WHEN THE DOMINION WAS YOUNG

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The Ottawa of 1867 was a straggling city, made up of two principal communities, commonly known as Upper Town and Lower Town, with the public buildings on "Barrack Hill" as a connecting link. Lower Town was mainly French, but Sandy Hill at its southern verge was a fashionable residential quarter, with Daly Street as the most exclusive section. Upper Town clustered about the Chaudiere Falls and the great lumber mills, whose operatives were indifferently housed on LeBreton Flats or across the river in the shanty town of Hull. Westward from the Parliament Buildings, just beyond where the statues of the Fathers of Confederation now stand, was an old stone building, known as the officers' quarters. In front of this building three tall poles were standing, each with a bit of plank about five feet long spiked horizontally to its top. On these positions of prominence three bears, pets of the Regiment, were wont to repose, basking in the sunshine. They were an object of frequent interest in full view from my office window in the southeast corner of the building.

The Library building was still unfinished, and Lovers' Walk not yet carved out of the cliff side. Parliament Square was rudely enclosed with a high board fence, already tumbling down and useless. It was no uncommon sight to see a herd of twenty cattle pasturing on the square on a warm June day, and these, when struck by a tormenting gadfly, would, with heads and tails erect, race madly down the hill across Wellington and Sparks Streets to the open fields beyond.

Ottawa had then no fixed system of waterworks other than wells distributed about the town, from which hard water was drawn for drinking and culinary purposes. French carters from Lower Town peddled soft water from the river, and did a brisk business on wash-days. They also supplied the fire department, when fires occurred, as they sometimes did. Hand engines, of which there were five or six, were exclusively in use. The days of steam fire extinguishers had not yet come. To stimulate zeal in both firemen and watermen the city paid rewards—I think it was $20 to the engine throwing first water on the fire, and $5 to the carter who brought first water to the engines, and the usual price per barrel thereafter. There were strange scenes at fires in Ottawa in those days. I am tempted to record a typical incident.

It was a winter night and about ten o'clock when this particular alarm was sounded. The fire was in a shop on Sparks Street, west of Bank Street. The engines responded promptly, as the crowd always did, but there was no water. The entire upper part of the building was soon ablaze, and the bystanders were jocularly throwing snowballs into the seething flames and commenting on the shrewdness of the carters. "They are waiting for the big light," it was said, in allusion to the apparent custom of becoming assured that the fire was to be really worth while for the watermen to attend. They had a monopoly of the water supply, and the bigger the fire the more barrels of water they would sell. Moreover the Ottawa river was deeply frozen and the descent to it along the canal bank was steep. So on this particular night they were in no hurry. Meanwhile the engines stood in a row near the burning building, the firemen with their hands on the brakes. The roof was ready to fall in when the first carter, driving furiously, appeared on the scene. His horse was seized by the men of the nearest engine while he gesticulatd, swore and tried to whip up his horse. Quickly the firemen inserted the suction hose in the barrel and began to pump vigorously, but no water was thrown. The barrel was empty—the carter was just starting after his load. Later from the eastward came a galloping carter with water, and the bystanders shouted with delight. The men of another engine seized upon the prize with avidity, but the supply was not sufficient to quite fill their hose, and not a drop was thrown upon the fire. Then another carter came racing in. A struggle ensued to obtain possession of this little store and to prevent the engine which had already a little from getting this additional supply. That would mean first water and the reward. Eventually there came a troop of furiously driven nags and water barrels, few of the barrels half full, and intermittently some water was thrown by one and another engine upon the fire. Soon the coming herd of watermen, eager now to make count, formed a cordon about those within with empty barrels, and the latter could not get out nor the former get in until the police broke the blockade. Little remained of the building by this time.

Broad streets and wide spaces between buildings were the city's salvation many times in those days. It were long to tell how at length movement for a better water supply was set afoot and the *Free Press* was founded by Mitchel and Carrier as its earnest advocate. When the subject was publicly debated a small army of carters gathered on the square by the city hall and interrupted the speakers for the space of three hours with angry shouts, "No water! No water!" Their craft was in danger. I remember these scenes the more vividly from having been a daily contributor to the *Free Press* on the water question at the time.

The summer of 1870 was a season of gloom in Ottawa and the Ottawa Valley. Sir John Macdonald was absent, slowly regaining in Prince Edward Island his shattered health. Following the threatened Fenian invasion of the spring, drought set in and intolerable heat. No rain fell for months. Some days the thermometer rose to 110 degrees in the shade, and all work was suspended in the mills. It was dangerous to venture out without a sunshade in the day and the nights were almost as hot as the days. Fires raged throughout the Ottawa valley, and the smoke was so dense that no one saw the sun rise or set for weeks at a time. Midway of the forenoon a red ball appeared dimly in the sky, glared down fiercely for a few hours and then disappeared in the smoke in the middle of the afternoon. There was a ruddy glare all around the horizon at night from the forest fires.

