

**MANUFACTURING PARADISE:  
TOURISM, DEVELOPMENT AND MYTHMAKING ON PRINCE EDWARD  
ISLAND 1939-1973**

by

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## Abstract

Tourism is today Prince Edward Island's second-largest industry and an integral part of Island society. Despite the industry's current importance, Island historians have generally neglected the study of tourism's development in the twentieth century. Those who have given Island tourism scholarly attention have often downplayed its historical importance. This thesis argues that tourism played a transformative role in the history of twentieth-century Prince Edward Island, particularly in the post war era.

Tourism growth on twentieth century Prince Edward Island largely occurred as a result of external factors, such as the development of the automobile as a reliable and affordable means of travel and the ever-increasing affluence and mobility of post Second World War North Americans. Some members of the Island's political and commercial elite recognized tourism's economic potential and tried to develop the industry. Island tourism promoters sold the Island to tourists as an anti-modern Garden of Eden while simultaneously selling tourism to the Island government as a means of attracting economic development and achieving prosperity. There was a contradiction built into this tourism strategy, however: On one hand tourism depended on the Island's anti-modern image to attract visitors. On the other hand, this anti-modern image became ever more difficult to maintain as increasing tourism brought increasing progress and development.

The rate of tourist development increased sharply as the federal government became involved in resolving the issue of regional economic disparity. Island tourism promoters used Charlottetown's status as 'the birthplace of Confederation' to sell tourism to the federal government as an economic development tool. Festivals were held in 1939 and 1964 to commemorate the Island's birthplace status. The success of these celebrations helped engender a spirit of cooperation between the federal and provincial government. By the mid-1960s it was generally accepted by both federal and provincial government planners that tourism responded well to carefully-planned capital investments and could serve as a useful economic development tool. In 1969, when the federal and provincial government signed the Comprehensive Development Plan, a fifteen-year scheme designed to modernize the Island's economy and society, tourism was a central plank in the Plan and received unprecedented funding from both Ottawa and Charlottetown.

The Plan's modernizing message could not be reconciled with tourism's promotion of an anti-modern paradise, however. Some Islanders began to scrutinize their province's anti-modern mythology and question the desirability of tourist development. When yet another celebration was held in 1973 to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Island joining Confederation, it became the stage for a debate between competing visions of Prince Edward Island society, and the role tourism had come to play in that society.



## **Acknowledgments**

There are many people to whom I owe my gratitude for their assistance in writing this thesis. I must begin by thanking my mother, Kathleen McRae, who introduced me to Prince Edward Island at an early age and passed on to me a deep affection for the province of her birth. More recently, my mother has provided me with much-needed emotional and material support. I also thank my brother and sister, who offered encouragement and were even willing to run the occasional errand, picking up odds and ends I had missed on my research trips back home.

Many individuals, and not just my family, assisted my research efforts. In the preliminary stages of my research, friendly discussions with Island historians David Weale and Edward MacDonald at the University of Prince Edward Island provided much-needed guidance, and for this I owe them my heartfelt thanks. The staff of the Prince Edward Island Public Archives (PAPEI) in Charlottetown should also receive my gratitude; their patience, understanding and expertise made my time at their institution very rewarding. Similarly, the employees at the Robertson Library's PEI Collection in Charlottetown were always willing to assist me in any way they could. As well, I wish to thank George Fraser Jr. and Jeannine Fraser, for being so willing to share with me memories of their father George Fraser Sr., one of the chief architects of the Island's postwar tourism industry. Thanks also goes out to their sister Evelyn Daley, who overheard me talking about her father at PAPEI and put me into contact with her siblings.

Once the research was done and writing finally began, I was aided by a legion of proofreaders. Foremost among these unofficial editors were three good friends: Nicola Luksic, Chad Thompson and April Cavender, all of whom never seemed to tire of

critiquing multiple drafts of this thesis. On the administrative front, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Graduate Secretary Joan White, who rescued me from the red tape of academia more times than I care to remember. My most important acknowledgment, however, goes out to my supervisors Duncan McDowall and Del Muise, whom I cannot thank enough. These two men had the patience of Job and never gave up on me- even when I had come very close to giving up on myself. Without their support and guidance this thesis would not have been possible.

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*Dedicated to the memory of  
John Keith McRae  
1948-2001*

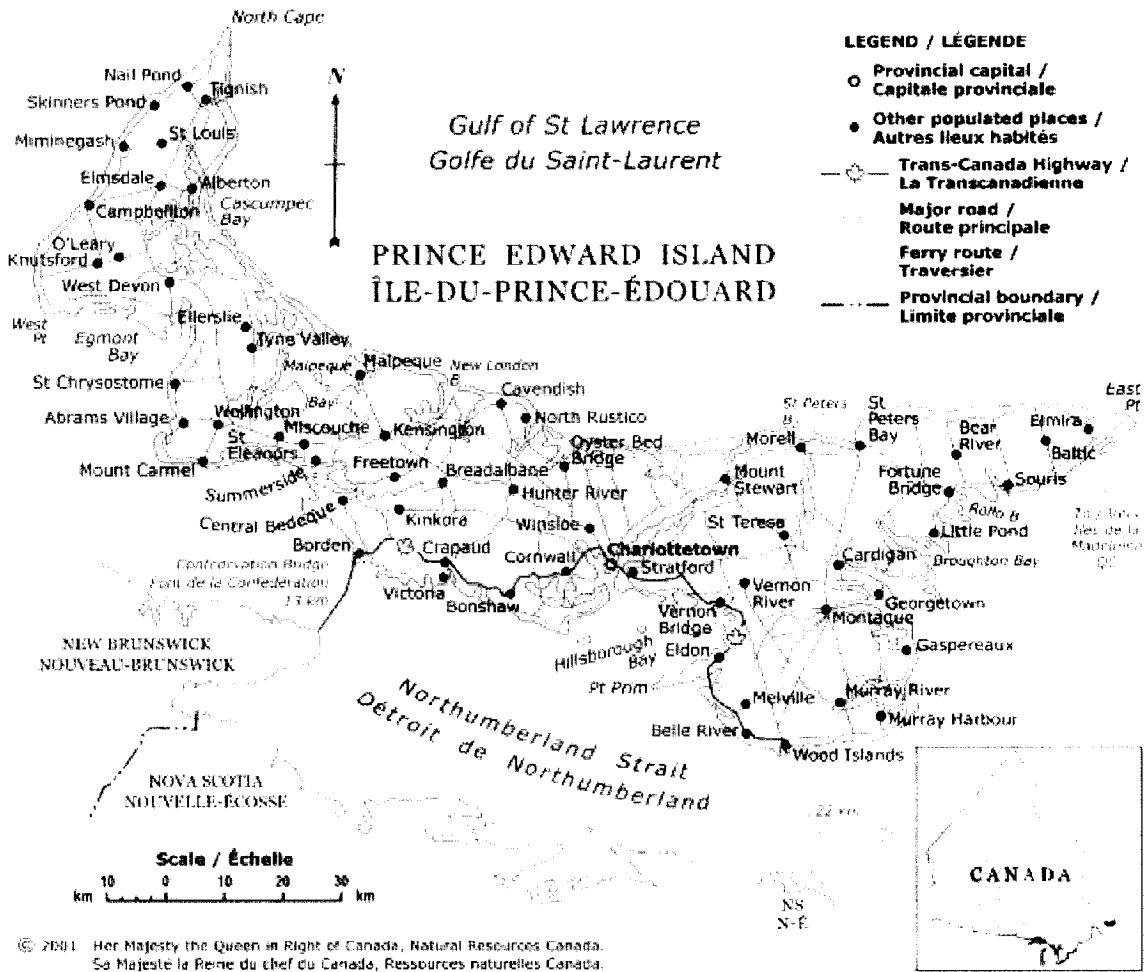


Figure 1. Map of Prince Edward Island (Courtesy of <http://atlas.gc.ca>).

