of the criticisms aimed at the various COC members were based upon an unclear delineation of the expected roles within the committee. One of the complaints Lamb addressed in his report centred around the distribution of tickets to the Canadian officials at the Amsterdam Games. He suggested that it was the responsibility of Robinson to assist in their allocation. Mulqueen countered, "it was your (Lamb's) job regarding those tickets." A similar dispute arose over the acquisition of housing for the athletes. Again referring to Lamb's report, Mulqueen was queried, "Why did (he) publish a statement that the billeting of all Canadian athletes was in the hands of Dr. Lamb?" Mulqueen's response was curt: "The situation regarding housing was this: Dr. Lamb was placed in charge of the housing." Lamb then interrupted Mulqueen to say that it was not his responsibility, and the argument continued without a resolution.⁶⁵

The personal differences between the two officials contributed even more to the COC's administrative difficulties after the 1927 meeting. The winter Olympics held in St. Moritz saw Canada send a contingent of four skiers, three speed-skaters and four figure-skaters as well as the hockey team. The Montreal Gazette reported that Mulqueen had informed the skiers that they would sail two weeks before the rest of the team in order to acclimatize themselves. Lamb overruled Mulqueen's statement and informed them that they would be sailing over with the rest of the Olympic team. No reason was provided for the altered schedule, but a later report by the same newspaper suggested that such matters of decision-making were ultimately controlled by the AAUC.⁶⁶

A similar controversy erupted prior to the sending of the swimming team to the summer Olympics. The Canadian Amateur Swimming Association (C.A.S.A) president, H.E. Herschorn, had been informed by Lamb that three or four swimmers would be funded for the trip, only to be later told by Mulqueen that that number had been reduced to one. Herschorn told one reporter that these actions resulted in part from "personal ill-feelings on the part of certain Canadian Olympic Committee members."⁶⁷ The question of why this dispute arose was posed to Robinson at the Port Arthur convention. He confessed that because of his association with track and field, he prejudicially allotted the funds for that group instead of the swimmers.⁶⁸

CONCLUSIONS - The Fortunes of War

As the Battle raged on, officials were contemplating the reconstruction of the COC. One columnist predicted, "One thing is clear, there will be a complete re-organization of the Olympic Committee before the next annual meeting"⁶⁹ The columnist's prophecy became reality the following year in Hamilton at the forty-second annual AAUC meeting. President T.R. Loudon reaffirmed the significance of the previous year's meeting saying, "There is a question of great importance we will have to discuss at this meeting, that is the suggested plans for the reorganization of the Olympic Committee." Judge Jackson also expressed his ambivalence, "If there has been any lack of harmony at the Olympic Games and centralization of authority in Canada, they can be put down largely to lack of experience and finances."⁷⁰

The imminent changes took the form of two proposed amendments offered by members of the Alberta Branch of the AAUC (of which Jackson was a member). Jackson synoptically described them:

Proposition "A" retains the present Olympic Committee in much its present form and provides for an executive committee, which will carry the burden of the work. Proposition "B" does away with the general Olympic Committee and makes the executive committee a standing committee of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada.⁷¹

He indicated that the tabled amendments were designed to create a more nationally representative body than its predecessor. Although the functions of the COC had been largely controlled by the Union, Proposal B would have resulted in their absolute takeover. According to the first clause of the second proposition, a committee would be appointed by the AAUC, leaving the election processes outside of the new COC's jurisdiction.