Then the wind arose and a tempest of flame and smoke swept the valley. Two thousand persons were rendered homeless in a night; houses, barns, fences, crops, and live stock all gone. The green grass burned in the meadows and the very soil was consumed. The city was several times seriously threatened and Rideau Hall was in great danger. To save the vice-regal residence a broad track was cleared through the woods on all sides with great labor, and full water barrels placed at short distances to assist the defence.

Later came the real crisis. A sudden change of wind brought the fire sweeping in on the southwestern side, where the forest was in actual touch with the suburb. Cinders and ashes drifted in the streets. Almost every one believed the city to be doomed. Householders packed their effects for removal. There was almost a panic when the mayor issued a proclamation ordering all places of business closed, and that every man capable of bearing a spade or a bucket should proceed to the fire line. The case was desperate and the army of fire-fighters resolved upon heroic measures. They cut the big St. Louis dam which impounded the waters of Dow's Lake as a feeder for the Rideau Canal. The dam was high and the plentiful outflowing waters poured in a deluge down the ravine below. Simultaneously, the sweeping fire reached the ravine. Many cinders blew across, but the thousands of ready hands with the plenty of water now at hand, extinguished every incipient blaze. The cutting of the dam left many steamers and barges high and dry, and put the Rideau Canal out of business for the season, but it saved the city.

There was little of society in Ottawa in those days, except that made up of the cabinet ministers and their families, with the civil servants, their wives and daughters, and these as yet but lately become residents. Curling was in some vogue as a winter sport, checkers and chess were played in the winter evenings, but hockey, or tobogganing had not yet come in, nor had baseball, tennis or golf for summer pastimes. Casual visitors of more or less note in the warm season enjoyed the sensation of running the slides at the Chandiere on the cribs of big square timber, en route from the Upper Ottawa for shipment at Quebec to Europe. There were, of course, no telephones, electric lights or street cars. One railway, the Saint Lawrence and Ottawa, gave the citizens ingress and egress by modern methods, and the station was beyond the eastern end of the town.

A talk with one of the older residents in those days turned naturally upon such events as the bringing to Ottawa of the body of the dead Duke of Richmond, on a rough ox-cart, along the Richmond Road, then simply a winter lumber road. That had occurred in 1820. He had been bitten by a pet fox, which had gone mad, and he died in great agony in a barn beside the waterway, in which he had come by boat from Kingston. Men and women walked beside the cart, with difficulty holding in its place the rough box in which the body had been placed. Or, one would be told of the days of Col. By and the canal building, or of the later event of E. B. Eddy, who came to the Chaudiere with fifty cents in his pocket, bought an axe and had already become a lumber king. Or, the story would be told of how the whole townsite of Ottawa had been in the still earlier days bartered for a yoke of oxen.

Ottawa was largely Catholic in religion then, from the relatively large size of Lower Town. There were also Episcopalian churches, high and low; Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist, and there was the Catholic Apostolic church, in which the Todds and Patricks of the House of Commons staff were worthy and shining lights. Lord Cecil, a younger brother of the late Marquis of Salisbury, on his retirement from the regiment in garrison, had rented the thatre as a place of meeting for the Plymouth Brethren. He appears to have had the double object of closing the theatre against plays and disseminating what he thought a purer gospel than was dispensed in other churches. Here he preached in his own eccentric fashion, and his auditory sang hymns of his remarkable composition. A favorite among these began as follows:

If you believe and I believe,
And all together strive,
You shall the grace of God receive
And Ottawa shall revive.
And Ottawa shall revive, etc.

These meetings in the theatre were largely attended by the soldiers whom they were particularly intended to benefit, and by the working classes and servant girls. Others went to the meetings out of curiosity. It was something to hear and see a lord preaching in a theatre. Those who attended from mere curiosity were wont sometimes to leave irreverently in the midst of the service. Once when a party who thought themselves ladies and gentlemen were thus going out, Lord Cecil paused in his discourse to remark in his drawling way, "If there are any more servant girls who wish to go out they had better go now, all together." The shot told, and there was less interruption of that sort thereafter.

Let the foregoing suffice for glimpses at the Ottawa of early Confederation days.

