



COLONEL DAN WINS WITH "LASSIE LUCILLE"

Old Home Week Launched As Wartime Morale Lift

Inspired by the immortal words of John Howard Payne—"Be It Ever So Humble, There's No Place Like Home"—Lt. Col. D. A. MacKinnon during the darkest days of World War II conceived the idea of Old Home Week.

Since 1940 when the first Old Home Week was held, it has grown both in size and popularity until today it is recognized as the most widely publicized events in Eastern Canada and the New England States. As a matter of fact it is the cue for Islanders and relatives of Islanders wherever they may be drop everything and head for Charlottetown.

WELL LAUNCHED

Colonel Dan - soldier, sportsman and showman felt that in order to get Old Home Week auspiciously launched, it would be well to have the good will of as many citizens as possible.

With this thought in mind he approached the Island's first citizen Hon. George D. DeBlois, then Lieutenant Governor of the Province. Colonel MacKinnon recalls that at first Governor DeBlois questioned the soundness of the move - he wondered whether the folks at home should engage in too much gaiety in the midst of such grave conditions.

Recalling the days of the first World War, Colonel MacKinnon said one of the main concerns of the list at the front was to know that the folks at home were enjoying life.

It took little persuasion on the part of former wartime commander to convince His Honor that Old Home Week would be an excellent morale booster for those left to carry on at home.

HEADED THE REST

And so it was—with Governor DeBlois' name at the head of the list it was not long before 500 prominent businessmen of the Province had affixed their signatures to a petition asking that such an event take place. It is noted that only one person approached refused to sign.

A strong believer that only the best in entertainment should be provided for patrons of Old Home Week, Colonel Dan got in touch with an old friend, George A. Hamid in New York who books vaudeville shows from that centre.

Talent was not particularly scarce but wartime restrictions made it difficult for acting troupes to get their trailer vans across the Canadian border. The Province of Quebec was experiencing the same difficulty in getting American talent.

STRATEGIC MOVE

Colonel MacKinnon conferred with a long time friend, Hon.

Thane A. Campbell, then Premier of the Province and at the Premier's suggestion Island license plates were forwarded to the United States show people and the vans came across the border with no trouble at all.

When Quebec exhibitions learned of this, they were now able to book the same actors; with the result that Colonel MacKinnon was able to arrange a much better financial deal with the entertainers.

LIVESTOCK ADDED

The first year was a tremendous success and the following year the livestock exhibition which had been a feature attraction for years was revived. New buildings were built and the bleachers of the grandstand were enlarged.

After the main exhibition building was destroyed by fire in April 1945 the management discontinued admissions at the main gate and the crowds became so large that in 1945-46 gates had to be closed before two o'clock because there was no room to move around within the grounds.

Col. MacKinnon in the Spring of 1947 was approached by H. J. Kennedy then a director of Old Home Week. Mr. Kennedy along with other directors made an offer to buy out the Colonel's shares and so the sale was made.

IN GOOD HANDS

Speaking of this transfer, Col. MacKinnon said "I was happy to be relieved of this heavy responsibility and at the same time I was glad to see the show going to such capable hands as those of Mr. Kennedy and his associates."

Looking back over the past eighteen years, Colonel MacKinnon feels that while the livestock exhibition has contributed greatly to the show - it has been the harness racing and vaudeville combined with the splendid midway provided by veteran showman Bill Lynch which has really swelled the attendance each year.

RABBIT GROUPS

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AND

OLD HOME WEEK

"A WEEK LONG TO REMEMBER"

- LIVESTOCK EXHIBITS
- MIDWAY
- HANDICRAFT DISPLAY
- VAUDEVILLE

The Official Opening of the 1958 Provincial Exhibition and Old Home Week will take place tonight in the Jones Livestock Pavilion at 7 p.m. This year the show will be opened by His. Hon. Lt.-Gov. Walter Hyndman, other speakers will be Premier Matheson, Hon. Eugene Cullen, Minister of Agriculture and His Worship Mayor Edwin C. Johnstone, Mayor of Charlottetown.

AUG. 11 to 16