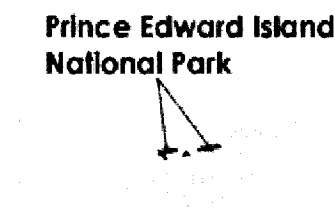


Figure 2. Location of the Prince Edward Island National Park (Courtesy of [www.seecanadianparks.com](http://www.seecanadianparks.com)).

## Introduction

Hotel accommodation, which was until recently on a rather limited scale, has latterly branched out into very respectable proportions.... while our climate is everything that can be wished for by invalids or others who might be disposed to leave the "Sultry South" during the Regency of *Sirius*, and travel north in search of health or pleasure in a bracing atmosphere and more temperate region. All this, taken in connection with the facilities of *transit* afforded by the Island Steam Navigation Company, will, it may reasonably be expected, as our Island becomes better known abroad, occasion a large increase in the number of respectable visitors frequenting this gem of the water known as Prince Edward Island.

--John LePage, *Visits of Distinguished Personages to Prince Edward Island*, 1869.<sup>1</sup>

That's the trouble with The Island...Sports. Those Sports kept coming, more and more. We didn't object because the Island is a visible sample of Heaven, and this evidence of the truth of religion shouldn't be kept from anybody, as long as they came in reasonable numbers. But then some Sports started calling the tourist trade an industry. Nobody was murdering tourists on the sly and canning them for export... still those Sports kept calling tourism an industry. They started advertising The Island and now so many Sports come here in summertime it's hard to find an Islander in the crowd.

--Milton Acorn, "Islanders are..." in *The Island Means Minago: Poems from Prince Edward Island*, c. 1975.<sup>2</sup>

What is history but a fable agreed upon?

--Napoleon Bonaparte

Pessimism and optimism-- over the years Prince Edward Islanders have thought of their province's tourism industry as both a blessing and a curse. John LePage, the self-styled "Island Minstrel" of the Confederation era, saw a prosperous Island frequented by "respectable visitors." One hundred years later, the "People's Poet," Milton Acorn, spoke of a province that had lost control of its own destiny, a land crowded not with respectable visitors, but swarmed by unwanted "Sports." Islanders have held both these points of view and as is often the case, there is some truth on both sides of the coin.

Tourism is now big business on Prince Edward Island; much bigger than the poet John LePage could have imagined. It is the province's second largest industry, outdone only by agriculture. The total number of visitors coming to the Island topped the one

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<sup>1</sup> John LePage, *Visits of Distinguished Personages to Prince Edward Island*. (Charlottetown: Henry Cooper, 1869), iii-iv.

<sup>2</sup> Milton Acorn, "Islanders are...", in *The Island Means Minago: Poems from Prince Edward Island*. (Toronto, NC Press, 1975), 98.

million mark in 1997, with the opening of the Confederation Bridge linking the Island to New Brunswick. In the year 2000 1.18 million tourists arrived on the Island's red shores, contributing approximately \$301.4 million to the local economy.<sup>3</sup> These impressive statistics were not created overnight, nor were they won without a price.

The costs of the province's tourist success go far beyond the endemic overcrowding referred to by Milton Acorn. The arrival of mass tourism on Prince Edward Island in the post-Second World War era went hand-in-hand with the arrival of modernization and the decline of the old agrarian order in the province. When writer and historian David Weale first arrived on Prince Edward Island as a child in the 1940s, the old order was still strong:

When we arrived on Prince Edward Island in 1948, the old order of rural life was still more or less intact. For my parents, my sister, and myself, it was unlike anything we had ever experienced. Our move from Calgary hadn't entailed leaving the country, yet it seemed like emigration to a strange new world; or, more accurately, like emigration to a strange old world.... I was too young at the time to reflect on the nature of the society I had entered, but thinking back I now understand it was, at its heart, an ancient and bequeathed order, filled with manifestations of a folk tradition stretching back into the distant European past; a mutated old-country society which still operated according to many of the customs and manners that had crossed the ocean with the pioneers.<sup>4</sup>

Within the space of one generation however, the "Island way of life" was radically altered and by the 1970s only scattered remnants of the old folk culture remained. Island historians call this process of economic, social and political transformation "the *Break*." Historian Edward MacDonald emphasizes that the *Break* was not unique to Prince Edward Island: "Most of rural North America experienced essentially the same process

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<sup>3</sup> Prince Edward Island: "Land Cradled in the Waves", Information booklet (Provincial Treasury, Information Services, 2001) 4.

<sup>4</sup> David Weale, Them Times. (Charlottetown: Institute of Island Studies, 1992), 1.



during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The difference on Prince Edward Island was its compression into a few short decades.”<sup>5</sup>

The growth of tourism on post-war Prince Edward Island was both a cause and effect of modernization in the province. Tourism was the inevitable outcome of mainland North America’s post-war affluence and new hedonistic focus on leisure. Sociologists Carlton S. Van Doren and Sam A. Lollar note that after years of war and deprivation, North Americans were ready to enjoy their newfound prosperity: “Americans did not want to be asked, as they were during the war, is this trip really necessary?”<sup>6</sup> Prince Edward Island’s post-war tourism operators saw these trends as a way to diversify and buttress their economy at a time when the province’s traditional industries of agriculture and fishing were faltering in the face of modernity. The Island’s tourism boosters realized they had an excellent product to sell to the rest of the world- that product was the Island itself.

Prince Edward Island’s main selling point to tourists has always been its anti-modern aesthetic. Sociologist Dean McCannell explains that modernity is often accompanied by a self-loathing complex:

Modern society, only partly disengaged from industrial structures, is especially vulnerable to overthrow from within through nostalgia, sentimentality and other tendencies to regress to a previous state, a “Golden Age,” which retrospectively always appears to have been more orderly or normal.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Edward MacDonald, If You’re Stronghearted: Prince Edward Island in the Twentieth Century. (Summerside: Williams and Crue Ltd., 2000), 227.

<sup>6</sup> Carlton S. Van Doren and Sam A. Lollar, “The Consequences of Forty Years of Tourism Growth,” in Annals of Tourism Research. (Vol. 12, 1985), 471. See also Larry Krotz, Tourists: How our Fastest Growing Industry is Changing the World. (Boston: Faber and Faber Inc., 1996), 10. Krotz comments: “It took a full century, until the end of the Second World War, before people felt free to indulge in uninhibited pleasure and hedonism in their travels and consider these as defensible virtues.”

<sup>7</sup> Dean MacCannell, The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 82.

Historian John Jakle notes, that for tourists seeking to escape the crushing homogeneity of North American culture, an idealized past has become an attractive destination:

“Historical sites offered a sense of permanence in an ever-evolving world of new, highly standardized landscapes.”<sup>8</sup> The Island, with its unspoilt green fields and quiet red beaches, was an anti-modern paradise; a land forgotten by time. Sociologist Judith Alder notes the appeal of the province’s pastoral idyll:

From the beginning, whenever ideas of Island tourism moved beyond a simple appreciation for warm sea water and sandy beaches, the Island was painted in a nostalgic mode. Pastoral sensibility has long accompanied the tourists’ retreat to the countryside, generating, here as elsewhere, second thoughts about progress. The emotional core of the Islands pastoralism is an attachment to a scene experienced as precious and fragile, just because it is regarded as having already disappeared elsewhere....<sup>9</sup>

Rural charm is hardly exclusive to the Island. The province does have an exclusive *brand* of rural charm, however. Political scientist David Milne identifies Prince Edward Island’s sylvan, anti-modern identity as the “garden myth.” The myth, as described by Milne, was the linchpin of Island identity for the greater part of the twentieth century, and the key to understanding Island politics:

But if we are to get beyond mere descriptions of Island politics and personalities, we must reckon with unexamined conventions. For at the centre of the question of identity- of the “Island way of life”- has rested a garden myth, which organized for Islanders an ideal picture of themselves as an independent agricultural people protected from the world in an unspoiled pastoral setting.<sup>10</sup>

The garden myth is also the key to understanding the Island’s tourism industry. The myth provided Prince Edward Island’s tourism promoters with an attractive, pre-packaged brand of anti-modernism to sell to tourists. The tourist gaze was directed to a

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<sup>8</sup> John Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America*. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 286.