Some Personal Experiences

My first recollection of Sir Leonard Tilley was when he came to Upper Sussex, now Penobsquis, over fifty years ago, to form a division of the Sons of Temperance, and he gave in the Baptist Church one of his eloquent addresses on the great moral reform to which he devoted the energies of his early and middle life. He was then a man of fine presence, with an excellent voice for public speaking, and an engaging manner. Later I saw him standing in the midst of the tall grass in my father's meadow talking with a number of the resident farmers about the railway that was shortly to run through that beautiful valley, first to be known as the European and North American Railway, and later as the Intercolonial. They were standing on almost the exact spot where, a few years later, "the embattled farmers" of the district fought and won against a captain and squad of railway police in a matter of holding possession of their lands till the damages were paid. But that is another story. Looking over the broad, rich meadows, the sloping, well-tilled uplands and the green mountain ranges of Pisgah and Pickadilly to north and south, Mr. Tilley remarked with diplomatic enthusiasm to my father: "Mr. McCready, if men could not live here and flourish and be happy, it would be their own fault." And after he had gone my uncle, Caleb McCready told me of how well he had known the budding statesman when the latter was a clerk in Peter's drug store, and my relative was learning a trade in St. John. I was destined to meet Mr. Tilley later, many times, and to have much to say of him in the St. John press and in Ottawa correspondence, much that was appreciative and possibly some things that could hardly be quite to his liking.

Our next meeting was to be under rather sigular circumstances. It was some years later. The Province once in its newborn zeal for temperance had demanded prohibition, got it, and then turned to rend the law and those who enacted it. The Government was defeated, all the advocates of prohibition but two swept out of public life and the law repealed. That was in 1856-7. But Tilley had fallen to rise again, while prohibition was buried for half a century. The greater question of uniting the Provinces had come on the scene with Tilley as its foremost advocate. He and his Government submitted the terms of the Quebec Scheme to the people at the polls, and again, in 1865, he and his measure were rejected. The Allan-Smith-Anglin Government came in and appointed their anti-confederate friends to office. Among the latter, I was given charge of Penobsquis railway station. Presently the Legislature met, its forty-one members, as it turned out, less influential than one defeated man, who became known as the "Forty-second Member"—S. L. Tilley. He was there in daily conference with the few confederates-elect; he was privileged to occupy a seat reserved for ex-members on the floor; he was reported to be from time to time an honored and favored guest at Government House. And presently the Lieutenant-Governor, against the counsel of his constitutional advisers, dissolved the House of Assembly. There was a howl of indignation among the anti-confederates, but Tilley and the better terms of the British North America Act swept the country, and he and his colleagues proceeded to do many things, not omitting to restore their friends to the offices from which they had been dismissed.

As a matter of course, the anti-confederate Board of Railway Commissioners was swept away, and with them almost all the station masters from St. John to Shediac. It would be too trivial to here relate my own dismissal but for some more interesting events it led to. The office and emoluments were of no account. My fellow-workers in the railway service all expected dismissal; it was the custom of the time when a change of government took place, and we did not resent it. I had intended in a few months to resign, but could not resist the temptation to make some slight trouble for the confederate autocrats who were now asserting their supremacy with so high a hand. Everybody has some friends in the land of his nativity. A petition was signed by every one of the patrons of the station, asking that I be retained. Then down the line came the Superintendent, the late J. Edward Boyd, C.E., serving the notices that at the end of the current month our services would be no longer required. He took off my official head in most kindly and regretful fashion. He gave me a certificate that my accounts had been always correctly kept and that I had always done my duty as station master quite to his satisfaction. He also handed me a pass over the road from station to station good to the end of the year. He was evidently my friend. Why, then, was I being dismissed? For an answer to that he must refer me to the Commissioners. I did not know them personally. Well, if I would get on the train and go with him to St. John, he would introduce me. Would he tell them all the nice things he had just said to me and done? He would. I went with him and he more than made good his word. The gruff Commissioners referred me in turn to the Government which had ordered the dismissal. I told them I would see the Government about it, and I did so later, as hereafter detailed. Previous to this, one member of the Executive had several times called at my station in passing and assured me that he was my friend, and that I would not be disturbed.