Union members rejected the second proposal, opting for the first instead. In order to provide national representation, Clause 2 dictated:

Each Branch or Province through the Branch with which it is affiliated and each Allied Body participating in any branch of Olympic sports shall have the right to appoint one representative to the Canadian Olympic Committee.⁷²

In addition, the COC would retain its power vis-a-vis electing its own executive committee. The most important clause in the amendment concerned the proposed duties of the committee. The mandates were substantially more encompassing than those outlined in the previous constitution, suggesting that the organization would become more influential and powerful in governing its own affairs:

The Committee shall have full power over all matters concerning the Olympic Games, including arrangements for finances, trials, selection of teams, transportation, arrangements, appointment of sub-committees, where deemed necessary, selection of coaches, trainers and executive officers to attend the Olympic Games...It shall have full control over all funds of the Olympic Committee.⁷³

Despite the increased autonomy, it is apparent that the Proposal was also designed to sustain the AAUC's authority. In addition to the ex-officio appointment of the President and Secretary of the contemporary Union, Clause six affirmed the same for those members who had held these positions since the previous Olympics. Similarly, the recommended election of ten Union delegates at its annual meeting illustrated the AAUC's reluctance to relinquish too much authority to the COC.⁷⁴

This was clearly indicated in 1930 when president Loudon reminded delegates that because the COC was a sub-committee of the Union, all Olympic matters were ultimately under the leadership of the Union president. Over the next decade, this omnipotence would be increasingly put to the test. By the outbreak of war in 1939 it was clear that only time separated the COC's independence from the Union. Ten years later this plan was realized when the Canadian Olympic Association became completely autonomous.

The findings from this study indicate that the Battle of Port Arthur was waged on at least three fronts. On the surface, the impetus behind the confrontation appears to have been the different attitudes taken toward winning at the Amsterdam Olympics. The notion of sportsmanship that Lamb upheld as the fundamental element of competition may have differed from that of Mulqueen and Robinson, who favoured a more liberal approach in their pursuit of victory. However, as it has been revealed, the division between Mulqueen and Lamb dated back to at least the annual AAUC meeting in December of 1927. For some reason, which is as of yet undetermined, the election of Lamb to the Union presidency posed some kind of threat to Mulqueen, setting the stage for a year of controversy and irreconcilable differences. And finally, it has been illustrated that the Battle reflected the Union's struggle for sustained supremacy, amidst the changing tide of sport in Canada during the 1920s.

The Battle itself proved to be an important step in the development of the Canadian Olympic Organization. It demonstrated not only the differences in the attitudes of the officials, but it also highlighted the weaknesses in the structure of the organization. The revamped constitution of 1929, which was the reaction to the meeting one year earlier, in turn

paved the way for future changes to the COC, and ultimately contributed to its divorce from the paternal Amateur Athletic Union of Canada.

ENDNOTES

1. Minutes of the 41st Annual AAUC Meeting, Port Arthur, December 6, 7, 8, 1928, p. 115.
2. Howard Stidwell, *History of the Canadian Olympic Association*, (MPE thesis, University of Ottawa, 1981.) and Keith L. Lansley, *The Amateur Athletic Union of Canada and the Changing Concept of Amateurism*, (Ph.D. thesis, University of Alberta, 1971.) have both mentioned the incident in their surveys of the rise of the Olympic movement in Canada. Similarly, John Douglas Eaton, *The Life and Professional Contributions of Arthur Stanley Lamb, M.D., to Physical Education in Canada*, (Ph.D. thesis, Ohio State University, 1964.) discusses the issue as it related to Lamb's career.
3. Lansley reported that the COC did not keep minutes of the meetings until 1933, but the author discovered minutes dating back to 1924 in the Colonel Davies Collection at the Sports Hall of Fame in Toronto; unfortunately, they were of little use for this examination.
Correspondence between some of the officials was also uncovered there as well as in the Crocker and Dewar collections at the University of Western Ontario, but again they had little application for this study.
Surprisingly, there has been very little scholarly material devoted to the Canadian Olympic Association. Stidwell's thesis and a graduate paper by Stephen Wenn, *A Call to Arms: A Survey of the Conflict Resulting in the Autonomy of the Canadian Olympic Association*, (Graduate Physical Education 561 term paper, University of Western Ontario, 1986.) were the only two sources dealing with this topic that I could find at the time of researching this paper in 1989.
4. Stidwell, 39.
5. *Ibid.*, 40.
6. *Ibid.*, 49. For a description of Canada's athletes at the Olympics see Henry Roxborough, *Canada at the Olympics*, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963), and Frank Cosentino and Glynn Leyshon, *Olympic Gold: Canadian Winners of the Summer Games*, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Ltd., 1975).
7. Stidwell, 50; Cosentino and Leyshon, 144; Roxborough, 65.
8. Minutes of the 37th Annual AAUC. Meeting, Winnipeg, September 25, 26, 27, 1924, p.35; Minutes of the 38th Annual AAUC. Meeting, September 10, 11, 12, 1925, p.33.
9. Canadian Olympic Committee, *The Official Report of the IXth Olympiad, 1928*, (Hamilton: The Spectator, 1929), p.27. The federal grant had increased from \$15,000 in 1924 to \$26,000 for the Amsterdam Olympics. This was due in part to the relative prosperity of the economy. In later Olympics, the federal contribution would be

