OTTAWA — In 1920 when the Hudson’s Bay Company began publishing a magazine for its 250th anniversary, The Beaver: A Journal of Progress probably seemed to be a good title. The company, which controlled much of the landmass that is now Western and Northern Canada, owed much of its early fortune to the trade in beaver pelts.

The Beaver, which was initially a bit of in-house boosterism, evolved into a respected magazine about Canadian history. The Bay, as the company is commonly known, shifted from fur trading to department stores. And last week Canada’s National History Society, the nonprofit group that now publishes The Beaver, decided that the Internet required the magazine to undergo a name change.

To be more precise, the title was doomed by a vulgar alternative meaning that causes
Web filters at schools and junk mail filters in e-mail programs to block access to material containing the magazine's name.

“It’s only been in the last two years or so that it’s been a problem,” said Deborah Morrison, the president and chief executive of the history society, which is based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. “‘Beaver’ is one of those key words students are denied access to on the Internet.”

The trouble went beyond Web pages. The magazine found that its attempts to e-mail classroom aids to teachers were thwarted by its name, as were attempts to contact many readers.

Ms. Morrison acknowledged that the name had become of source of schoolyard humor long ago. And she said records showed that debates about changing the title went back at least to the 1970s.

A few years before Internet use became common, the magazine, which now has a circulation of about 44,000, sought its readers’ opinions and decided to stick with the name.

The last issue as The Beaver, which announces the name change to Canada’s History, was mailed to subscribers last week. Ms. Morrison said the few readers who had contacted her were understanding about the change. IAN AUSTEN
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