Following my dismissal from the railway, I was asked to join the staff of the St. John *Telegraph*, and when the Legislature met was sent to report its proceedings, the last session in which that body retained its plenary powers, and at which the terms of Union were definitely adopted. The *Telegraph* was supporting the Government. I, as its representative, was still bound to have what fun I could over my dismissal. Arrived at Fredericton on Saturday evening, I put up at the Barker House. The hotel was full and the obliging clerk told me he would have to give me Hon. John M. Johnson's room till Monday and then change me to another as Mr. Johnson would then have arrived. He had been detained. Mr. Johnson's room, as it happened, was one of a suite and was only separated by a door from that occupied by Hon. Peter Mitchell. That night there was a meeting of the Government in Mr. Mitchell's room, and a stormy meeting it was. It kept the young newspaper man and dismissed station master awake far along into the morning hours of Sunday. The "River Members" were in revolt over the list of new Senators. How came it that these "twelve apostles" of the new dispensation had nearly all been chosen from along the shores of the Bay or Funday and the North Shore, while half the population of the province residing in the fertile valley of the St. John had been overlooked, despised, treated with contempt? How came it that little Albert County, with a mere handful of population, was given two senators, while four of the River Counties, Kings, Queens, Carleton and Victoria, had none? And so they argued, remonstrated, challenged and defied one another until the leaders saw that something must be done. The revolt was too strong to be quieted with mere soft words and explanations.

It was thought that Hon. E. B. Chandler might be induced to give up the Senatorial seat to which he had been named. He was rich and there was to be presently a new Railway Commission appointed to build the Intercolonial. Peter Mitchell undertook to see him. Mitchell could do it if any one could. And the next day being Sunday, I saw Peter Mitchell and E. B. Chandler pacing up and down in front of the hotel in earnest conference. (In the end the River Counties got another Senator, and Mr. Chandler became Railway Commissioner and, later, Governor of New Brunswick.) Thus, by accident, I had got much secret information which I could not publicly use, but with which, rightly or wrongly, I hastened to acquaint my principal, Mr. Livingstone of the *Telegraph*. And I thought I ought to also acquaint Mr. Tilley of what I knew and how I had acquired the information. Accordingly, on Monday morning, I called at his office, introduced myself as the representative of the *Telegraph*, come to report the legislative proceedings. He received me very graciously. I artlessly inquired who was to be the new Senator? He was on his guard in a moment and with grave face and half-closed eyes inquired "What Senator?" Then I told him frankly that I knew all about it, and had been an enforced listener to all the Cabinet wrangle of Saturday night. He at once endeavored to impress me with a sense of the impropriety of publishing any information so obtained. In this I entirely concurred and stated that I had no desire or intention to do so. But there was another matter. How came it that I had been dismissed from the railway service? He inquired the circumstances and I related them. "This took place when I was in England, and, of course, I had nothing to do with it," he said. "Come back at 10 o'clock. The Cabinet is to meet then and I will take you in with me and we will have it all explained."

At ten I returned, and he took me with him to the Council Chamber, introduced me as one of their friends, who by some mistake had been dismissed from the railway, and made me sit among the rest at the table. Of course he, Mr. Mitchell, and some others had been absent when the dismissal had taken place, he said. An awkward silence followed, which I greatly enjoyed. I was seated between Hon. Charles Connell and Hon. John McAdam. Mr. Connell turned to me and said: "Mack, I had nothing to do with it." Mr. McAdam, on the other side, said: "I had nothing to do with it, either." Two of the five members of the Executive who had been present at the meeting of Council which dismissed me had spoken. A third was the member who had called at my station assuring me that he was my friend and that I should not be disturbed, and as there was an awkward pause, I cited this circumstance. How could I have been dismissed by five men, three of whom were in my favor? Mr. Tilley, who sat at the head of the table opposite me, raised his hand as a signal for silence. I rose, thanked them for their courtesy, and remarking that I was still in doubt as to how and why I had been dismissed, withdrew.

I was half-way back to the Barker House when I heard some one behind me shouting my name. I turned and met Mr. McAdam. He was out of breath with his haste to overtake me. "You think there is a lie somewhere," he blurted out. I protested, no, not a lie, but still I could not quite understand. "It was this way," he said, "there were five of us at the meeting. I was called away on urgent business. It was understood that there were to be no more dismissals till our leaders came back from England. But in the event of a tie occurring between the two northern and the two southern members who remained, on any other matter, I left power with McMillan from the north, and McClelan from the south, to jointly cast my vote to decide the tie. When I was gone, McMillan brought up the question of your dismissal. The two North Shore men voted against you and Connell and McClelan voted in your favor. That made a tie, then McMillan and McClelan together threw my vote against you and you were dismissed." Of course, I afterwards called Mr. McClelan to account, and he quite properly declined to discuss the matter, what was done in the Council being under the seal of secrecy. For my part, I have never doubted the substantial accuracy of "Honest" John McAdam's version.