reduced substantially. See Mulqueen's proposal in Minutes of the 39th Annual AAUC Meeting, Saint John, December 9, 10, 11, 1926, 45.

10. The quotation was taken from Roxborough, 74. See also Cosentino and Leyshon, 145.
11. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 144.
12. Montreal Gazette, August 2, 1928, 13e.
13. Minutes of the 41st Annual AAUC Meeting, 122-23.
14. Ibid., 117-18.
15. Lou Marsh, Canadians May Not Enter the L.A. Olympiad, in the Toronto Star, August 1, 1928, 1.
16. See for example the description of the race in The Globe, August 1, 1928, 10. Until her death Cook was convinced that she had not committed two false starts. She said that she purposely held back after the first false start to avoid disqualification.
17. Gibb regularly wrote a column in the Toronto Star and occasionally for Maclean's Magazine. For Gibb's opinion see Maclean's, October 1, 1928, 18-19, 49.
18. Ibid.
19. Toronto Star, August 1, 1928, 1b.
20. Quoted in Eaton, 152.
21. Fort William Daily Times-Journal, December 1, 1928, p.17b. The newspaper provided considerable front page coverage of the meeting. Most of the other newspapers relied on Canadian Press information, presumably because of the distance required to cover the event. In addition, Lappage has noted that although ample coverage was given to amateur sport in the first half of the decade, by the end, professional sport demanded most of the attention. See Sport Between the Wars, 101. See also the Montreal Gazette, December 7, 1928, 18.
22. Fort William Daily Times-Journal, December 6, 1928, 13a.
23. Minutes of 41st Annual AAUC Meeting, Port Arthur, December 7, 8, 9, 1928, 4.
24. Ibid., 109; 110, 115.
25. Ibid., 7.
26. Ibid., 84. See also Alexandrine Gibb, A Woman Speaks Her Mind, in Maclean's, October 1, 1928, p.49.

27. Eaton has argued that Lamb did not favour women's involvement because he perceived they had physical limitations, which if tested too severely by athletic competitions, would result in injury (which was coincidental with many of the medical beliefs concerning women at this time), 151. Lamb was harshly criticized following the IAAF meeting for his reluctance to consult other members of the Canadian contingent before casting his vote. In his defense, he argued that "on no occasion did I hear anyone, who might be considered as a Canadian official, favour a continuance of the present policy, but on the other hand, there were many outspoken opinions against it." Mulqueen later stated that he had always supported women participating in the Olympics. It is unclear why he did not voice this opinion before Lamb delivered his vote.
Minutes of the 41st Annual AAUC Meeting, 7, 8.
28. See The Fort William Daily Times-Journal, December 7, 1928, 26 and the Montreal Gazette, December 7, 1928, 17.
29. Minutes of the 41st Annual AAUC Meeting, 113, 115.
30. The Globe, December 8, 1928, 14; The Fort William Daily Times-Journal, December 8, 1928, 12.
31. Minutes of the 41st Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, 116, 118.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., 124. See also The Montreal Gazette, December 10, 1928, 11 for a more 'flavourful' description of this session.
34. Fort William Daily Times-Journal, December 10, 1928, 1
35. Minutes of the 41st Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, 134.
36. Fort William Daily Times-Journal, December 10, 1928, 1. See Eaton, for a description of Lamb's career during the interim, 155.
37. Stidwell, 59; Lansley, 162. Lansley suggests that because of the increased ties with the United States, Canadians became more self-reliant. Ron Lappage also discusses the influence of the Americans in *The Canadian Scene and Sport, 1921-1939* in Maxwell and Reet A Howell, *History of Sport in Canada*, (Champaign: Stipes Publishing Co., 1981), p.230.
38. Canadian Olympic Committee, *Canada at the VIIIth Olympiad France, 1924*, (Toronto: COC, 1925), 20-21.
39. Stidwell, 53.
40. *Canada at the VIIIth Olympiad*, 13.
41. Ibid., 21.

