

# 'The Patriot' records news for a century for the Island

Born before Confederation and growing stronger down the past 100 years as Canada has grown, The Evening Patriot today carries on the proud tradition of service to its community established by the founder in 1854.

It was in that year 31-year-old David Laird, destined to go on to great things and take his place in Canadian history, decided the Charlottetown newspaper he then owned and edited was too limited in scope to serve as a proper medium of expression.

Possibly it was the name of his then newspaper that caused his restraint because its title, "The Protestant and Evangelical Witness," had religious connotations perhaps not in keeping with the political battles Mr. Laird wished to wage.

Back in 1857 he had started "The Protector and Protestant Witness," switching to his second paper just two years later. Then, in 1864, he met his third venture with The Patriot.

**DISLIKED TERMS**  
It was with his newspaper and his deep voice that Mr. Laird thundered against Confederation and warned Islanders against becoming involved.

He disliked the terms offered because no mention was made of a settlement of the Evangelical land question and mained against each province should have representation in the Legislative Council.

The Patriot recorded another battle when Mr. Laird fought strenuously against the building of the P.E.I. Railway, insisting the Island could not afford it. He was right, but the proof of his argument came with the near bankruptcy of the colony and forced it to go to Ottawa to seek 'better terms' for entry into Confederation.

When Prince Edward Island became the newest province of Canada, Mr. Laird was one of the six representatives to the Dominion Parliament and he was absent from the newspaper for several years.

During this time The Patriot was managed and edited by Henry Lawson.

**A WEEKLY AT FIRST**  
In the beginning it was issued weekly until 1857 when it became a semi-weekly and so continued for many years. But in 1852 it was published as a daily and has been to this day.

There has played a great part in the existence of both surviving Charlottetown papers, and a bad one in 1854 destroyed the plant of The Patriot. Reorganization meant establishment of a joint stock company with Mr. Laird as managing director and editor. He continued in this capacity until his earlier experience dealing with the plains Indians was called on by Ottawa in 1856 and he became Indian Commissioner with headquarters in Winnipeg. This ended his connection with the newspaper and he had started.

Taking over the editorial management at this time was Frederick J. Nash, a strong supporter of the Liberal Party and one time Member of the Provincial Legislature. He also became president of The Patriot Publishing Company in 1924, but died a few years later.

**MATHESON NAMED**  
Associated with him for many years had been Reuben MacDonald who now took over as editor and major shareholder of the paper. He held the management reins until his death in 1942.

At this time the late W. Arthur Gaudet assumed the management and control of the company and, following in the political footsteps of his predecessors, strongly and actively supported the Liberals both provincially and federally.

In fact that support was so obvious that when his party was successfully in an election a large picture of a crowing rooster was prominently displayed on the top of the front page.

During Mr. Gaudet's tenure as publisher there were two men occupying the editorial chair of The Patriot. Taken over on Mr. MacDonald's death was Neil A. Matheson who followed some years later by the late Calvin Lewis.

**FIRE HITS ANEW**  
Mr. Matheson handed the editorial department until his successful entry into federal politics in the general election in 1935. However, he only remained in Ottawa for the one term, refusing to offer again in 1937 and returning to the newspaper world. Since then he has held various positions from legislative reporter through news editor and is now provincial and farm editor of The Guardian and The Patriot.

When he left the paper in 1933 the editorial writing was taken over by Calvin Lewis, veteran reporter who had worked for both papers, and he stayed until his death last year.

In the meantime, a disastrous fire on August 31, 1937, took more sweep through the Richmond Street plant of The Patriot to leave the place a shambles. Some equipment was destroyed, much more serious damage.

However, publication of the daily paper continued when The Guardian offered Mr. Gaudet all of its facilities until he could



## EARLY MONEY LINK WITH PAST

Not exactly priceless (the originals would command a good price), bank notes of olden days provide a link with the days when several Island banks were operating. Later, when the province entered Confederation, such bank notes were hon-

ored by the Canadian Government and were over-stamped with the words "Canada Currency." An example of this is shown in the \$5 bill of The Bank of Prince Edward Island.

got a new plant established. But the strain of his loss, which was followed shortly afterwards by the death of his younger brother, proved too much for Mr. Gaudet, who was then over 70 years of age. Feeling the big task of reorganizing would be too much for him, The

Patriot became a joint operation with The Guardian. Since then The Patriot and The Guardian have been published from the same plant with full editorial and mechanical crews maintained for each.

In keeping with what has become modern newspapering practice in most, English speaking countries, several senior members of The Patriot's staff now provide the paper's editorials, each dealing with subjects in his own area of specialization. This procedure has been followed since the death of

Calvin Lewis. The chief contributor is Neil Matheson; a d Burton Lewis, an executive editor of both The Patriot and The Guardian, is another of those giving active attention to the present-day Patriot's editorial



## EUROPE AND PATRIOT BOTH BLAZE OUT

One of the most fantastic front pages in the history of this paper is that shown above when the August 1, 1914, issue of The Island Patriot screamed that Europe was ablaze for war. The

front page itself was ablaze as the entire sheet was printed in red ink. Some older residents may recall the pictures then playing at the Prince Edward Theatre.



## PEACE COMES AS 1914-1918 WAR ENDS

The joy and thankfulness of the coming of peace are both revealed in the front page of The Evening Patriot of Monday, November 11, 1918, as the First Great War came to an official end.

From this event came the annual celebration of Armistice Day which 46 years and two wars later is now known as Remembrance Day.

## Only five editors have occupied chair

Throughout its long history, it has never since its "founding father" started his first newspaper and kept it going through a weekly and then a semi-weekly and finally a daily. After a couple of its predecessors had changed hands, The Patriot had only five editors.

In 1925 W. Arthur Gaudet acquired control and took over the management. At that time Neil A. Matheson became editor and stayed until his resignation when he became a Member of Parliament for Quebec. Mr. Matheson has since then returned to the paper as Provincial and Farm Editor and is the author of the widely popular column "Across The Island". When he left the editor's chair it was taken over by the late Calvin Lewis who held it until his death last year. Today The Patriot editorials are generally written by Neil Matheson, Burton Lewis and Wally Ward with contributed editorials by other Patriot staff writers.

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