<sup>9</sup> Judith Alder, “Tourism and Pastoral: A Decade of Debate,” in Verner Smitheram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta, ed., *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980*. (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982), 132.

<sup>10</sup> David Milne, “Politics in a Beleaguered Garden,” in Verner Smitheram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta, ed., *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980*. (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982), 40.

series of “signposts,” or “markers” that identified the Island as a worthy tourist destination. Garden myth signposts were numerous and varied, including concepts as vague and generalized as the Island’s rural “folk” and objects as specific as the Green Gables house which author L.M. Montgomery had made famous. All these markers shared one thing in common. The garden myth infused them with the same meaning; under the tourist gaze they all came to represent the anti-modern “Island-ness”<sup>11</sup> so many travellers fervently sought. For the province’s tourist promoters, the garden myth was more than just rhetoric; it was a veritable goldmine.

Over the course of the 1950s and 60s the tourism industry experienced remarkable growth; each year an increasing number of visitors arrived on the red shores of “The Garden of the Gulf.” The industry’s infrastructure and facilities expanded to meet the growing demand. The industry’s early post-war expansion, driven primarily by external forces, was often unplanned and erratic. Historian Edward MacDonald notes that the modernization process that was the *Break* “...was partly natural and partly artificial, partly deliberate and partly dysfunctional.”<sup>12</sup> The same could be said of the Island’s tourism industry. Tourism’s impact varied across the province and had uneven effects on different sectors of the economy and society. No one organization effectively directed the industry’s expansion.

Erratic or not, tourism’s growth looked impressive in comparison to the poor post-war performance of the Island’s traditional industries of agriculture and fishing;

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<sup>11</sup> MacCannell defines a tourist attraction as an “empirical relationship between a *tourist*, a *sight*, and a *marker* (a piece of information about a sight),” *The Tourist*, 41. British sociologist John Urry, in his book *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. (London: SAGE Publications, 1990), explains that “The tourist gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs”, 3. Urry also notes that “The contemporary gaze is increasingly signposted. There are markers which identify the things and places worthy of our gaze”, 47.

<sup>12</sup> Edward MacDonald, *If You’re Stronghearted*, 227.

tourism began to be seen by many as the Island's economic salvation. The provincial and federal governments increasingly thought of tourism as an actual *industry* that could be encouraged to greater productivity through detailed planning and strategic investment. In the mid to late 1960s government planners took this vision one step further. Tourism became a development tool that would be used to create infrastructure and employment, raising the standard of living in the province.

This vision was not without its contradictions. Tourism used the anachronistic image of an isolated, old-world society to attract tourists to the Island's red shores. Conversely, tourism altered the very nature of the isolated, old-world society it sought to promote. Thus a great paradox was created: tourism became the central feature of the plan to modernize Prince Edward Island, but at the same time required the Island to retain its underdeveloped rural character. Tourism was simultaneously weaving and unravelling the garden myth it depended upon for its success.

This research examines the use of tourism as a development strategy on Prince Edward Island and the resulting conundrums it created. Tourism's post-war transformation from a cottage industry to an engine of economic development and the social, political and economic effects of this transformation constitutes the focus of this work. Within this era of transition, this research will pay special attention to three pivotal events in the rise of the Island's tourist industry, three celebrations that all drew their inspiration from the Charlottetown conference of 1864.

In 1864 delegates from the governments of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and the United Province of Upper and Lower Canada (Quebec and Ontario) had met at the legislature building in Charlottetown to discuss the idea of

colonial union. Three years later, in 1867, the British North America Act was signed and the Dominion of Canada came into being. The Charlottetown Conference also gave birth to one of Prince Edward Island's most important tourist attractions: Charlottetown became the *birthplace* of Confederation. City mayor T.H. Havilland had been present at the conference and was quick to recognize the meeting's significance: "...it may yet be said that here, on little Prince Edward Island, in 1864, was that meeting held which has produced one of the greatest nations on the face of God's earth."<sup>13</sup> And so a legend began to grow: on a tiny idyllic Island peopled by quaint farmers and fishermen, men of vision had sown seeds of friendship which grew into a great and powerful nation. The pastoral aesthetic of the garden myth bonded with Canadian nationalism to become the "birthplace myth."

By the twentieth century, the opportunity to transform the Island into a national shrine was too alluring for the province's tourism boosters and political elite to pass up. Three major celebrations focusing on Prince Edward Island's role in Confederation were held in the province between 1939 and 1973. The first celebration, held in the summer of 1939, commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conference. The celebration created a growing awareness of tourism's economic potential among the Island's elite, and took the first step in establishing the province's status as a national shrine. 1939 served as the prototype for future celebrations. The 1964 Centenary of the conference featured a year-long celebration and was heavily funded by the federal and provincial governments. The

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<sup>13</sup> Edward Whelan, The Union of the British Provinces : A Brief Account of the Several Conferences Held in the Maritime Provinces and in Canada, in September and October, 1864, on the Proposed Confederation of the Provinces, Together with a Report of the Speeches Delivered by the Delegates from the Provinces, on Important Public Occasions / Compiled by the Hon. Edward Whelan. (Charlottetown: G.T. Hazard, 1865), 16.

1964 celebration was a turning point for the Island tourism industry. Both the federal and provincial government became convinced that extensive planning and heavy investment in the industry could enhance the local economy. Finally, the centenary of the Island's entrance into Confederation was celebrated in 1973. The 1973 centennial represented the apex of the federal and provincial government's attempts to use tourism, the birthplace myth and massive amounts of funds to spur economic growth. At the same time, 1973 saw the first strong symbolic resistance to the vision of the Island presented by tourism boosters and government planners. The 1973 celebration became the arena for a debate between competing visions of Prince Edward Island's past, present and future.

The province's love-hate relationship with tourism is unique, but certainly not unprecedented. Since the end of the Second World War, armies of affluent tourists spread out and invaded not just the Island, but every corner of the planet; tourism has become the biggest employer and fastest-growing industry in the world.<sup>14</sup> Tourism is a global phenomenon, and Prince Edward Island's tourist industry can only be understood in the context of economic and political forces much larger than the province itself.

Modern mass tourism began in the 1840s when Thomas Cook first organized package tours to the English seaside for middle-class Britons.<sup>15</sup> It is only since the 1960s, however, that the global tourist industry has truly become a popular subject for scholarly work.<sup>16</sup> It was in that decade that the World Tourism Organization, headquartered in Madrid, began tracking tourism as a global social-economic

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<sup>14</sup> Larry Krotz, Tourists: How our Fastest Growing Industry is Changing the World, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that as early as the 1930s, some academics, particularly economists, had begun to recognize and write about tourism's importance to national economies. See Arthur Joseph Norval, The Tourist Industry: A National and International Survey. (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1936).

phenomenon. To the present tourism has attracted a vast corpus of literature, including numerous books and even its own academic journal, the *Annals of Tourism Research*.

