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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Dr. Blanchard's Book Tells Acadian History

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THE ACADIANS OF Prince Edward Island is the title of a book that came to my desk this week from my friend J. Henri Blanchard, B.A., M.A., LL.D.

The book of 51 pages covers the period 1720 to 1964 and the attention to detail shown has long been a trade mark of this tireless worker.

Dr. Blanchard has been retired for 16 years, but he is the busiest retired man I have ever known, and I've met many who managed to keep busy after they retired officially.

This book may be more correctly styled a "chronicle of events, rather than a history," Dr. Blanchard suggests in his foreward, but whatever one calls the book, it contains a vast amount of information that will be of interest to Acadians, and those who are interested in reading of their development over the years.

THE MATERIAL is written objectively with "no attempt to express any personal opinion on the merits or demerits of individuals or authorities", the author explains.

The first census of Isle Saint-Jean, as this Island was formerly named, was in 1728 and the Blanchard attention to detail indicates, for example, that two of the families number 19 people each, with one of 16. Their arrival came in 1719 and 1720.

I wrote in this column once about the plague of mice that hit this Island in the long ago. Dr. Blanchard reports there were three such plagues between 1724 and 1738, when the worst one occurred. "Every field of grain from Three Rivers (Georgetown) to Malpeque was made desolate by their ravages and the settlers found themselves face to face with starvation."

The book is partly a translation of a former French version, but I understand that a great deal has been added in this latest book, by this friendly, interesting man who is constantly called upon to furnish historical information on this province, particularly on the Acadians, by people all across this country.

Ch'town Placed In Nova Scotia

CARMEN SMITH, Summerside bureau manager for this paper, sent me a clipping from the Calgary Herald which has a heading indicating the original Confederation conference was held in Nova Scotia. The text of the story explains that a stamp being printed is to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charlottetown conference, but the person who wrote the heading put Charlottetown in Nova Scotia.

My friend Carmen is a bit upset about the stupid error and so was a transplanted Islander - I can't make out the name - who sent the clipping from Calgary. But I take those things in my stride by now. During the four years I spent in Ottawa it was a fairly common experience to have the telephone operator ask me is that in Nova Scotia or

New Brunswick? when I asked her to get my home telephone number on the Charlottetown exchange.

MY NEPHEW, John A. Blonden, writes from Montreal with a copy of an editorial reference from the St. Thomas Times-Journal which is even more inexcusably ignorant. Among other things it states that the visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip here in October will be the first time royalty ever visited this province. How stupid can you get? Next time the Times-Journal decides to play smart it should check its facts, so it will not succeed in revealing its supreme ignorance.

Speaking of publicity though, this province has received a tremendous amount of good publicity in just about all of the larger papers across the country, and in many of the small ones too. On the whole we have been royally treated in that line.

### Neighbors Cause Fear, Not Lord

THE MATHESON lawn at Southport was the scene earlier this week as the company of several American visitors was enjoyed. The talk switched to olden times and Mrs. Florence MacPhail Peck of Nobleboro, Maine recalled that her grandmother, Mrs. Catherine MacPhail of Orwell used to wash the clothes over the short weekend, of family members who were home from their studies at Prince of Wales College.

The time was short and Mrs. MacPhail put out the clothes Saturday evening on bushes behind the house so they could be taken in on Sunday without attracting too much attention.

Her son, John Andrew MacPhail, later known as Sir Andrew after he had been knighted for service overseas in the First Great War, asked her "Mother, don't you think the Lord can see the clothes in the back yard on Sunday?"

AND PROMPTLY, and with a depth of feeling, came the reply, it's not the Lord I'm afraid of, it's the neighbors". And gossiping neighbors could be fearsome adversaries in those long gone days, as Mrs. MacPhail well knew. Even taking in the washing on Sunday would be regarded as inexcusable by many at that time, when the most careful residents of some communities would drink warm water over the weekend, rather than "desecrate the Sabbath day" by hauling in water from the well or a nearby spring.

Florence who has been a long-time friend of our family is the daughter of the late Finley MacPhail whose home was on the Kinlock Road in Southport.