

## THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

The first time you walk north along cobble-stoneed Spadina Avenue in Toronto, you may be surprised to see on the hill before you the battlements and turrets of a medieval castle. You are not having hallucinations, for this is Casa Loma, Canada's famous castle.

The founder of Casa Loma, Sir Henry Pellatt, was born in Kingston, Ontario, but resided in Toronto until in 1939 he died at the age of eighty. Always keenly interested in military affairs, he was for many years associated with the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, and rose to the rank of Major-General. Also very successful in business, Sir Henry took a great interest in many cultural and charitable institutions, and was noted for the support he gave them. In 1906, he was knighted, "in recognition of his services in connection with the Militia, of his successful promotion of important industrial developments, and his disposition to assist Imperial objects." In 1910 he was further honored by King George V, who made him a Commander of the Victorian Order.

For many years Sir Henry had planned to build Casa Loma, which is a combination of the finest features of several European castles. Three hundred men took almost four years to bring it to its present state, and during this time he thoroughly enjoyed watching his dream materialize. About 1914, he and his wife moved into the castle, where they lived until Lady Pellatt's death, eleven years later. Then, impoverished by the depression, Sir Henry found the upkeep of his dream too much of a burden, and returned to his country estate.

For some years Casa Loma stood like a haunted mansion, with locked doors and ghostly emptiness. People daily saw it silhouetted against the sky and wondered what lay behind those massive walls. Few ever entered the stately castle with its baronial towers like battlements guarding the heights. But the "The House on the Hill" came into the possession of the City of Toronto, and it was converted into a tourist attraction. Since that time, its fame has spread widely until now thousands of people pass through its doors each year, and daily, in the corridors and towers, echo awed exclamations.

Because of his financial difficulties, Sir Henry never completed the construction of the castle. However, there are twenty-three completed rooms, as well as eleven bathrooms, and many halls. The main corridor, which runs the length of the castle, is Peacock Alley, a replica of one of the halls in Windsor Castle. The floor



is of 2½ inch planks of imported teakwood, not nailed, but keyed together by means of dovetailed wedges. The walls are of mahogany, and in Sir Henry's time were hung with many beautiful paintings, though today they are bare.

Many of the bedrooms have also been completed. These, each with a fireplace, are all on an elaborate scale, with large wardrobe rooms, private bathrooms, and even solariums and sitting rooms. The Bathrooms are very modern, and also quite elaborate. Lady Pellatt's is all soft-toned marble, with silver-plated fittings. Her husband's is even more elegant. It too is of marble, but with gold-plated fittings. Besides the usual fixtures, there is a foot-bath, and a most unusual shower, composed of about twenty long pipes, placed in a semi-circle. Each pipe is perforated from top to bottom, so that the water can spray from all directions. For this shower there are six taps—one for hot water, one for cold water, and four for perfume!

Another remarkable room is the Library, which was once very impressive with its array of 100,000 volumes on the glass-enclosed shelves. The ceiling of this room is marked in squares, and within each square is engraved the coat-of-arms of the Pellatt family. The oakwood floor is laid in a peculiar herring-bone pattern which appears to reverse as you change position. This room, furnished with candelabra and with white-covered tables for two, today is used as a ballroom.

Of all the rooms in Casa Loma, the Conservatory is perhaps the most beautiful. The floor and wainscoting are of Canadian marble, which is very rare. Opening into the room are three sets of bronze doors, which are exact copies of those in an old Italian palace, and cost \$10,000 a pair. (Imagine paying \$30,000 for doors for a single room!) The Conservatory is a rectangular room, and off one end opens a charming alcove, in which stands a small, gracefully-carved, white marble fountain. The water sparkles in the sunshine, which slants through the Gothic-shaped, leaded windows. The ceiling is adorned with a great dome, constructed of rare stained glass of rich shades, which sun and time have blended into a marvelous harmony of color. Somehow the splash of the fountain, the soft colored light, and the hundreds of plants impart a feeling of peace to this room.

The foundations of Casa Loma are of great depth and strength, in order to carry the colossal superstructure with its weight of massive stone walls, tiled roofs, stately chimneys and rugged lofty towers. Sir Henry planned that the castle would eventually be used as a museum or as a military base, and so the basement was made large enough to drill a regiment. There too, are a shooting gallery, an



immense swimming pool, and several refrigerators large enough to hold sides of beef, or carcasses of vension. Also in the basement are the wine vaults, where the walls are honeycombed with thousands of "port" holes, that once contained "cobwebbed bottles of rare vintage." Today, however, you will find in the converted basement a few souvenir booths, a cafeteria, and a room for square dancing, while in the wine vaults only the cobwebs remain in those "port" holes.

No article on Casa Loma would be complete without mention of the stables. They are of striking design and with their lofty towers have always been a source of comment. They are connected with the castle by an extremely long tunnel, which is finished in white tile, and covered with the autographs of visitors. The stables have accommodation for about twenty horses and were once the home of some of the finest animals in Canada. The stable floors are tile, and when visitors came, Sir Henry had the servants spread a red velvet carpet the length of the stable. The stalls are of Spanish mahogany, ornate with the Pellett monogram, while the fittings are bronze, and there is a special system of ventilation—so the horses would not catch cold!

With its stables and all its surroundings, Casa Loma cost its owner over two million dollars, so that it became known as "Peelatt's Folly." But, folly or not, it has become a famous landmark. And when you walk for the first time along Spadina Avenue, do not be surprised to see, on the hill before you, the battlements and turrets of a medieval castle. You will know that before you stands Canada's famous castle, Casa Loma.

DOREEN CUSACK, '58.

### ISLAND OXODUS

Many students within the College circle as well as many other people throughout the province have expressed concern over the large and steady exodus of the young people from Prince Edward Island. We shall concern ourselves here with the exodus from the farms because this is the more serious since the farmers constitute the backbone of the country.

The first notable decline in the number of farmers took place in the period between 1920 and 1930 when industry began to operate on a large scale. Since that time industry has continued to increase and conditions among its members have become better through labour unions but the farmer's plot since that time has, for the most