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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Kings Quartet Is Outstanding

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial Farm Editor

I WAS lost in thought Wednesday as I stood and watched the people of St. Peters bid a last goodbye to their beloved "Dr. Roddie" when a Kings County man walked up to ask if I had ever thought about Kings County doctors and the remarkable age to which they live and serve their province usefully.

"Dr. Roddie" was off by himself, of course, with his more than 103 years of life and nearly 70 of them spent in active, useful service to people for many miles around.

Then, my informant observed, there is Dr. A.A. "Gus" MacDonald in Souris who is still active at 85 and Senator T.V. Grant of Montague, also 85 who practiced medicine until parliamentary duties became too onerous, and the late Dr. Lester Brehaut who pursued an active medical career until two weeks before his death last December at the age of 85.

SO MUCH has been written about Dr. MacDonald, I feel I have nothing to add. Highly honored by his church and by his profession, he held the most honored spot of all, perhaps, in the hearts and minds of the people whom he served so faithfully over the years.

My friend recalled a story that was told after Dr. MacDonald had been honored on the occasion of his 100th birthday anniversary. The second child whom he delivered was at the ceremony, it's said. When someone asked why the first child wasn't present, he was told the man "is too old he couldn't come".

Both Dr. A.A MacDonald and Dr. Grant had a crack at politics. "Dr. Gus" was elected to the provincial legislature as a Conservative in 1915, 1923, 1927 and 1931. He was made speaker in 1932 and contested Kings for the Conservatives several times.

DR. GRANT became a provincial member and cabinet minister in 1927, was elected to the House of Commons in 1935, 1940 and 1945 and called to the Senate in 1949. He began the practice of medicine in 1913. I'm not clear on when he stopped it.

Looking through the tributes paid to Dr. Brehaut last December I found he had practiced medicine for 57 years and he "never turned down a call. Ten to fifteen mile sleigh rides in bitter winter weather were a daily and nightly occurrence".

My friend was right. These are truly remarkable men of Kings County whose deeds speak for themselves.

Athletic Feats Recalled

MEMORIES OF his athletic feats here came to mind this week as I learned that George C. Walker had retired as secretary of the YMCA in St. Thomas, Ontario.

Several are worth recalling. Perhaps the highlight was the time he qualified for the Canadian Olympic team as a long distance bike rider in 1924.

Short of funds as most Island athletes were in those days, George arrived in Montreal the night before the race, and did not have a chance to even go over the 35-mile route that was used. The race was 105 miles, or three times over the course.

But he finished third and the two chaps that beat him were paced by fellows on motor cycles, who handed out refreshments and first aid when required. George had nobody with him, so he had to stop and hunt refreshments for himself when he needed them. The Charlottetown boy so impressed the Olympic team officials that he was offered a spot on the team although he did not accept.

PRIOR TO that he had established himself as the Maritimes' premium long distance bike rider when he won the 45-mile Windsor-Halifax race three years in a row. The first time he was in and dressed, before the second place rider arrived. The last time he rode, he smashed three racing wheels, got bruised considerably himself, and finally finished with a kid's wheel which he grabbed a short distance from the finish line and pushed it as he ran the rest of the way.

It was back in the early Twenties that he competed here in an athletic event before a crowd that included the then Governor General, Lord Byng of Vimy. Having seen Walker compete successfully in running, bicycling and Highland dancing events, Byng decided he wanted to talk to the versatile athlete. George was able to inform Byng that he had also paraded as an official with the Boy Scouts earlier in the day.

Brothers, Sisters are 99 to 95

I'M REMINDED right now of a brother-sister combination of 99, 97 and 95 years. They are C.W. Judson of Churchill and his sisters Mrs. Mary B. Irving, 95 and Mrs. Alice J. Disley, 97 both of Brockton, Massachusetts.

Mr. Judson lives with his granddaughter, Mrs. Neil D. Lamont and Mr. Lamont at Churchill, and at 99 his memory is still good, a neighbour, John A. MacKinnon tells me. He lived at Cherry Valley until three years ago. This combination of long life in a family is unusual even in those days of advanced life spans. It's not so long ago since people who had passed ninety were the talk of the countryside.

Neil Cheverie Lives In Elmira

I LEARNED this week of Neil Cheverie who lives at Elmira, from his daughter Mrs. Catherine MacMillan who lives in the City. I'm glad to know the grand old violinist is still living at 86 and still treasures wonderful memories of the time he won the Maritime fiddling championship here in 1926 and went to Boston for an international competition where he placed second.

A silver cup he won, filled with telegrams he received at the time, are treasured reminders which he keeps in his bedroom. A gold medal brings back more fond memories of the days his nimble fingers and bow tickled the strings in Maritime supremacy.

A twin brother Eddie, another top fiddler, died several years ago. "Joe Angie John" MacDonald, South Lake was another contestant in the 3-day competition at Charlottetown who was recalled in a poem written by the late Master Gunner W.B. Cheverie of Souris, I am told.