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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Sir John A. Was Staunch Subject

By NEIL A. MATHESON

SIR JOHN A. Macdonald became known as the Father of his country – one of his self-styled titles was “Cabinet Maker”. But here, more than a century after his supreme triumph in 1867, the year of Confederation, I find a copy of a speech he made in the general election campaign of 1891. The date was February 7th.

Reciprocity was one of the big issues of the day – it became the major issue in a later election. And I note with appreciation the way this man could play on the emotions of his countrymen, while speaking on what he called “an iniquitous theme”.

At one stage of his speech he said:

“For a century and a half this country has grown and flourished under the protection of the British crown.”

Then he sums up in masterly fashion in this closing paragraph:

“As for myself, my course is clear, a British subject I was born ad a British subject I will die.”

“With my utmost effort, with my latest breath, will I oppose the ‘veiled treason’ which attempts by sordid means and mercenary proffers to lure our people from their allegiance. During my long public service of nearly half a century, I have been true to my country, and to its best interests, and I appeal, with equal confidence to the men who have trusted me in the past, and to the young hope of the country, with whom rests its destinies for the future, to give me their united and strenuous aid in this my last effort for the unity of the Empire and the preservation of our commercial and political freedom.”

This skilled politician, this crafty leader of his Conservative party, successfully branded the opposing liberals with the brand of traitors for betrayers of their country. Nobody suggested breaking ties with Britain, but Sir John A. was able to effectively suggest as much in his reference to their platform of reciprocity with the United States.

John A.’s Brother Lived Here?

HAROLD SMITH, Charlottetown called me recently to say he had a clipping from a British Columbia publication saying Sir John A. Macdonald’s brother had lived on a farm near Charlottetown.

With the reputation history has given Sir John A. for his fondness of liquor, perhaps it was natural the story should attribute the same weakness to his brother.

Several years ago I used the same story in this column, with my own expressed opinion that the story was not true. Calls I had after the column appeared confirmed my belief that the story was not true.

My story source was a British Columbia publication, the same one if I recall correctly, to which Mr. Smith referred.

Horse Racing 60 Years Ago

THE DATE was Thursday, September 23 and the year was 1909 on an old Charlottetown Driving Park score card I find among my material of other years.

There were three classes of horse racing that afternoon, the 2.18 Class Trot and Pace; the 2.50 Class Trot (Stake) and the 2.40 Class (Stake).

Ozon D., owned by Gordon Ives, Montague, won all three heats of the 2.18 Class with best time of 2.24 ½.

A roan gelding, Tom Trim, won all three heats of the 2.50 Class for P.S. Brown who was a one-time mayor of Charlottetown.

A horse known well to many people in the area where I was born, King Brazilian, was owned by Fred Walsh, the address given here is North Tryon though he did not live there when I knew of him. Brazilian was no better than fifth that day.

Baby Boy won one heat of the 2.40 Class for C.H. Chandler, Charlottetown but the race winner was Pretoria, owned by M.A. O'Brien, Charlottetown, with three heats to his credit. Hilda S. had a good summary of 2, 2, 3. The Chandler horse was 1, 3, 2. The best time was 2.26 ½. Best time for the 2.50 Class was 2.27 ½.

Dinners At 50 Cents

A RESTAURANT "Under the Grandstand" was offering a "course dinner" for 50 cents. A "plain dinner" was 25 cents. The restaurant was run by Carver and Herman.

Hyndman and Company was advertising on the score card that Great West Life Assurance Company which it represents on this Island "wrote by far the largest business of any company in Canada in 1908".

J. George Carver was the "Oyster King" of that era and he catered to the public in his stand at 133-135 Great George Street.