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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Mothers Of Canada Parts Are Depicted

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THE ISLAND'S big Centennial celebrations are all but over, but one of the best shows of the year is coming up next week, and I hope as many as possible will be able to see it.

It's been called by many names by the hundreds of people across Canada who have seen it, but the show depicts the Mothers of Confederation or the Ladies of Confederation, to use a couple of titles placed on those talented ladies with the colorful costumes who bring back to life for a few hours the wives of the men who founded this country we call Canada.

One of the Mothers is living. She is Mrs. Joseph Smallwood, wife of the colorful Joey Smallwood who is known across the country as Newfoundland's Premier.

Mrs. Smallwood was delighted with the image the Charlottetown ladies created for her and she said as much to Mrs. T. A. Laidlaw who played the wife of Premier Smallwood when the Ladies Aid presented it in St. John's in September. Her husband was so impressed that tears ran down his cheeks as his wife was depicted on the stage.

THE COLORFUL group production was originated by the junior ladies aid of the Prince Edward Island Hospital, as their 18th consecutive "Parade of Fashions" but this year they excelled their previous presentations so far that their production literally ran away on them. Geared to the Island's Centennial year celebrations, it was called this year "The Centennial Parade of Fashions" and from the start it was destined for much wider showing than the three day program the junior ladies aid show runs normally. They appeared before many conventions, most of them nation-wide. Convener of the committee responsible for the show is Mrs. Alfred W. McNeill. Her co-convener is Mrs. Walter Auld. Mrs. Lloyd S. Cox Jr., is president and Mrs. Tom DeBlois past president. The burdensome task of looking after all of the correspondence and directing the financing fell on Mrs. William Hambly.

Three other ladies drew the interesting designs from which an experienced Toronto firm created the costumes. They are Mrs. Athol Roberts, Mrs. Daniel Tweel, and Mrs. David Boswell.

Warmly Praised Across Canada

THIS IS as good a place as any to admit that I did not fully appreciate the work of those energetic ladies until prominent men from all walks of life, and from many parts of Canada, came to me with 'songs of praise on their lips'.

A veteran Hereford cattle breeder from near Calgary, who is recognized internationally as a top judge, is the first I recall. The tribute came in a most unusual way. We were discussing with Fulton Sanderson, York Point, what the discerning fancier wants in a show-worthy Hereford. After several attempts to give us his views, he

said a really good Hereford has 'presence'; then added, "just like your Confederation ladies have."

THE WESTERN visitor had seen the show the previous night – the occasion was the visit here of the Canadian Council on 4-H Clubs – and was deeply impressed. "Your ladies," he continued, "have that 'presence'; regardless of what type of costume anyone of them was wearing, her personality came shining through, and she remained an attractively lovable individual."

It was at the same presentation, I believe, that a Quebec Frenchman came to the ladies with tears streaming down his face, to thank them personally for their presentation.

The people of St. John's, Newfoundland gave them a tremendous reception. One group of young ladies pleaded with them to stay over for another night. "We'll guarantee to sell 1,000 tickets, if you do" they assured.

That was their only trip outside the province with their show but I'm sure it won't be the last. Men in the top echelon of this country's administration are so deeply impressed they feel the show must be seen by people across the country.

All-Canada Sense Portrayed

STATE SECRETARY Maurice Lamontagne said, for example, he had seen the show twice – "for the first time since I started studying the national Centennial celebrations, I really feel that all of Canada is behind us." His reference was in the sense of history the show creates with all the provinces depicted in the respective places they occupy in that historic sequence that led to the Canada we know today.

He said "I have learned more Canadian history in one hour than I did in one year previously," then added "what a delightful way to learn history."

Dominion archivist Dr. W. K. Lamb said "this show should be seen in all of the major cities of Canada". It was to Dr. Lamb and the national archives that Mrs. McNeill went first to probe for the background of the wives of the Fathers of Confederation, about whom nothing had been known previously. She went from there to Toronto, and before the research was completed, every archivist in all of the provinces was asked for what information he had available.

Big Things Are Predicted

NONE OF the modest ladies responsible for the show, which has caught the attention of representative Canadians all across the country, would talk about what I'm going to say now. But I have it on excellent authority that this show of the Confederation Ladies almost surely will be staged in some of the most prominent of Canada's cities, and it will be done by the same ladies you'll be seeing next week.

The show, incidentally, has the goal of raising money to furnish the waiting rooms at the hospital here. It goes on Friday of next week with shows at seven and nine o'clock in the evening. It's in the Confederation Theatre.

This will be the last time, as far as I can learn, the show will be presented here, though I hope some vestige of it can be preserved for showing to high school students later.