Earlier writers, particularly sociologists, tended to look at tourists and the tourism industry with condescension. 1960s sociologist Daniel J. Boorstin depicts tourists as superficial visitors with no desire to understand the places they visit. Instead tourists seek out fabricated attractions, what Boorstin refers to as “pseudo-events.”<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, writers Louis Turner and John Ash identify tourism as a new form of economic imperialism. Underdeveloped regions of the globe become what Turner and Ash refer to as “The Pleasure Periphery,” invaded and subjugated by hordes of affluent tourists.<sup>18</sup>

More recent work on tourists and tourism has not taken such a one-sided view of the subject. Dean MacCannell redefines the tourist as “one of the best models for modern man in general.”<sup>19</sup> In their continual travels, tourists are seeking meaning and authenticity they do not believe exists in their everyday life. Modernity only exists and has meaning in contrast to the places the tourist visits. When viewed in this light, tourist attractions “...are precisely analogous to the religious symbolism of primitive peoples.”<sup>20</sup>

Much like MacCannell, sociologist John Urry argues that tourists are aware of the distinction between “authentic” and “spurious” tourist attractions, and even uses the term “post-tourist” to identify tourists who revel in the inauthentic nature of many tourist

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<sup>17</sup> Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo Events in America*. (New York: Harper Press, 1964), 99.

<sup>18</sup> Louis Turner and John Ash, *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 11. Many scholars of the era shared Turner and Ash's views of tourism as a revived economic imperialism and applied them to Prince Edward Island as well; see Monica Driscoll, “Tourism, with a Special Emphasis on its Relationship to Underdevelopment: Part 1.” *The Abegweit Review*. Vol. 2, No. 11, spring 1975, pp. 80-92., and Mary Boyd, *Paradises in the Sun: Tourism in Prince Edward Island and the Caribbean*. Vertical File, Tourist Trade “B”, Robertson Library, University of Prince Edward Island.

<sup>19</sup> MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

attractions. Urry concludes that authenticity is not the only basis for tourism: “Rather, one key feature would seem to be that there is difference between one’s normal place of residence/work and the object of the tourist gaze.”<sup>21</sup>

While many sociologists and economists have looked at the historical features of the tourist industry as part of their work, historians themselves have been slow to take an interest in tourism.<sup>22</sup> As late as 1985, geography professor John Jakle opened his book on the historical development of automobile travel in North America with the words “I present this book as an argument for renewed scholarly interest in tourism.”<sup>23</sup> In recent years academic historians have responded enthusiastically to Jakle’s plea. Tourism is finally an attractive topic for the historian. Dubinsky, Lenček, MacEachern, McDowall, McKay, Overton and Sears, to name a few, have all published extensive treatises on the history of tourism in Canada and around the world.<sup>24</sup> The study of tourism is often combined with the new histories, such as business, labour, gender and environmental history, creating interdisciplinary works. Sadly, very little of this scholarship has been directed at the “Garden of the Gulf” and its now-thriving tourism industry. In particular, there has been little scholarship that places modern tourism in the oft-discussed framework of Canadian regional development.

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<sup>21</sup> Urry, The Tourist Gaze, 11.

<sup>22</sup> Countless books and articles by economists and sociologists deal with tourism’s historical development. One good example is Carlton S. Van Doren’s “The Consequences of Forty Years of Tourism Growth,” in the Annals of Tourism Research. Vol. 12, 1985, pp. 467-489.

<sup>23</sup> John Jakle, The Tourist, xi.

<sup>24</sup> Karen Dubinsky, The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999); Lena Lenček and Gideon Bosker, The Beach: The History of Paradise on Earth. (New York: Viking, 1998); Alan MacEachern, Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001); Duncan McDowall, Another World: Bermuda and the Rise of Modern Tourism. (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1999); Ian McKay, The Quest of the Folk. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994); and James Overton, Ed. Making a World of Difference: Essays on Tourism, Culture and Development in Newfoundland. (St. John’s: ISER Books, 1996); John Sears, Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.



Historian Alan MacEachern's master's thesis *No Island is an Island: A History of Tourism on Prince Edward Island 1870-1939* and historian Ralph Hazelton's short paper *Tourism in a Small Community: Prince Edward Island* are the sole major works dealing specifically with Island tourism.<sup>25</sup> Out of necessity, both MacEachern and Hazelton give a broad overview of tourism's development. MacEachern however, does focus on the efforts of tourism boosters in the early twentieth century, and looks at how the Island came to be seen as an attractive tourist destination by affluent North Americans. In the post-war era, documentation is even sparser, consisting only of the brief article by sociologist Judith Alder about the Island's image as a rural paradise, entitled "Tourism and Pastoral: A Decade of Debate."

This oversight of an important field of study on the part of Island historians makes more sense when the general scholarship on the history of twentieth-century Prince Edward Island is taken into account. Historian J.M Bumstead notes that very little historical writing has been published focusing on the Island not only during the twentieth century, but during the *entire* post-Confederation era.<sup>26</sup> Earlier works on Island history tend to focus on the pre-confederation era, and what post-1873 scholarship was offered often lacked depth and detail. The prime example of this is the 1973 collection of historical essays (a 1973 Centennial project) entitled *Canada's Smallest Province: A*

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<sup>25</sup> Alan MacEachern, "No Island is an Island." M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1991; Ralph Hazelton, "Tourism in a Small Community: Prince Edward Island," Presented at the Bermuda/Canada Conference, Hamilton, Bermuda, 1984.

<sup>26</sup>Bumsted, J.M. "'The Only Island there Is': The Writing of Prince Edward Island History." *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980*. Ed. Verner Smitheram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta. Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982, pp. 11-38.

*History of P.E.I.* Of thirteen chapters, only four dealt even superficially with post-Confederation topics.<sup>27</sup>

Historian Ian Ross Robertson notes that even after Prince Edward Island historiography was transformed in the 1970s by a surge in public interest and a new generation of politically-motivated historians such as Harry Baglole and David Weale, new works still focused almost exclusively on the pre-Confederation era.<sup>28</sup> The collection of essays entitled *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980* (which includes both Alder's and Bumsted's articles) is still the only book focusing solely on post-war Prince Edward Island. Furthermore, no comprehensive narrative history of the province's twentieth century was available until the year 2000, when Edward MacDonald published *If You're Stronghearted: Prince Edward Island in the Twentieth Century*.

Two of the most obvious reasons for the Island's lack of twentieth-century scholarship are the province's small academic community and the tendency of Island writers to focus narrowly on local history.<sup>29</sup> Ironically, the garden myth may also have had a hand in stifling work on the Island's recent history. MacEachern worries that "...Islanders have begun to believe their own press clippings, and have decided that the past century *has* been history-less for the province, that theirs is a society that has not

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<sup>27</sup> Francis W.P. Bolger, ed. *Canada's Smallest Province: A History of P.E.I.* (Charlottetown: P.E.I. 1973 Centennial Commission, 1973).

<sup>28</sup> Ian Ross Robertson, "Historical Writing on Prince Edward Island since 1975," in *Acadiensis*, Autumn 1988, pp. 157-183.

<sup>29</sup> Robertson notes that "At a popular level, over the past 15 years amateur historians, working in groups or as individuals, have produced approximately 75 community histories of Island towns, villages and rural districts." *Ibid*, 158. Robertson also remarks that such local focus can sometimes infringe upon broader academic studies. One case in point is *The Island Magazine*, a leading light of the new historiography on Prince Edward Island. The magazine underwent a "radical change" when folklorist Jim Hornby became editor: "Some articles based on authoritative research continued to appear... but they were mixed with light pieces, personal reminiscences, expressions of sentiment, and annotated documents. From the perspective of the historian there was too often a lack of research, context and analysis." *Ibid*, 160.

changed or developed.”<sup>30</sup> Of course, the truth is that the Island has been drastically transformed during the past century by social, political and economic forces that have elsewhere been in the forefront of academic research.

