

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JULY 18, 1891.

THE PAST AND PRESENT.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND ITS EVENTFUL HISTORY.

From the Time it was Discovered by John Cabot, to the Next Session of the Legislature—When More History will be Made and Duly Chronicled.

CHARLOTTETOWN, July 15.—I promised some time ago to tell you something of our island, and although I am afraid it is a task too great for such a humble scribe as "Jack," yet I will make an effort now, "and if I chance to talk a little wild, forgive me.

It is supposed that Mr. John Cabot, then in service of Henry VII, of England, discovered this island on 24th June, 1497, (before my time you know) and that he called it the island of St. John, in honor of the day; but it is certain that one Verazani, a French navigator, re-discovered it in 1528, and that he claimed it for the king of France. Nothing was done to settle the country till 1663, when Captain Doublet got a grant of the island from France and started some fishing establishments along the coast. Up to 1713 France held it and Cape Breton, while England owned Nova Scotia, which at that time was called Acadia, and included what is now the province of New Brunswick. In 1759, after the fall of Louisburg, the British troops under Col. Rollo, took possession of the island, but it was not ceded to England until the treaty of Fontainebleau, in 1763.

Three years later the whole island was surveyed, divided into three counties, and sub-divided into 67 lots of about 20,000 acres each. These counties were called Kings, the capital Georgetown; Queen's, the capital Charlottetown, and Prince, the capital of which was named Princetown, but since changed to Summerside. Certainly, if names can do it, loyalty to the mother country will always have a strong hold in P. E. Island. In 1767 these lots were given by King George the Third to favorites of the crown. There were so many applicants for grants of land that the ballot box was resorted to, and in that way the lots were parcelled out. I wonder how they would work out such a problem in these days!

Among the fortunate ones who drew prizes on this occasion, we find names of many of our well-known citizens, among them being: Young, Stewart, Gordon,

McLain, Pownal, Montgomery, Stuart, Moore, Owens, Peters and Douglas.

The first governor was sent out in 1770, and in 1773 the first legislature met. This consisted of eighteen members, although the population at that time was not quite one thousand. In 1775 Governor Colbeck and his surveyor-general, Mr. Wright, were kidnapped and carried to Cambridge, Mass. by American privateers, who first looted Charlottetown. This is the only instance of a governor being stolen from Prince Edward Island, though strong hopes have been expressed in that direction since then.

In 1799 a bill to change the name of the island St. John was passed by the legislature, and Prince Edward, father of Queen Victoria, being in Halifax at the time, the island was called after him.

In 1824 the first newspaper, the Prince Edward Register was published, but as they had no "Etoile du Matin," "Rex," or "Jack," in those days, it must have been, as a rule, very dry reading. The population at this time was about 22,000. In 1832 the first steamboat was subsidized to run between Charlottetown and Pictou, twice each week, receiving \$1,500 a year for the service. This boat was named Pochontas, and remained on the route for several years. When Queen Victoria's reign began in 1837, Prince Edward Island had a population of 45,000. In 1852 a telegraph cable was laid between Capes Tormentine and Traverse, and in 1855 Charlottetown was incorporated, Mr. Robert Hutchinson being its first mayor. The island now contained over 71,000 souls.

I will have to skip a lot of interesting matter and get down to 1873, the time of confederation. The idea was mooted in 1864 when delegates met first in Charlottetown on 1st September, and again in Quebec on 10th of October of the same year. The terms of union here agreed upon did not suit the maritime provinces, and as far as Prince Edward Island was concerned, the idea dropped, and dropped hard.

