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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Dalton Sanatorium Period Is Recalled

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial - Farm Editor

A VISIT to Emyvale and the site of the old Dalton Sanatorium last November started me on the trail of today's story, which started with the "Act to Incorporate the Dalton Sanatorium" in 1913 and ended unfortunately less than a decade later. The building was begun in 1914, completed in 1916, was taken over by the Dominion government in 1917 for the treatment of soldiers and enlarged so greatly - two huge pavilions were added for a total length of 110 yards, I was told - that it was too large to operate and was closed after Ottawa turned it back to the province in 1920.

Mr. Dalton, who was knighted by the Vatican in 1917, and was one of the pioneers of the fox industry - he had been experimenting in breeding from 1890 - paid \$160,000 for his part of the building and the furnishings. I have been unable to ascertain the amount the Canadian government spent on the extensions.

ALL THAT remains now is the doctor's residence, which cost \$17,000 at the time, the wreckage of a 30,000-gallon water tank which towered 130 feet in the air, and some of the concrete foundation of the old structure. Sir Charles turned it over to the Roman Catholic Church here, some of the finer woods and the better furniture went to the Charlottetown Hospital which was being built at the time - the cornerstone says it was built in 1922 to replace a building destroyed by fire in 1921 - and the rest of the lumber was sold by auction sales as the building was taken apart piece by piece. I recall that many truckloads passed my Rose Valley home when I was a boy, although I have no idea where they went.

The reference to the Charlottetown Hospital was told me by Emyvale people and confirmed this week by Monsignor J.G. McLellan who was Vicar General of the Charlottetown diocese for many years.

John M. Clark, Summerside, I was told, was the contractor for the Dalton part of it, his son Peter Clark was in charge for the federal government part. Walter P. Doull, Charlottetown was in charge of the wiring, Allison MacLeod told me this week, and many of the Charlottetown people went out on the morning train and back in the evening.

The land for the site was sold by Patrick McGinn, now a patient in the Charlottetown Hospital who recalled many interesting events for me, and James Clarkin. Mrs. McGinn who worked as a waitress, recalls that the huge building was fully occupied at one time and I was told also that two soldiers died in the institution during the time it was run by the federal government.

Brilliantly Lighted Spectacle

THEY HAD a big cold storage room for the food with refrigeration supplied by ice, but the institution had its own electric power plant and stood out at night as a brilliantly lighted spectacle that could be seen for miles around on the high hill where it stood, while the rest of the countryside was in comparative darkness.

Dominic MacDonald and Mrs. MacDonald, with their son Leonard and his wife and family live now in the doctor's residence. Dominic told me the loafing on the construction job was unusually bad at times. "I saw a man drive 85 nails into one board one afternoon", he recalled, and James McCloskey told me he and his dad hauled bricks just one day from North Wiltshire and then were fired because they were loading too heavy and were "too damn greedy". This sounds to me as though it was during the period when the government was doing the building. I recall as a boy that it was common practice to loaf on a government job - roadwork was an example - and a man who did a hard day's work was most unpopular with the rest of the gang.

I GATHERED that many people worked on the construction job - many hauled material from Wiltshire by horse and wagon, or sleighs in season, and some 50 others worked in the hospital and on the farm while it was in operation. It was a big boon to the economy of the district and a district loss when it closed.

Pat Clarkin told me he hauled the first load of lumber. It was used for a shack where many of the workmen ate and some of them lived. Laborers got \$1.50 per 10-hour day if they furnished their own board, I was told by Jim McCloskey who said the average pay for working on a farm then ran around 50 cents a day.

Mr. Clarkin also worked with a team of horses and a scoop digging the cellar and got \$2.75 a day for that job. He also had the job of hauling 1,000 tons of coal a year from the station at Wiltshire. Load for the two-and-one-half mile haul across the fields was one and one-half tons.

How Water Pipes Were Insulated

WELL DRILLERS went down 300 feet without finding water on the Sanatorium property, then went down almost as far on an adjoining property and struck a stream which they pumped to the overhead tank which produced the necessary water supply. But Leonard MacDonald recently struck water on the place at slightly over 100 feet, he told me.

I was interested in the frost protection used at the time for the vertical pipes leading to the big water tank. There was no insulating material as we know it today, so the builders used layer upon layer of groove-and-tongue boards with heavy building paper in between, and that kept the water from freezing.

The Sanatorium doctor was an American, Dr. Myles Garrison. Mrs. Joseph Coady, Emyvale, who now lives with her daughter in New Haven, I believe, was one of the matrons of the institution. A Miss Conroy - first name is not available - was a matron before that.

Virtual Death Sentence At Time

THE ACT of incorporation provided that the Sanatorium be administered by a five-man commission. One man was to be named by the government, one by the P.E.I. Medical Association and one by "each of the parent associations for the prevention of Tuberculosis in the counties of Kings, Queens and Prince respectively."

The language of the act referred to Tuberculosis as "a dread scourge", and explained that Hon. Mr. Dalton was desirous of providing a Sanatorium where people afflicted "may be treated by the most recent and up-to-date methods", but really effective treatment did not come, apparently, until some years later.

Tuberculosis - it was commonly called "Consumption" and people who had it were said to be "going into decline" - was virtually a death sentence in earlier years and entire families were wiped out by it.

Dr. Eric Found told me this week the death rate was 200 per 100,000 population in 1900 and "it would probably be 150 or more in 1913", though that's only an estimate as no figures are available. There were 60 deaths per 100,000 population by 1947 and it has varied between three and six the last five years, with three last year.

Dr. Found added, though, that the incidence of the disease has not improved much in the last 10 years, and that is one reason why constant alertness and care is so strongly emphasized at every opportunity.

DR. FOUND'S capsule comment on the fight against Tuberculosis here with added comment from Miss Mona Wilson, goes back to 1925 when Dr. Claire Brink, a chest diagnostician, was sent here by the Canadian Tuberculosis Association from Ontario. With the help of Miss Wilson, then a Red Cross nurse, he had some 17 clinics throughout the province. There was no treatment center, but people found to be infected were sent home for bed rest and isolation to prevent spreading the disease.

In 1927 or 1928, the insurance Underwriters were interested in financing, or backing a five-year-program to really do something about combatting the disease. Dr. P.A. Creelman, later medical superintendent of the Sanatorium when it was built, was taken from "a lumber camp up North" and sent here to organize the province for a Sanatorium, I was told. There was also valuable assistance from Dr. J.G. Wherret who retired only this year as secretary of the Canadian Tuberculosis Association.

A small building with 60 beds was erected in 1930 and Miss Wilson gives the Women's Institutes a great share of the credit for their work, and the rest of the development to today's fine institution is pretty well known by most people here. The bed space was grossly inadequate at first, but that was gradually overcome until the time came when beds were released in the Sanatorium for some of the other valuable health work that is done in the building.