Part of Prince Edward Island’s transformation was brought about by the rise of Keynesian economics and the welfare state. Prince Edward Island’s tourism boosters used these developments to their advantage, and helped make the Island into a client of Ottawa’s fiscal largesse. This aspect of Island tourism’s development can only be understood in the broad context of regional economic disparity and development in Canada’s Atlantic Provinces. Atlantic Canada has long been a hard-luck region of the country, experiencing poverty, unemployment and emigration levels well above the national averages. Initially the federal government was reluctant to even acknowledge the problem of regional disparity, but by the late 1960s, Ottawa had become so committed to solving regional economic inequalities it created an entire federal department dedicated to that purpose: the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, or DREE.<sup>31</sup> Thus, this thesis will also seek to situate tourism within the context of Canadian regionalism and determine in what ways and to what degree Island tourism has been used to leverage the province’s place in the economic union.

In part because provincial and federal governments employed armies of bureaucrats, statisticians and scholars to analyse and find solutions for regional disparities, the literature of regional development has flourished in Atlantic Canada and produced numerous books, articles and statistical analyses. Regional development has been considered of national importance, and has often been considered vital to

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<sup>30</sup> MacEachern, *No Island*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Donald Savoie, *Regional Economic Development: Canada’s Search For Solutions*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 3.

maintaining national unity. Anthony Careless, in his book on the federal government's changing approach to regional development policy entitled *Initiative and Response*, notes that "The topic under study is... an activity no less significant for contemporary Canada in view of its broad ramifications than was the Quiet Revolution in Quebec."<sup>32</sup> Other regional development analysts such as Donald J. Savoie and J. Frank Strain also provide useful analyses of federal and provincial policy, and place the Island's tourism industry within a broader economic context.<sup>33</sup>

Secondary sources can only provide so much however; for a subject with such a sparse historiography, primary sources are indispensable to painting a clear picture of provincial tourism's post-war development. The Public Archives of Prince Edward Island (PAPEI) have proven vital in this regard. On the provincial level, the two key players in tourism's steady growth after 1945 were the Provincial Travel Bureau and the Prince Edward Island Innkeepers Association. The files of both organizations are located at the PAPEI.<sup>34</sup> The provincial archives also housed the organizing committee files for all three of the Confederation celebrations along with the files of premier's office, which

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<sup>32</sup> Anthony G.S. Careless, Initiative and Response: The Adaptation of Canadian Federalism to Regional Economic Development. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977), 3.

<sup>33</sup> Economist Donald J. Savoie has been a prolific in his writing on regional economic development. Perhaps his most comprehensive work is the aforementioned Regional Economic Development (see footnote 31); Economist J. Frank Strain, focusing on the economic past, present and future potential of Charlottetown and Prince Edward Island provides a model for understanding the Island's "passive" economy, and tourism's place in it; J. Frank Strain, "Charlottetown: A Peripheral Centre at the Crossroads," in George J. de Benedetti and Roldolphe H. Lamarche, ed., Shock Waves: The Maritime Urban System in the New Economy. (Canada: Acadiensis Press, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> W.W. Reid or G.V. Fraser, various Reports of the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau or the Tourist and Information Branch. (Charlottetown: Department of the Provincial Secretary, dates 1948 to 1960), PAPEI and Prince Edward Island Innkeeper's Files, 1951-1973. RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI, respectively.

often contained reports and correspondence dealing with government's attitude towards tourism.<sup>35</sup>

Brochures, articles and promotional material associated with the Island's tourism industry were to be found not only at the archives, but also at the University of Prince Edward Island's Robertson Library, in the PEI Collection. The PEI Collection included news clippings, annual budget report and a number of surveys and reports dealing with tourism. Published primary sources, such as the 1969 Prince Edward Island Comprehensive Development Plan, which enshrined the tourism's central status in the battle against regional disparity, were to be found in the Robertson library's general stacks.<sup>36</sup>

The third important source of information was the National Archives of Canada, which provided some information regarding the federal government's attitudes towards the Island's tourism industry and towards tourism in general. Such material was sparse, but the files of the Canadian Government Travel Bureau and some correspondence provided insight into Ottawa's relations with the Island and its tourism boosters.

A final reservoir of information and documents came out of a chance meeting at the provincial archives. It was there that I encountered Evelyn Daley, the daughter of George Fraser, who served as head of the Island's travel bureau for nearly twenty years in the 1950s and 60s. Ms. Daley put me in contact with Fraser's two other children, Jeannine and George Jr., both of whom now lived in Ottawa. Jeannine and George were

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<sup>35</sup> Confederation Celebration 1864-1939 Fonds. RG 25/9, PAPEI, Prince Edward Island 1964 Centennial Committee Fonds. RG 34/13, PAPEI, Prince Edward Island 1973 Centennial Commission Fonds. RG 34/15, PAPE I, Premier's Office, RG 25, PAPEI.

<sup>36</sup> Canada, Canadian Department of Regional Economic Expansion. Development Plan For Prince Edward Island; a 15-year Federal-Provincial Program for Social and Economic Development. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969. The plan was amended repeatedly throughout the early 1970s, and a new edition of the above publication was released in 1976.

kind enough to share their stories and scrapbooks that dealt with their father, and helped flesh out the character of a man who had been of such vital importance to the development of post-war Prince Edward Island's tourism industry.

The story of the post-war tourism industry does not begin with George Fraser however. It begins in 1939 with the first Confederation celebration and the beginning of both the federal and provincial government's endorsement of tourism as a viable industry that could help counteract the Island's regional economic subordination. A study of these events make up the first chapter of this work.

Chapter two passes briefly over the war years, and then focuses in depth on the visions of grandeur that tourism boosters saw as the industry's future. The visions contrasted sharply with the erratic nature of tourism growth and the non-committal attitude displayed by the provincial government leaders immediately following the war.

Chapter three looks at how this attitude was turned around in the 1950s by steady growth and the increasingly professional efforts to promote tourism at home and abroad on the part of both George Fraser's provincial travel bureau and the Innkeepers' Association. The fourth chapter deals with tourism in the early 1960s, focusing particularly on the 1964 Centennial. The relative success of the celebrations convinced the Island's political and business elite, as well as the federal government, that tourism would respond positively to planning and strategic investment.

Finally chapter five looks at tourism's coming of age in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Under the 1969 plan, the tourism industry received massive funding from both the federal and provincial governments, and was subjected to comprehensive planning and professional management on every level for the first time. However, at the same

time that such modernization had begun to transform the garden, some Islanders began to demonstrate a greater degree of resistance to the brand of modernity that tourism had come to represent. As a result the 1973 centennial became more than just a tourist event; it became an ideological testing ground for competing visions of the province's future. Tourism had helped bring modernity to Prince Edward Island by promoting an anti-modern myth, and by 1973 the contradiction was becoming apparent to many members of the community. Islanders were finally beginning to discuss exactly which fable it was that they wished to agree upon.

## Chapter One:

### **Paradise Found: Tourism and Nationalism Meet in Charlottetown, 1939**

Unless this celebration is made a National one, it will be of little value, and it will be of little value unless the leading statesmen of Canada are present.

--Memorandum to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Canada, circa spring 1939.<sup>1</sup>

The point is not that politics intruded into the gaiety or interfered with the master plan, but rather that festivals are politics.

--Historian H.V. Nelles in *The Art of Nation Building*, 1999.<sup>2</sup>

Festivals *are* politics, and Prince Edward Island's Confederation Week

Celebration was no exception to this rule. The 1939 festival served as a matchmaker, linking the goals of Island tourism boosters to the interests of provincial and national governments. Desiring federal funds to help publicize their province as a tourist destination, Island planners transformed a celebration commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference from a local festival into a national event. In the process they successfully established Charlottetown as the first abiding icon of Canadian nation-building. Just as the Fathers of Confederation met in Charlottetown in 1864, tourism and nationalism met there in 1939. It was the start of a beautiful friendship.