In 1870 the government of the day passed a railway bill, authorizing the construction of the P. E. Island railway, as it now exists, or nearly so, within a term of three years. The contract was let to Messrs. Schreiber and Burpee, and the work begun in good shape. The people, however, were dissatisfied with the way in which the contract was let, and also, as is usually the case, by the fact that the road was not located through every dooryard in the province. So the government were defeated and a new election fought out on the railway policy. This resulted in a change of government, of which Mr. Haythorne was made leader. But in 1872 it was discovered that the island could not afford to build the railway, and that the only salvation for the province was to join the dominion of Canada. Early in 1873,

the leaders of the government, Messrs. Haythorne and Laird, went to Ottawa, and on returning, dissolved the house and appealed to the country on the question of confederation. But Mr. Pope contended that better terms could be obtained from Canada than those offered to Mr. Haythorne, and with this cry he succeeded in carrying a majority of the constituencies, and became leader of a new government. During the first session, a new delegation to Ottawa did succeed in getting \$20,000 more than Mr. Haythorne was to receive, and on their return, the union of the island with Canada was moved by the leader of the government, Mr. Pope, seconded by the leader of the opposition, Mr. Laird, and carried almost unanimously, so on the 1st of July, 1873, Prince Edward Island became a part of the great dominion of Canada. Mr. Robinson, who came out in 1870, was the last governor appointed by the crown to Prince Edward Island, and the only one whose salary was paid by the province. He was succeeded in 1873 by Sir Robert Hodgson, who was appointed and, of course, paid by the dominion.

Eighteen years have rolled away since we joined the other provinces of Canada. Prince Edward Island has now a population of about 125,000 and has made rapid strides in many other directions. The country is not rich in minerals, but from an agricultural point of view it cannot be excelled in any part of the dominion. Fisheries have been developed, stock raising gone into very largely, and Prince Edward Island horses are known far and wide as being equal to any, and surpassed by none. The present governor of Prince Edward Island is the Honorable Jedediah Slason Carvell, a native of New Brunswick, but for over 30 years a resident of Charlottetown. He is of distinguished personal appearance, suave in manner and disposition, and deservedly popular with all classes.

The government led by the Honorable Neil McLeod of this city, was defeated a few weeks ago, and a new administration formed under the leadership of the Hon. Frederick Peters, a well-known and successful barrister of Charlottetown. Associated with him are Hon. Mr. McLean, Hon. Mr. McMillan, Hon. Mr. Farquharson, Hon. Mr. Laird, Hon. Mr. Forbes, Hon. Mr. Kichham, Hon. Mr. Sinclair, and Hon. Mr. Richards. Hon. Mr. Peters is a native of this city and a son of the late Judge Peters who was buried but a week ago. The premier is a very good looking fellow, an energetic, hard-working one, too; a man who likes to get things straight and keep them so. He has the rare gift, in a politician, of being able to give a square, honest answer to the many questions by which he is assailed.

The next in order, as in place, is the Hon. Angus McMillan, provincial secretary and treasurer and commissioner of lands. He is a man possessed of great

power of thought, and has will enough to carry out his good ideas. He represents Summerside in the house, but is known from one end of the island to the other as a man who can always be depended upon.

The minister of public works is the Hon. James McLean, member for Souris, and he appears to be the right man in the right place. He is tall and fine looking, pleasant and affable in manner.

The Hon. James Richards, of Biddeford, is a member of the government without portfolio. He is well known both here and in the neighboring provinces; is generous to a fault and exceedingly popular; has been a member of the house for nearly twenty years, and is one of the most useful men in it.

Hon. Donald Farquharson, of West River, is a wealthy, energetic, and careful man who adds great strength to his party.

Hon. Alex. Laird, of Bedeque, member of the government without portfolio, and has a seat in the legislative council as well. He is an intelligent, well-read man, well up in parliamentary usage, and would be a credit to any legislature.

Hon. Mr. Forbes, from Vernon River, is a new man to us of the capital, but appears to be a credit to his lot (49).

Hon. Peter Sinclair, is a quiet, careful legislator, and a fine specimen of the class of farmers who have helped so materially to make Prince Edward Island what it is.

Hon. Mr. Kichham, is a good looking merchant of fair ability, and always votes right.

