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## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Service Goes Back Over 100-Yr. Period

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Provincial - Farm Editor

I HAD the privilege of sharing in a most unusually moving experience when the people of South Granville Presbyterian church observed their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary last Sunday afternoon.

There were many things to remind one of the services of the long ago. The old church itself is unchanged in its basic structure and arrangement since I first worshiped in it more than 50 years ago. The interior has recently been painted and redecorated and presents an attractive appearance as a place of worship.

But tears came to my eyes as I was whisked rapidly down the long trail of memory, when William Bruce of Valleyfield "presented" the lines for the rendition of the 103<sup>rd</sup> psalm in Gaelic for those of us who were singing with him. It took me back to my boyhood days in Rose Valley and the nearby churches our family attended at Sacrament time, including Granville.

THE FACT the psalms, and a paraphrase, were sung without organ music was another reminder. And Lloyd Leland's reading of the lesson in his faultless Gaelic was still another link with the past that was forged on that unforgettable afternoon.

I can recall the days when only the psalms were countenanced in some of the older Presbyterian churches. I wonder how many readers can recall the statement: "The psalms came down from heaven and they go back to heaven when they are sung, but the hymns which were man-made go only to the ceiling of the church and bounce back from there." If that sentiment seems unreal now, it was very real to those who held that opinion in the long ago.

### Vase Of Flowers Was Resented

DEVOTED CHURCH people held strong views in those earlier days. I recall attending a Sacrament service one Sunday in this same South Granville church, with my mother in my boyhood days. One of the men sitting in the side seats, facing the pulpit, at the front of the church arose and walked from the building shortly before the service started.

When we went to a neighbour's home for dinner, as was the custom, I learned that one of the devout members of the congregation had walked from the building because someone had brought a vase of beautiful flowers and placed it on the table in front of the pulpit.

If flowers in a church seem commonplace now, it must be remembered that it was unusual in those days and to this old churchman the vase presented "a foreign matter, or an idol as some people termed it, brought into the House of God."

I have long since forgotten the gentleman's name but I thought of him Sunday as I sat in the old church and listened to Rev. Donald Campbell pay tribute to the days of the long ago.

The same strong convictions were held concerning a church organ. Many a congregation, including our own, had to wait many years before permission would be granted to bring this instrument into the church. The older people of those days, and their forefathers, had worshiped without an organ and it was difficult to break with the long established tradition.

### First Organ Came In 1961

SOUTH GRANVILLE was one of the last of the Presbyterian churches in the province to bring an organ into the church. To quote a paragraph from the leaflet distributed for the service:

"Until 1961, when circumstances necessitated the accession of the first organ to the church, the ministry of praise was under the direction of a precentor. Only the psalms and the paraphrases were in use, with some of their most beloved ones being sung today. This is a taste of that stout Covenanter spirit that has marked out the devout path of a people of God."

The "precentor" would sing the line and all of the congregation would join in singing it. One of the reasons, older people used to explain, was that many in the congregation would not have psalm books in the early days, and the line was sung or "presented" so the rest of the congregation could join in the singing. Many memories came flooding back when Mr. Bruce acted as "precentor" on Sunday.

### Names Of Men On Hose Reel Team

HERE ARE the names of the men who ran on that championship firemen's hose and reel team here in 1925 - I referred to it briefly last week. Phil MacDonald - he had been on the Olympic team in 1924 - and Alan Stewart ran lead. Others who are still living are Monroe MacLeod, George Walker, Louis A. Stewart, Jack Connolly (recently retired as Postmaster here); John Turner Jr., Bob Allen - he was with the Royal Bank of Canada and is living so far as I know - and myself.

Three have died. They are Wilbur Wood, who came from Alexandra; George Wood, and Wilfred Coyle

Readers will note that 12 men are listed and that is correct, but only ten ran in the race. Those 12 were selected when the team candidates were cut to that number. It was necessary to have a couple of spares in case of injury or illness. So the 12 men trained faithfully through the six-week period and nobody knew who was going to run on the team until we were getting into our track togs for the actual competition.

The names were taken from the big picture that hangs in the Fire Hall here and my old friend, Jack Connolly, was good enough to phone them in to me at my request, earlier this week. The old picture lists Angus MacEachern as coach and Chief Thomas Ranahan is also pictured.

## Strength, Stamina Were Needed

THE RACE of one-quarter mile was on the Exhibition track here. The eight men in front of the reel pulled the 500-pound reel - it took a lot of effort to get it rolling - when the hydrant was reached, 250 feet from the finish, hydrant man Jack Turner had to take the end of the hose that was rolled on the reel, and couple it to the hydrant. George Walker was nozzle man and he followed the reel to the finish line where he broke the last coupling and put the nozzle on to the line of hose that had been laid from the hydrant. If the coupling at the hydrant, or the nozzle was not tight, the judges added one second to the time for every one-quarter turn they could take up on the couplings. There were no turns possible on the couplings that day. The Turner-Walker pair saw to that.

The run was in one minute, five seconds. The coupling at the nozzle was in four and three-fifths seconds. It was all in fun and though it was strenuous work, it was nothing more than competition against other firemen's teams.

## Fire Fighting Was Tough Job Then

BUT I recall John Turner, father of the man who was in the 1925 race telling me of the time when firemen had to haul the hose and reel units to fires, and then fight the fire when they got there. A CBC-TV show recently showed some of the pictures of the old hose reels used in Halifax, with the large handles the firemen pulled on to pump the water.

I don't know if there is one of those old firemen living - if there are I would like to talk to him - but the powerful machines of today are a long cry from the sort of thing John Turner was telling me about.

I ran with firemen's teams at Truro and Moncton as well as here, and I have never had more interesting or congenial friends. I recall that there was a great deal of drinking around those tournaments when old timers got together, but I never did see anyone in bad humor. There seemed to be an unwritten law that nobody should spoil the good fellowship, and that was strictly adhered to.

I heard of some rare squabbles over prizes and trophies in later years. I'm speaking about the tournaments in which I had the privilege of competing.

## Information Would Be Appreciated

I expect to spend the Thanksgiving holiday weekend in West Prince this year as usual. If any reader has something, or knows of an item he or she thinks might be interesting, please get in touch with Frank Weeks at the Guardian in Alberton, or Edith Eldershaw in Tignish, and I shall call at your homes, or wherever you suggest for the story.

If the man who told me about an early attempt at airplane making in a West Prince locality sees this column, will he please call me or see me prior to October 8. I have lost the notebook in which the item was recorded and I have forgotten the name of the

people in the home I was to visit. It sounded like a really interesting item and I would like to run it down.