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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Birth Of Quints Recalled Here

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I HEARD this week from two reliable sources that quintuplets were born to a Bell family on Clark Street here in Charlottetown many years ago.

It came from two well known men on whom I can rely although neither wanted his name used.

One man told me it happened "back in the early 1800's" and so could not recall whether any of the children lived or not.

I CAN look out over Clark Street from my office window, as I type this column and it seems almost incredible that such an event could have escaped notice for so many years.

Recalling the world wide acclaim given to the birth of the Dionne Quintuplets at Callander, Ontario in 1934, it seems strange that someone did not remember the quint birth here at the time. And I can't recall that anyone did.

I LEARNED before this column went to press that the parents were Mr and Mrs. David Bell and the presiding physician was Dr. Harry D. Johnson who was well known in this city. The babies were born dead, I was told.

Two Veteran Legislators

I CHEATED John R. MacLean out of three years of legislative service when I said last week he was first elected in 1947. Mr. MacLean won a byelection in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings on February 8, 1940 and sat until 1943.

The man who is now speaker of the Legislature was elected again in 1947 and served until 1951, and is now serving in his 13<sup>th</sup> session in the assembly which was elected in 1959. He is easily the dean of the legislature on the Conservative side, so far as the beginning date of his service is concerned.

I ALSO forgot my old friend Philip Matheson, present highways and public works minister, who was elected first in 1943, served continuously until 1951, and came back to the legislature in 1959.

Careful research indicates that both Mr. MacLean and Mr. Matheson are in their 13<sup>th</sup> session, if we count special sessions. Here's how I get those figures in case someone wants to check up on me.

MR. MACLEAN was elected in February 1940, early enough to serve in the session of that year, so he had four sessions before he was defeated in 1943. He had five sessions in the period 1947-51 - there were two sessions in 1950, including a special session - and now he is in his fourth session of the present general assembly, as there was a special session last December.

The 1950 special session was called to pass a resolution claiming damages from the federal government for allowing the Borden - Tormentine ferries to be tied up by a nation-wide railway strike, and seek assurance that a similar tieup would never occur again. Mr. Matheson was also a member at the time.

I credit Mr. Matheson with four sessions from 1943-47, five from 1947 to 1951, and four in the present assembly, which also adds up to 13, so the two men are even in that respect.

I had a dozen or more telephone calls about the error in Mr. MacLean's service, a few about Mr. Matheson, and many interesting talks with various people. All of the calls were also enjoyable. Several of them were from people with whom I have not talked for a long time.

### Best Story Of 1940 Byelection

BEST STORY I heard was the one from E. D. Reid who was teaching school in Charlottetown when the 1940 byelection was held in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings. Harry Cox, who was a long time provincial member from 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, and a Highways minister at one time, had called Mr. Reid and proposed they fly down to the district as Mr. Cox also had a vote there.

They finally decided against the trip, as the Liberals apparently thought they would win anyway. Later that night, they naturally felt the loss of their two votes was pretty important. Mr. MacLean had won by a single vote over Tom Kickham.

The MACLEAN family, incidentally, has an unbroken record of political service that goes back 80 years. There has been a MacLean in the federal or provincial house, or in contention for one of them, ever since 1882, John MacLean told me this week.

His grandfather, John MacLean, was a provincial member, a federal member and later a Senator. The Parliamentary Guide says he was elected in the legislature by acclamation in 1882, won a contest in 1886 and another acclamation in 1890, resigned in 1891 to win election to the House of Commons - Kings had two MPs then - and did not run when one seat was cut out in 1894. He was elected to the legislature on two later occasions before being called to the Senate in 1915.

HIS SON, Harry MacLean, father of the present Speaker, served continuously as a member of the legislature from 1915 - he took over from his father who went to the Senate - until 1935 when he was beaten by only 15 votes in a Liberal tide that swept the province. No other Conservative candidate came within 100 votes of his opponent, and most of them were far behind. It emphasized the esteem in which the man was held by his constituents.

He was financial critic for his party and held a non-portfolio cabinet post in the Stewart-MacMillan government 1931-35.

### Politics Were Rougher Then

RALPH CAMERON brought me this one which I think is timely, now that the legislature is in session.

It comes from the diary of a Province House employee on February 17, 1859 and says "The House of Assembly was called together but were unable to decide on a choice of speaker, consequently the Governor returned home without delivering his speech. "The same thing happened the next day and the House was dissolved. "Great excitement in the house," the diary note added.

On March 12 candidates were nominated for Queens. The diary added "The Irish were fighting (it does not say who their opponents were) and three or four persons were badly hurt."

Three days later "revolvers and sling shots were taken from some parties at the election," the diary added.

### Flat River Eagle Disappears

THE FLAT River eagle I talked about a few weeks ago has disappeared. You'll recall that he had been coming back each year for some 20 years, and that he always roosted on the same branch of the same tree, not far from the home of Stewart Ross, MLA.

The eagle always came alone. But three weeks ago a second eagle flew in and lit on the same branch. Last Saturday the second eagle came back, and the pair were flying down the river, disappearing into the distance when last seen.

If the big bird is gone, he'll be missed by the Flat River people, who developed an affection for him because he never caused any harm. He lived on fish caught in the stream.

The big bird may come back but Mr. Ross told me yesterday he has not returned yet.

### Holstein Registrations Grow

THE INCREASING use which breeders of high quality cattle are making of artificial insemination is shown in a report which says that 61.5 percent of the 91,475 Holsteins registered in Canada last year were bred artificially. And it's understandable. A frozen semen program enables careful breeders to plan their program in advance.

And Parker Newson, Kingston, who is a national director and president of the P.E.I. association, told me this week "I can call the inseminator now and go to work in the field, or whatever else I may be working on a given day."

The biggest and fastest growing cattle association for many years, the Black and White registrations have more than doubled in the last 20 years, the annual meeting was told recently.