There appears to be a general feeling in the country, that the new government shall have a fair chance to make a success of governing the island, and the new administration appear to desire only a fair field and no favor. The upper house or legislative council, contains fifteen members; half the number being elected by the people every three years. There are many reforms in contemplation, and I must say they are much needed. The first is to reduce the number of legislators; to cut down the upper house to six and the lower to fifteen members; to put these into one chamber and do away with the old legislative council, which is a relic of bygone ages. This reduction would save a great deal of expense in the matter of legislation, which has been costing far too much for a province of this size. Then it is proposed that the house shall sit but once in two years, and this would save half the present expense. If I were the government, I would follow the Irishman's plan, and if sitting once in two years would save half, I would sit once in four, and save it all! Then, the public lands are to be sold, and the government relieved from the care and cost of looking after that branch. This would enable them to do away with the office of "commissioner of lands," and be another great saving to the country. At present all the lots, etc., are governed by the houses of assembly.

There are no municipalities, as in other places; roads, bridges, etc., being built and kept in repair by the powers at Charlottetown. As the people cannot be taxed, not even for roads, "how to make both ends meet" is a problem that has puzzled many wise men in the legislative halls of Prince Edward Island. This government proposes to divide the island into municipalities and parishes; to give these local bodies power to raise money for their own roads, etc., as is done elsewhere, and, in that way, give the people more general satisfaction, while, at the same time, lessening the expense of the public works' department in Charlottetown. As for taxing the province to raise the amount of money necessary to enable the government to start with a clean sheet, I am afraid that our people, who have been accustomed to freedom from taxation, would arise in their wrath and smite down any government who attempted such a thing. It should be done, however, and I am glad to say that I think Mr. Peters has pluck enough to try and do that, or anything else he considers right, and I, in my very humble way, wish him luck.

The condition of the houses of assembly was simply a disgrace to any province, but great improvements are to be made. Can you fancy a house of parliament without a single drain? Well! Such was, and still is the case here, but I notice the drain pipes are on the ground, and excavations for drain already begun. Everything will be drained except the resources of the country; that they say was done by the late government! The buildings are to be papered and painted, fitted with electric lights and steam heating apparatus. Water is also to be put in throughout, and bath rooms, wash basins, etc., to be added. The hands of this government are clean and they intend to keep them so! The smoking room is to be renovated; the bar-room removed to a neighbor's house; the janitor to be put in the attic; a bowling alley and billiard room to go in the basement and there is some talk of a restaurant being added as well. The library is to be cleaned and rearranged. At present there seems no method in its madness, and it is a shame to let valuable books and documents go to ruin for the want of a little care. Many volumes have been borrowed and not returned, and for this reason a student would find it an impossibility to get complete information upon any subject of history. Please do up the library first, Mr. Peters, if it be in your department. An act is to be passed by which government employees, outside of heads of departments, will be forbidden to vote at any election, on pain of dismissal. A neat iron fence is to be built around Parliament square; government house is to be completely renovated and fitted up with all modern conveniences; a great change from its present condition. A railway to Bellast and Murray Harbor is spoken

of, and also a bridge across Hillsborough river near this city; in short there are, as I said in the beginning, enough reforms and improvements (they are not always the same thing) in contemplation, if carried out, to guarantee to the new government a lease of power for many years. But every cloud has a silver lining, and I do not think that all the acts of this government are right. It is neither fair nor just to discharge old and faithful servants, simply because they were employed by previous governments. Give the old fellows a chance, Mr. Premier, for a person who has been in government employ for twenty years or so, would find it very hard, indeed almost impossible, to make a living by work. "Be just and fear not. Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's, thy God's, and truth's!" JACK.