42. Minutes of the 39th Annual AAUC Meeting, 1926, 4; 44; 10.
43. Minutes of the 40th Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, Edmonton, December 1, 2, 3, 1927, 46. McVicars also condemned the practise of re-instating athletes, after openly supporting it the year before.
44. At the 38th Annual AAUC meeting in 1925, Mulqueen insisted that “Canada cannot have a different amateur definition to the other nations and expect to go abroad and compete on equal terms...”, 24. Although he may have been willing to re-instate a few athletes in 1926, it is unlikely they were of Olympic calibre. In 1926 as a result of the Technical Congress in Prague one year earlier, the I.O.C. executive produced its first formal definition of what constituted an amateur. It determined in part that “All athletes taking part in the Games must comply with, as a minimum, the following conditions:
 - A. Must not be a professional in any branch of Sport.
 - B. Must not have been reinstated as an Amateur after knowingly becoming a Professional.
 - C. Must not have received compensation for lost salaries.
See Jeffrey Segrave and Donald Chu, eds., *Olympism*, (Champaign: Human’ Kinetics, 1981) 37.
45. Minutes of the 39th Annual AAUC Meeting, 11, 45.
46. Canadian Olympic Committee, *The Official Report of the IXth Olympiad, 1928*, (Hamilton: The Spectator, 1929), 19.
47. *Edmonton Journal*, December 3, 1927, 19b.
48. *Ibid.*
49. Eaton, 148.
50. Minutes of the 40th Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, 127.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*, 130. Mulqueen did not comment on this charge by Lamb, therefore, it is plausible that he did in fact refuse to consult with Lamb throughout 1928 on this issue!
54. Lansley, 166.
55. Stidwell, 50. See also Ron Lappage, *Sport Between the Wars in A Concise History of Sport in Canada*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.90-93.
56. Stidwell, 50.

57. Minutes of the 39th Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, 45; Minutes of the 41st Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, 91.
58. See Lappage, *op. cit.*
59. Minutes of the 41st Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, 18
60. Minutes of the 39th Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, 4.
61. Minutes of the 41st Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, 5.
62. Lappage, *Sport Between the Wars*, 90.
63. In the Minutes of the 38th Annual meeting he called for an increase in the number of representatives from the Maritimes (p.33), but the 1928 Official Report indicated that only five of the officials who attended the Amsterdam Games were from outside of Quebec and Ontario (one was from England!), 149.
64. Minutes of the 40th Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, p.8.
65. Minutes of the 41st Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, p.120.
66. See Roxborough, p.75 or *Montreal Gazette*, January 4, 1928, 16c.
67. *Montreal Daily Star*, July 9, 1928, 20d.
68. Minutes of the 41st Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, 124.
69. *Toronto Star*, December 8, 1928, 12c.
70. Minutes of the 42nd Annual A.A.U. of C. Meeting, Hamilton, p.24.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, 25.
73. *Ibid.*, 26.