

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., Aug. 24, 1962

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Link To Canada Sought In Eng.

By NEIL A. MATHESON  
Provincial-Farm Editor

DO YOU know that P.E.I. sent delegates to England once, in the effort to get a better transportation link with the Mainland? I read that this week in an old issue of the Parliamentary Guide which said Hon. Donald Ferguson went to London in 1886 "regarding winter connection between P.E.I. and the mainland." I had never heard that we went that far in our transportation search and I'm wondering how the London trip idea developed.

I'd like to talk to my friend Charles S. MacDonald, Wood Islands about it, for I'm reasonably sure he has some information on it.

I FOUND the information this week as I was researching the life of Hon. Donald Ferguson, who we must add to the list of Islanders who represented this province in the federal government. Unsuccessful in his only attempt for a House of Commons seat in 1891, he was called to the Senate in 1893, accepted a seat without portfolio in the Bowell government in December 1891, served later with the Sir Charles Tupper government in 1896 and resigned with the government the same year. It lasted only from May 1 to July 8 which was the shortest term on record according to the Guide.

In case modern political observers are wondering about the Arthur Meighen government in 1936, it lasted from June 23 to September 25, which is roughly three months, to Tupper's two months and eight days.

Served In P.E.I. Legislature

FERGUSON was elected to the P.E.I. legislature in 1873 after several unsuccessful tries, was reelected in 1879 when he was made Commissioner of Public Works - the term Commissioner was used then instead of minister - and he later became Commissioner of public lands and provincial secretary, portfolios he held until 1890.

Mr. Ferguson was born in East River and brought from Scotland the "Tulloch" farm name which H. Lyle Boswell of Marshfield has perpetuated on his farm, and in his fine herd of Scotch Shorthorn cattle. His Tulloch Fashion Leader was grand champion at the Exhibition here last week.

I have to thank Heath Macquarrie, M.P for the tip on Ferguson and Miss Jean Gill, our librarian for indispensable help in researching the story. It gave me a chance to congratulate Mr. Macquarrie for his appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to Hon. Howard Green. As I told him, I cannot think of a nicer man or a finer gentleman to work with.

David Laird's Part In Nation Building

A FRIEND has suggested I may have left an incorrect impression of Hon. David Laird in the July 20 column, when I said “he had been a strong opponent of this province entering Confederation.” He was opposed as most Islanders were at the time, because the terms were considered inadequate, but his contribution to the building of this nation must rank with anyone else from any place at any time in its history

Research I’ve done indicates he played a tremendous part in arranging terms with the Indians, who peopled much of the Western area he administered, first as minister of the interior in the federal cabinet 1873-1876, later as Lieutenant-Governor of the Northwest Territories and Indian Commissioner 1876-81, and still later as Indian Commissioner when he returned to Winnipeg in 1898, after spending the intervening time as editor of the Patriot, which he founded before beginning his political career.

AT THE time he began his work with the Indians, “there was not a mile of railway, the inhabitants were mostly Red men and the wheat-growing possibilities of the West had not yet been dreamed of.” I’m quoting from Benjamin Bremner’s condensation of an item on “Confederation and its leaders” by M.O. Hammond.

His integrity, fearlessness and sense of fairness won the respect of the Indians who called him “Big Chief whose-tongue-is-not-forked.”

#### Stood Like An Avenging Angel

I LIKE the language used by a biographer who said “he stood in the House like an avenging angel” and the London newspaper correspondent who was present in 1909 at the celebration in Winnipeg of the establishment of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and said of Laird “He well and truly laid the foundations of organized government in the territories . . . his life and work a model for those who sit in high places of earthly dominion.”

Born in New Glasgow, P.E.I. March 12, 1833 he died at Ottawa on January 12, 1914. His early education at the Presbyterian Seminary at Truro, N.S. was aimed to fit him for the church, but he founded the Patriot instead and became its editor, and went on from there to the wider fields of service.

#### Snapdragon Stands 54 Inches Tall

A STAFF writer for these papers, Stan Bowles, has one snapdragon 54 inches tall and several others that have grown to between 34 and 40 inches. Local horticulturists tell him that must be record growth and he’s naturally wondering if anyone else can match it.

#### P.E.I. Bank Note Is Interesting

DON ALLEN, Montreal was an interesting visitor with his Bank of Prince Edward Island two-dollar bill of 1777 that’s as crisp and bright as the day it was printed. A currency collector, he tells me the printing job was particularly good and his research indicates they were having trouble with counterfeiters back in those days.

A mathematics teacher in Northmount high school, Montreal, Mr. Allen is here to lecture in mathematics at a teacher's institute I believe is being held at St. Dunstan's University.

I was interested in tracing the families of J. Longworth, the bank president, and John A. Moore who also signed the currency, but have been unable to get in touch with the people I think may know about them. Perhaps some readers can enlighten me.

Mr. Allen, incidentally, is interested in meeting any currency collectors here.

### Some Tourists Like Us, Some Don't

WE HAVE had warm praise and sharp criticism for our P.E.I. camping facilities and the co-operation or lack of it from our people by some of the visitors who wrote to the editor in the past month or so. But a Boston newspaper column, by Arthur Sullivan, sent to us by Mrs. George Campbell, Coleman, quotes several visitors from his area who had nothing but appreciation for the bathing, camping and fishing facilities found here. So we please some and arouse the ire of others. So long as we please many, if we do, and offend only a few, I guess that's about the best we can accomplish.

"A former Bostonian, Charlie Stead now of Howe Bay, Annandale" advised the visitors toward "salt water fishing around the Isle" and promised "good size cod, flounder and hake and big mackerel" and added "if you like lobsters, P.E.I. is the place", which reminds me that a lady in southern Kings County has tipped me off to a "big lobster" story that I hope to get first time I'm down that way.

### Hospitality in Guysborough County

TALKING of hospitality, I found more of it in Guysborough County, N.S. when I was there for two summers 30 years ago than any other place I've ever visited outside of P.E.I. Nobody ever passed me on the road without offering a lift, whether they were in a dump cart or a fine limousine, or whether I was dressed up or in working clothes, as I often was.

And loyal Guysborough natives like Charlie Scranton, and Reid Sangster assure me that it's like that to the present time.