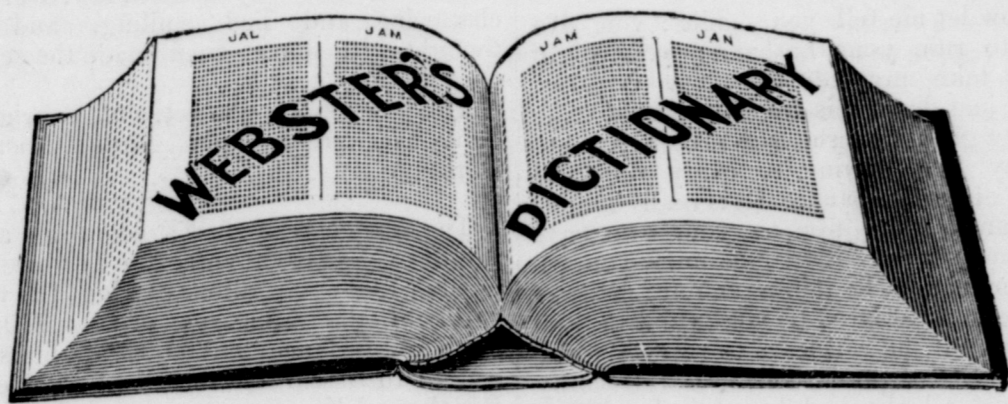
Herrman's Greatest Trick.

People have repeatedly asked me which of my tricks have pleased me the most, and which I take the most delight in performing. Naturally the effort that brings the greatest success is regarded by a man his best. I consider the trick of restoring the shattered mirror as my most famous one. This I had the honor of performing before the czar of Russia upon an invitation to give an exhibition at his court. It was done unexpectedly to the spectators, and was not down to the regular bill. While playing billiards with the attaches of the court after the performance, the czar being present in the saloon, I shot a ball with all my strength against a plate glass mirror extending from floor to ceiling. It was shattered into fifty pieces. Consternation was depicted on every countenance; on none more plainly than my own.

While the czar courteously waived my apology, considering the destruction of the mirror as trifling, and ordered the game to proceed, I could easily see that my supposed awkwardness made a disagreeable impression. With the czar's permission I examined the mirror to estimate the damage done and the possibility of repairing it. While so engaged one of the suite playfully challenged me to exercise my art and make the mirror whole again, never dreaming that his challenge was the very one I wanted, and not considering the successful acceptance of it as possible. I hesitated an instant, and then ordered the mirror to be covered with a cloth entirely concealing it from view. On the removal of the cloth, after ten minutes, the mirror was found without a flaw, and as perfect as before the damage.

I will leave it to my readers' imagination to decide how this trick was done.—A. Herrman.

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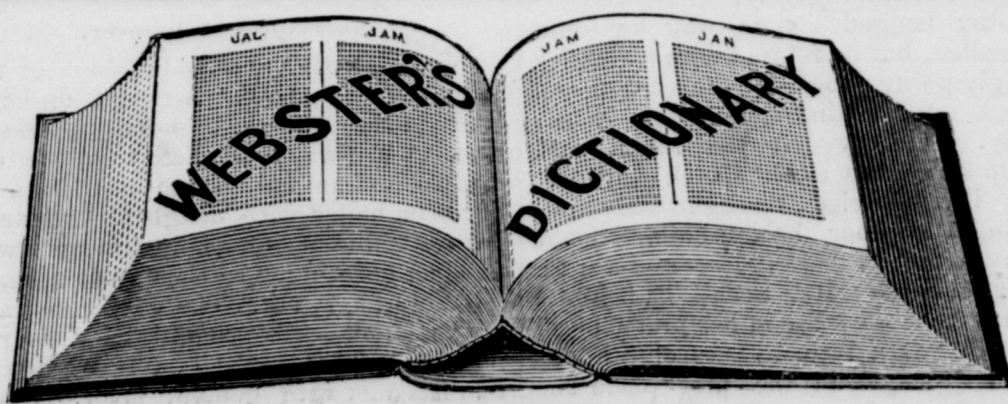


