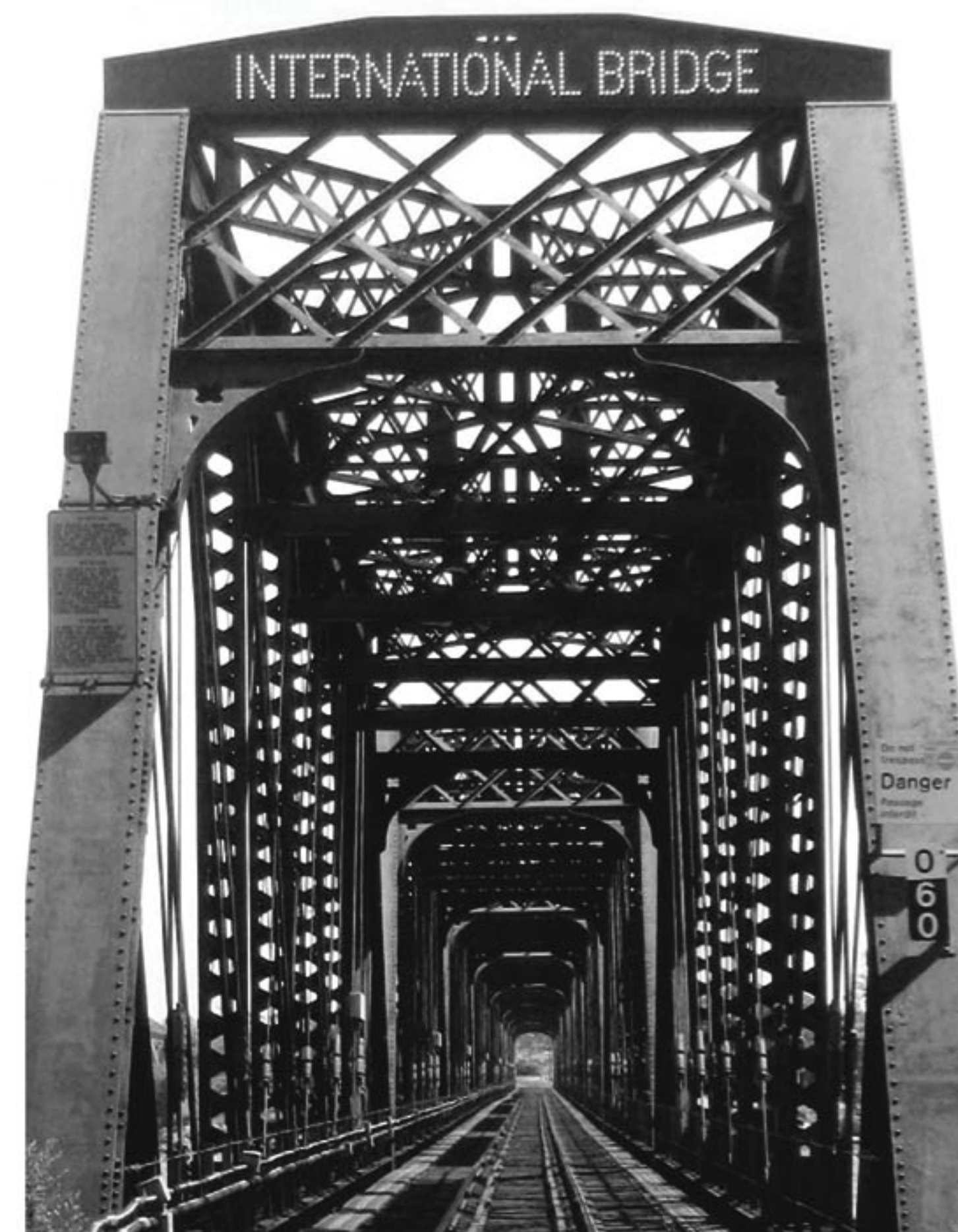


Sir Casimir Gzowski

(1813-1898)

Engineer, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario



Gzowski's personal qualities, his professional skills and his devotion to public affairs in the land of his adoption made him one of the foremost citizens of the Dominion in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Born to an aristocratic Polish family residing in Saint Petersburg at the time, Casimir Gzowski served as a young man in the Imperial Corps of Engineers, until he joined the rebels in the 1830 uprising against Tsarist rule in Poland. When the uprising fell, he fled to Austria, where he was first interned for two years, then exiled to the United States, where he lived until finally settling in Canada in 1841. After a short career as a lawyer, Gzowski returned to engineering and became involved in the leading-edge projects of the time, railway and canal construction. He was the Chief Engineer of one of the first railways linking up Montreal with the U.S.A., and again in the Harbour Works of the great St. Lawrence seaport. In 1853, in partnership with A.T. Galt, D.L. Macpherson and L.H. Holton, he created a firm for railway construction, to be known as Gzowski and Co., and began the building of the Grand Trunk line from Toronto to Sarnia. When in 1873 the construction of the International Bridge across the Niagara River was finished, Gzowski's reputation as a front-rank engineer in the New World was assured.

During a number of years he sat in the Senate of the University of Toronto and was one of the founders of its Wycliffe College. He also took an active part in the creation of Niagara Falls Park, and was made First Chairman of the Park Commission.

Gzowski did not confine his energies solely to professional duties. An ardent supporter of imperial unity, he rendered yeoman service in the field of Canadian defence, and in the expansion of the national militia. For this he was named Lt. Colonel of the Forces, and in 1879 made an Hon. Adjutant to the Queen. Eleven years later, he was knighted.

Shortly before his death, he served briefly as Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

Continuing to maintain ties with his native land and the Polish community in Canada, Gzowski served as President of the Canadian Polish Congress.

Sir Casimir's achievements are commemorated by the Casimir Gzowski Park and monument in Toronto.



POLISH SPIRIT