The incident derives any interest it may possess from the prominence of the persons present at the two meetings of the New Brunswick Cabinet, at one of which I was an accidental listener and the other at which I was an invited spectator. The list of nine included some seven gentlemen who were afterwards members of the House of Commons, four who were afterward Senators, two or three who were afterwards Judges, and three who became Lieutenant-Governors of the Province, one for two terms. They afterward showed a disposition to make right any real or imaginary wrong they had done me, and I was promptly offered one of the best railway stations on the line. This was not accepted because of an alternative offer of a clerkship in the House of Commons. The *Telegraph* wanted an Ottawa correspondent, and in those days the position of correspondent for a journal supporting the Government was not incompatible with a position in the Civil Service.

I came to Ottawa with the Maritime Senators, members and newspaper men, and entered the Reporters' Gallery and went to work. I said nothing and nobody said anything to me of the promised clerkship till weeks after the House met. Then one day a big envelope was sent me containing my appointment as Junior Clerk in the House of Commons at $800 a year, conditioned on residing permanently at the seat of Government. I promptly notified Mr. Tilley that I could not accept this. He advised me to accept; the duties were merely sessional, he said, and members of Parliament only received $600 per session in those days; promotion would follow shortly, and I could go on with my newspaper work, and between the two would have a fair remuneration. I still declined but when the session resumed in March, 1868, I went back to the gallery, and also reported duty as Junior Clerk. It was funny that my first official task was to draw my pay.

In those days the official staff of the House were paid half-monthly in advance. It was now the middle of March. I found the paying office busy, clerks and translators signing the book and being handed out money, and in not a few cases slips of paper called "bons." I was shown one of these by a fellow junior. It read, "Good for $20 at my next pay. (Signed)————." On these "bons" advances were regularly obtained by considerable numbers of the staff as it appeared. My turn came and I signed for $33.34 for the latter half of March, got the money and turned away. Mr. Stansfield, the accountant, called me back. He handed me another envelope containing a like amount for the first half of March, and kept me signing for one-half month back of another to 6th November, 1867, the date of my appointment. So I received nearly five months' pay before I began work, and had loaned $40 of it to a fellow clerk (he had little but "bons" that day) before I reached my rooms. It was promptly repaid at the time promised.

In subsequent sketches I shall have something to say of five years' experiences as a clerk in the Commons, and among the men prominent in political life who I met there in that capacity, and afterward as representative at Ottawa of the St. John *Telegraph* and Toronto *Globe*. Very pleasant experiences they were in the main. I found my official associates on the staff of the Commons capable, courteous and efficient public servants. And of the public men I trust I shall have no ill-report. Of Sir Leonard Tilley I have most pleasant memories. Since New Brunswick became a Province no one of its sons held greater sway in its affairs or for a longer time. He had a gift of leadership, was at once astute and kindly, and above all, a man whose private life was irreproachable. I think he was a little too sensitive of newspaper criticism, but perhaps our pens are sometimes sharper than we wot.

Sir Leonard was not only the greatest political leader that his Province had hitherto raised. He was much more than that. He was a great advocate and exemplar of moral reform. After prohibition had failed of acceptance and his political fortunes had gone with it, he remained faithful to his total abstinence principles till the end of his days. Twice defeated in his constituency of St. John, he never sought another, and in each case, in about a year, he won his old seat again.

Our Own Correspondent

The duties of "Our Own Correspondent" for a leading Opposition daily are many and varied; they are also arduous at all times. If he is at all fitted for his task, he will find it often very interesting, sometimes intensely so. If he knows the ministers of state personally, so much the better; if he does not know them he will find it of advantage to make their acquaintance, choosing his time carefully, for most ministers are busy men. They are also men of like passions with other men, and like men of lower station in life, have differences of manner, temperament, their likes and dislikes, are sometimes jealous of each other, and so on. To get on some sort of footing, at least that of a speaking acquaintance, is most desirable. Sometimes a word dropped by a minister in the most casual way will supply a missing link, or serve to solve a political riddle on which one may have spent weeks of patient investigation. Moreover, it may be found that the information you are seeking will be frankly given by the minister for the asking, when it could in no other way be obtained.

It is of almost equal importance to know the deputy-ministers, the permanent official heads of the several departments. The deputy may know more of the matter you are for the time seeking to find out than the political chief of the department, especially if the latter is comparatively new to official life. The phrase is current that "ministers come and ministers go, but deputy-ministers go on forever." If you are known to him, it will count in your favor with the deputy and with all the subordinate officials. Again, to be favorably known to the deputy may give easier access

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