The strange love triangle established between tourism, nationalism and Prince Edward Island was not a serendipitous affair; it had been carefully orchestrated by the province's political and commercial elite. The celebrations marked the Island's tourism promoter's first attempt to create a national myth- the birthplace myth. Federal and off-Island provincial politicians embraced the myth chiefly because it suited their needs at the time. Similarly, many of Prince Edward Island's elite promoted the myth with only

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum to the Prime Minister and Minister of finance, N.D., RG 25/9 series 9 file 9, PAPEI.

<sup>2</sup> Nelles, H.V. *The Art of Nation Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 1.



parochial, short-term goals in mind. This federal and provincial support, however short-sighted, had far-reaching consequences. By establishing Charlottetown as a national shrine, the festival created a permanent tourist attraction that could be used to funnel tourist and federal dollars into the province. The success of Confederation Week would convince many Island tourism boosters that anti-modernism was not just an aesthetic, it was an *event*. Celebrating the *past* became the *future* of Prince Edward Island's tourism industry.

The significance of the 1939 festival can only be understood in the context of the political and economic conditions that fostered tourism's development, not just on Prince Edward Island but in the Maritime region as a whole. During the first part of the twentieth century, tourism's growth was inversely proportional to Maritime economic performance. As traditional industries such as agriculture, fishing and coal mining sank into decline, tourist numbers continued to increase steadily and tantalizingly. It was enough to convince some of the Maritimes' political and business elite that tourism could serve as a panacea for their region's economic woes. Tourism's rise to prominence on Prince Edward Island had its roots in the regional economic disparity that existed between the Maritime Provinces and the rest of Canada.

### **The Garden in Decline 1873 to 1939**

The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century is remembered as the last "golden era" of the Maritime provinces. The region's export-oriented economy benefited from its position in the North Atlantic trading system. Maritime products were in demand across Northeastern North America and Great Britain. Industries such as agriculture, fishing, timber and mining, as

well as shipping and shipbuilding grew exponentially as a result.<sup>3</sup> Maritime prosperity masked a vulnerability to sudden economic change, however. Reliance on the export of staples meant very little economic independence. As a small region on the periphery of Canada's and North America's largest population centres, the Maritimes had little control over the outside economic forces that shaped their destiny. Economist J. Frank Strain explains that a region with a passive, peripheral economy often develops economic dependence, which in turn can bring about economic decline:

... marginal regions are on the cultural fringe of the civilization. Consequently, people in a marginal region must import culture from the rest of the world just to remain part of the civilization. (Note that culture is being defined very broadly here. Culture is embodied in the material goods we consume: for example, automobiles, televisions, and computers are essential features of the culture of today's North America; symphonies and dance troupes are not) Finally, the cultural dependence creates economic dependence, since the marginal region must either export products in demand to the rest of the world; borrow (which assumes future exports), or be given, no strings attached, the cultural products they demand if they are to remain in the civilization.<sup>4</sup>

The weaknesses of the Maritime's position in the North American economy became increasingly evident after the region joined Canadian Confederation in the 1860s and 70s. The old trade routes with New England and Great Britain were disrupted in favour of a continental outlook. The larger size and growing diversity of central Canada's economy put the Maritimes at a distinct disadvantage, especially when technological advances in transportation, communication and mass production sank the Maritime's increasingly obsolescent wind-and-sail economy:

The Maritimes then had a small, costly vulnerable manufacturing sector, unable to compete with Central Canada and its economies of scale; their agricultural sector was mainly geared to local consumption. Their large ship-building, shipping, and fishing industries had always been at the mercy of conditions in external markets... The coming of the depression in the 1870s, and the application of steel and steam technology, affected the Maritime economy seriously whereas the central provinces, with larger, more

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<sup>3</sup> J. Frank Strain "Charlottetown: A Peripheral Centre at the Crossroads," in George J. de Benedetti and Roldolphe H. Lamarche, ed., Shock Waves: The Maritime Urban System in the New Economy. (Canada: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 271.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 270.

diversified manufacturing resource sectors, and with competitive agricultural products, proved to be more resilient.<sup>5</sup>

For Prince Edward Island, economic decline set in almost right after the province joined Confederation in 1873:

The local economy stagnated as export earnings and living standards began to fall. Between 1881 and 1921 the Island's population declined from 109,000 to 88,000, as relative boom conditions in distant cities opened up opportunities for Islanders willing to leave their homes.... The small declining market in Prince Edward Island simply did not offer the opportunities for the new large scale decreasing-cost industries developing in the heartland of North America.<sup>6</sup>

Historian Douglas Baldwin notes that outmigration cost the province many of its youngest and most capable citizens. This trend further hampered economic recovery, since it "...resulted in a high percentage of the population being over seventy years of age and placed an increased tax burden on the employed people who remained behind."<sup>7</sup> By 1931 the average age of an Islander was thirty, the highest in Canada.

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick managed to keep up appearances much longer than Prince Edward Island.<sup>8</sup> It was not until the 1920s that increased competition and decreased demand cause the region's brittle economy to finally fall to pieces.<sup>9</sup> An unprecedented number of businesses closed shop or left the region in search of greener pastures. The Maritimes' net value of production shrank from a high of \$325 million in 1920 to \$192.5 by 1924. Approximately 122,000 people left the region during the 1920s,

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<sup>5</sup> Careless, Initiative and Response, 14.

<sup>6</sup> J. Frank Strain, "Charlottetown," in Shock Waves, 273.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas Baldwin, Land of the Red Soil: A Popular History of Prince Edward Island. (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1998), 105.

<sup>8</sup> Ian McKay notes in his article, "The Stillborn Triumph of Progressive Reform," that right up into the 1910s, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick thought of their society "...as one of advanced and advancing capitalism; its central problems were those of industrial societies the world over." in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, ed. The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 228.

<sup>9</sup> W.A. Mackintosh notes that the Maritime products, particularly agricultural produce, had been favoured during the First World War, but this preferential treatment did not last: "After 1920 competition in the European market was too severe for anything but specialty products and the United States market was closed to many products by the tariffs of 1921 and 1922." The story was the same for most of the other Maritime industries except for paper and pulpwood. In The Economic Background of Dominion-Provincial Relations. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1964), 83-84.

looking for work they could no longer find at home. Never had so many outmigrated over the course of one decade; never had the region lost some many of its youngest and best workers.<sup>10</sup>

The region had only begun to recover when the Great Depression struck in 1930. Again the Maritimes found themselves at the mercy of economic trends emanating from faraway cities: “Dependent upon primary production and international trade, the Maritime economy was hit harder than that of any region east of the Prairies.”<sup>11</sup> On the Island, agricultural income dropped from \$9.8 million in 1927 to \$2.3 million in 1932, while the value of fisheries fell from \$1.368 million in 1929 to \$842,000 in 1933. Perhaps most notably, the province’s lucrative silver fox industry was all but wiped out by lack of demand.<sup>12</sup>

### **Searching for Solutions**

Maritime reactions to regional economic disparity in these decades varied. As has been noted, many individuals left the region to seek improved living conditions. Others formed organizations such as the Maritime Rights movement to try and influence political change.<sup>13</sup> On Prince Edward Island however, the Maritime Rights movement lacked the strength it had in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.<sup>14</sup> Islanders were more likely to look to their past for solace. A *post hoc ergo propter hoc* sense of nostalgia swept over the province. MacDonald notes that as early as 1900, the Island “...glanced back wistfully over its shoulder at a past that seemed considerably more golden than it

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<sup>10</sup> David Frank, “Class, Region,” in The Atlantic Provinces, 234.

<sup>11</sup> E.R. Forbes, “The 1930s: Depression and Retrenchment” in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, ed. The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 272.

<sup>12</sup> S.A. Saunders, The Economic History of the Maritime Provinces. (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1984), 48, 73.

<sup>13</sup> David Frank, “Class, Region,” in The Atlantic Provinces, 252.