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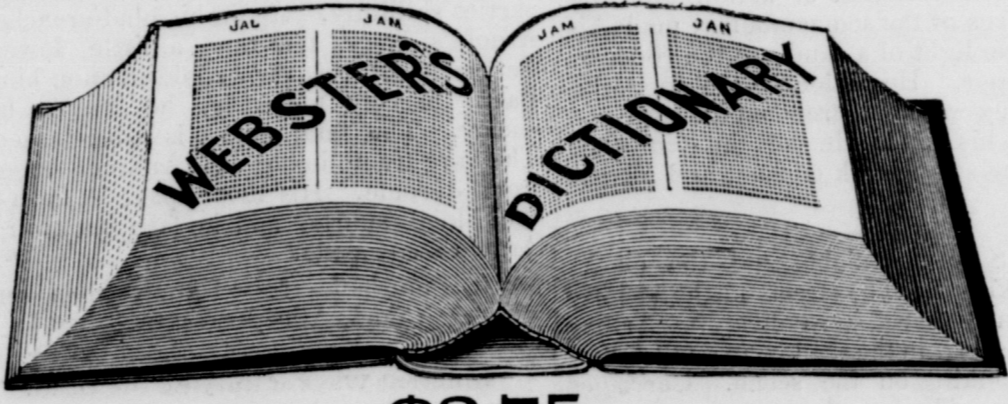


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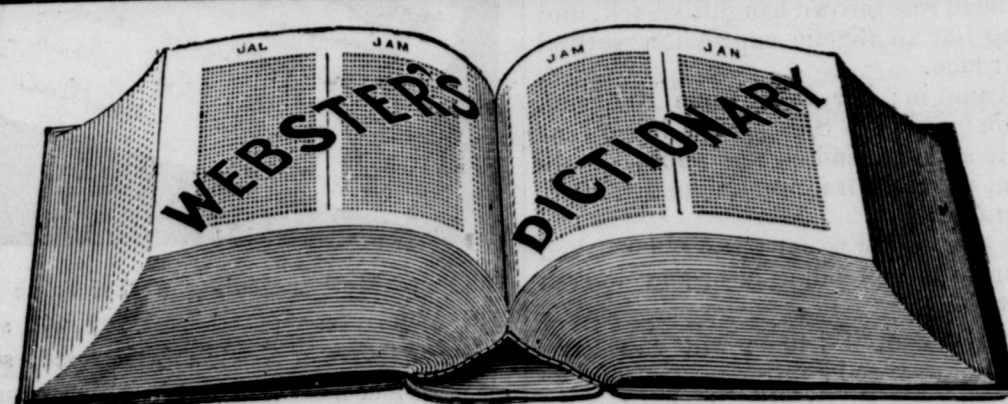


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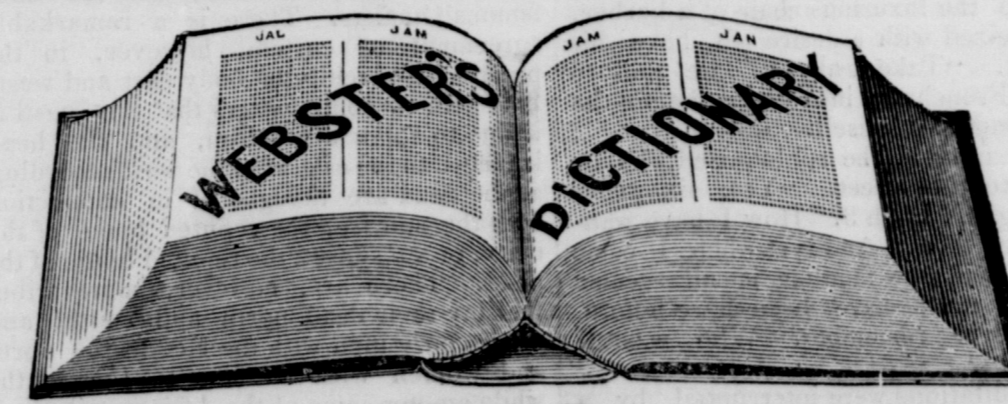


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