<sup>14</sup> Baldwin, Land of the Red Soil, 121.

probably was.”<sup>15</sup> Unable to compete in the modern world, some Islanders chose to embrace anti-modernism, mythologizing the Island’s “golden age” of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup>

Governments were slow to acknowledge the problem of regional disparity and even slower to find solutions. Both the federal and provincial governments clung to the classical ideals of 19<sup>th</sup> century *laissez-faire* economics. Officials maintained that the region could return to a prosperous state under its own power:

It was elaborately pretended (until the 1930s) that provinces were indeed self-sufficient, but had not been equally compensated for by the terms of the original financial agreements. Ottawa was not prepared to change its impression that all parts were fundamentally sound . Its policy was to disengage from an intimate involvement in the province’s economic or financial affairs. Indeed, even until 1912, its practice was to use stopgap appeasement for dislocated economies. The federal regime was convinced that the provincial regimes were faulty in operation, not in nature; thriftiness was the solution. For their part, the provinces were slow to adjust to the difference between reality and the visions of Confederation. They too believed- with diminishing confidence- that Ottawa’s aid would only have to be temporary.<sup>17</sup>

The economic collapse of the 1920s and pressure from the Maritime rights movement finally forced the federal government to address the issue of regional disparity. The Duncan Commission was created in 1926 to investigate “Maritime Claims,” and proposed a number of measures to correct regional imbalances. However, most of the recommendations were one-time, short term corrections that did little to address the dysfunctional nature of the region’s economy. Recommendations were based on the notion that if the region was better integrated into the national transportation network and fiscal grievances were permanently settled, the Maritimes would be able to

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<sup>15</sup> Edward MacDonald, *If You’re Stronghearted: Prince Edward Island in the Twentieth Century*. (Summerside: Williams and Crue Ltd., 2000), 4.

<sup>16</sup> The Island was not the only Maritime province to develop an anti-modern identity, although since its economic decline began earliest it was probably the first to do so. Ian McKay states that “Antimodernism had a marked effect on Nova Scotian and Maritime culture, because it emerged as a way of conceptualizing collective and individual identity at a time of profound crisis in the 1920s and 1930s.” In *The Quest of the Folk*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), 42.

<sup>17</sup> Careless, *Initiative and Response*, 14.

compete with the rest of the country economically. Accordingly, Prince Edward Island received a \$125,000 increase to the province's subsidy and had its railway standardized at a cost of \$2.3 million.<sup>18</sup>

Some of the region's commercial elite realized that the region's traditional industries could not compete, regardless of whether or not the province had standardized rails. The economy needed to develop in new directions if decline was to be halted and reversed. Tourism presented an alluring opportunity for economic diversification, and many of the region's business elite became convinced that this emerging industry held the key to future wealth and prosperity.

### **The Gospel of Tourism**

For the Maritime Provinces, the age of modern mass tourism truly began with the development of the motorcar as a serious and affordable form of transportation. Tourists had certainly come by train in the past but the motorcar democratized the experience by allowing visitors to 'experience' the Island's anti-modern aesthetic as they never could from the window of a Pullman car:

Compared to travel by railroad, touring by automobile offered freedom of action, closer contact with place, and novel kinds of sociability as well as the challenge of the sport. Automobiles freed tourists from the "inflexible track" and the bondage of timetables," themes repeated over and over again in the early promotional literature.<sup>19</sup>

The motorcar made the Maritimes, including Prince Edward Island, accessible to millions of affluent North Americans who wanted to escape the hustle and bustle of the city and experience the anti-modern aesthetic. Island entrepreneurs realized that these visitors would need to pay for gas, food and other necessities, and saw business opportunities.

The problem however, was making potential tourists aware that Prince Edward Island

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<sup>18</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 149-151.

<sup>19</sup> John Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America*. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 103.

existed at all. Promotion costs money, and money was something the province's early tourism promoters did not have.

Most Prince Edward Islanders were slow to take to the idea of tourism during the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many Islanders did not see the benefits of the tourist trade, and saw no reason to "attract" more visitors. For its part, the cash-strapped provincial government remained largely uninvolved in the tourism business. Historian Allan MacEachern describes the period of 1900 to 1935 as the age of "if only":

This was the age of the "if only": if only accommodations could be found to satisfy the "worthwhile" tourist, if only the ferry services were more dependable, if only more promotional brochures were printed, if only Island roads were not always either mud or dust.<sup>20</sup>

Yet tourism gained ground on Prince Edward Island during this time. Many of the province's political and commercial elite, desperate to find an industry that could bring their Island out of the economic exile, were being converted to the gospel of tourism, particularly during the dark years of the 1920s.

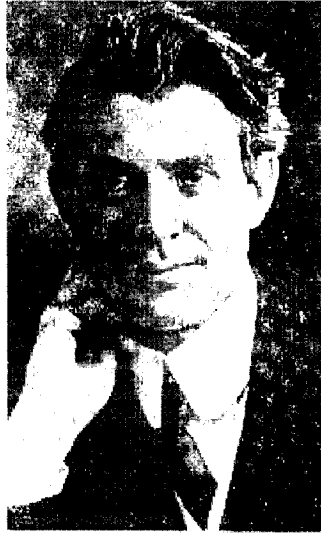
Evidence of growing conversion rates came in 1923 with the formation of the Island's first lasting tourism organization: the Prince Edward Island Tourist Association, renamed the Publicity Association the following year.<sup>21</sup> The Association's membership was comprised almost entirely of Summerside and Charlottetown businessmen. Even more impressive, the organization's first and only president was one of the province's most prominent and influential public men – Mr. Justice Aubin E. Arsenault.

Born in 1870 in Abram's Village, Arsenault was the son of the first Island Acadian to be appointed to the Senate. Arsenault the younger first became a lawyer and then followed in his father's footsteps. He entered politics in 1906 and joined the

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 85.

<sup>21</sup> "Credit to Whom Credit is Due" Transcript of Speech by A.E. Arsenault, Ex President and chairman of the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau, N.D., Acc. No. 4135, Vol. 21, File 21, PAPEI, 2.



JUSTICE A. E. ARSENAULT

Figure 3: A. E. Arsenault in the mid 1970s (Acc. No. 1135, Vol. 21, File 21, PAPE 3)

provincial Conservative party, becoming the province's first Acadian Premier in 1917. Defeated in the 1919 election, Arsenault stayed on as leader of the opposition until 1921, when he accepted an appointment to the Prince Edward Island Supreme Court.<sup>22</sup> Throughout his life, Arsenault was involved with countless provincial, national and international organizations and had influential contacts throughout the Maritimes, Canada and England, where he had attended school.<sup>23</sup> In 1923 Arsenault became the president of the Canadian Association of Tourist and Publicity Bureaux.<sup>24</sup> Despite countless obligations, Arsenault's favourite cause always remained his province's tourism industry.

The Association's members were dedicated to the notion that tourism could become one of the Island's most important industries, if only the Island was properly and

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<sup>22</sup> Blair Weeks, Ed., Minding the House: A Biographical Guide to Prince Edward Island MLAs, 1873-1993. (Charlottetown: The Acorn Press & The Association of Former Members of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 2002), 4.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



adequately promoted. They immediately founded a provincial travel bureau, dedicated to publicizing the Island and providing information on transportation, accommodation and attractions to tourists. This was perhaps the Association's single most significant act; the Bureau would remain at the core of province's efforts to encourage and develop the tourism industry for the proceeding fifty years.<sup>25</sup>

The Publicity Association made other important contributions to tourism's growth. In 1927 the Association convinced Canadian National and other railway interests to schedule more train trips to the Island and the Maritimes.<sup>26</sup> The Association also lobbied for lower ferry crossing rates and, as a result, prices dropped from \$8.00 a return trip in 1923 to \$3.00 in 1935.<sup>27</sup> Despite these small victories, the Association's members felt their abilities were restricted by their limited finances.

By 1928 the Association's annual budget was only \$6,000 and almost completely made up of subscriptions from private citizens. The fact that practically all subscriptions came from the province's two largest urban centres, Charlottetown and Summerside, indicates that the rural population did not see the benefit of supporting tourism.<sup>28</sup> If the Association was to expand its efforts, either the majority of Islanders had to be convinced to support tourism or a new source of reliable funding had to be secured. The Association chose to go the latter route and demanded that the provincial government provide increased financial backing. The support of the population was unnecessary:

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<sup>25</sup> By 1928 the Association was already carrying out a relatively effective advertising campaign through the Bureau, publishing some 25,000 promotional pamphlets for distribution, sending over 9000 personal letters of invitation to Nova Scotia motorists and advertising in newspapers from Halifax to Boston to Montreal. Prince Edward Island Publicity Association, Fifth Annual Report, January, 1928, Acc. No. 4135, Vol. 2, file 21, PAPEI, 6-7.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 2-3. See also Letter from G. Frank to A.E. Arsenault, January 25, 1927, discussing direct railway routes between the states and the Maritimes. Acc. No. 4135, Vol. 2, file 21, PAPEI.

<sup>27</sup> A.E. Arsenault, Memoirs of A.E. Arsenault. Acc. 4135, Vol. 3, file 61, PAPEI, 145.

<sup>28</sup> The secretary glumly noted in the 1928 Annual Report, "Apart from a few subscriptions, we regret to report, that the outside districts did practically nothing to assist in our work." Annual Report, 1928, 6.

If the work, however, is to continue and grow, more funds must be provided. The work is Provincial, and as such everybody should contribute. It is a practical impossibility to obtain subscriptions outside of Charlottetown and Summerside, and it is therefore evident that the provincial government must be more generous in its grant in the future than the past.<sup>29</sup>

Historian MacEachern notes that the province's early tourism promoters had never truly included the average Islander in the nascent tourism industry:

Tourism was directed to outsiders with Islanders' needs secondary to, and even dependent on, these visitors... Though Islanders were assured that they would gain materially from tourism, promoters did nothing to put this into practice. In the name of efficiency they sided with the tourists, not Islanders and doing so distanced guests from their hosts.<sup>30</sup>

Instead of being the means to an end (economic prosperity for the average Islander), tourism was an end in itself. Tourism promoters were secure in their belief that because tourism was the Island's economic future, promoting its growth took precedence over everything else. Luckily for the promoters, governments both federal and provincial were beginning to agree.

### **The State and Tourism**

Converts to the gospel of tourism were not just appearing on Prince Edward Island in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were appearing all over North America. By 1919 the federal government was already encouraging tourism growth with the Highways Act, providing funds to build highways linking affluent American motorists with Canadian towns and cities.<sup>31</sup> On Prince Edward Island, one of the results of the Duncan Commission had been a new ferry, the S.S. *Charlottetown*, for the Borden-Cape Tormentine run across the Northumberland Strait. It is worth noting that unlike its predecessors, the *Charlottetown* was designed to carry not only trains, but automobiles as

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<sup>29</sup> Annual Report, 1928, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Alan MacEachern, "No Island," 110.

<sup>31</sup> Jakle, The Tourist, 127.

well.<sup>32</sup> Since Islanders had the least number of cars per capita in all of Canada, it can be assumed the government had tourists in mind when they built the *Charlottetown*.<sup>33</sup>

By 1929 tourism ranked sixth among the great industries of Canada.<sup>34</sup> The Dominion had the one of the largest annual amounts of tourist traffic in the world, with over 20,000,000 tourists - nearly all of them American - visiting during the peak year of 1930.<sup>35</sup> The nation's elites were increasingly impressed. A Prince Edward Island Publicity Association circular listed some of tourism's more distinguished acolytes:

The tourist traffic to Canada has been pronounced by the Prime Minister of Canada, by Mr. Bennett, Leader of the Opposition, by Sir Henry Thornton, by Sir E.W. Beatty, and by several of our Bank Presidents, as one of our most valuable assets. It has brought to Canada, during the past year, a revenue of 300,000,000 dollars and has been a vital factor in keeping the Canadian dollar nearly par in the United States.<sup>36</sup>

A 1927 article in *The Busy East* entitled "Tourist and Other Maritime Opportunities" was only repeating now conventional wisdom when it remarked: "The importance to Canada of this tourist traffic cannot be over-estimated.... The problem of developing and increasing this traffic is one that is worthy of every consideration."<sup>37</sup> The Depression of the 1930s did little to change this view of tourism.

On Prince Edward Island tourism weathered the depression better than most of the province's other industries. The key to tourism's resilience was the Island's ability to provide an affordable holiday for cash-strapped depression-era tourists. MacDonald notes that while resort hotels reported declining returns throughout the decade, small

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<sup>32</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 149-151.

<sup>33</sup> Douglas Balwin, *Land of the Red Soil*, (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1985), 118.

<sup>34</sup> Arthur Joseph Norval, *The Tourist Industry: A National and International Survey*. (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1936), 61.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>36</sup> A.E. Arsenault, Circular of the Prince Edward Island Publicity Association, February 8, 1930, UPEI Library, PEI Collection, Tourist Vertical File "A."

<sup>37</sup> R.E. Armstrong, "Tourist and Other Maritime Opportunities," in *The Busy East*, May 1927.

rented cottages did a brisk business: “A housekeeping cottage was a better fit for motoring tourists in modest circumstances.”<sup>38</sup>

Tourism’s resilience has the effect of further convincing the provincial government of the industry’s importance. The Publicity Association’s annual provincial grant finally began to increase substantially in the late 1930s. While it had only grown from \$1,000 to \$3,500 between 1923 and 1936, the grant doubled to \$7,000 in 1937. In 1938 the amount reached \$10,000 and was no longer called a grant; the expenditure was listed as “tourist promotion.” In its own meagre way, the provincial government was taking an increasingly Keynesian approach to tourism.

On a national level, the Depression caused tourism profits to fall drastically. The federal government became very interested in revitalizing what was now recognized as an important industry. In the words of MacEachern, Ottawa came to realize “...that a laissez-faire tourism policy was inadequate.”<sup>39</sup> A Senate Special Committee on Tourist Traffic created in 1935, and marked the first time the disparate tourism trades were treated as a single industry:

The committee that resulted was what could be called a watershed in what could be called tourist appreciation in Canada, in that it brought together experts on publicity, transportation, tourist accommodations and national parks to study how to rationalize and make national the tourism in Canada.<sup>40</sup>

For the purposes of this research, two key developments arose out of the Special Committee. First, it was recommended that a national travel bureau be created to promote and direct Canada’s tourism industry. Eager to see tourism prosper once again, the government immediately followed the recommendation, creating the Canadian

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<sup>38</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 180.

<sup>39</sup> Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 44.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

Government Travel Bureau in 1935. For Prince Edward Island, whose provincial travel bureau was still privately run by the Publicity Association, the federal bureau would serve first as an example to emulate and later as a source of expert advice and financial assistance.

The second key recommendation was to establish National Parks in Atlantic Canada, so that the Maritimes could share in the economic and recreational benefits the Parks had provided to the Western provinces. This recommendation would lead to the creation of the Prince Edward Island National Park, an attraction that would become a permanent nucleus for the province's developing tourism industry.<sup>41</sup>

The primary purpose of the new park was to be as a tourist attraction. The site selected in 1936 attested to the park's raison d'être. The Prince Edward Island National Park, as it was to be called, was to consist of a small strip of land running twenty-five miles along the Island's North Shore and going only several hundred yards inland at most points. It was far too small to contain the traditional sublime parks landscape of soaring mountains and endless forests. Consequently, Parks director F.H. Williamson believed the best strategy was to develop the park as a "...typical seaside resort, sans the obnoxious amusements."<sup>42</sup>

The provincial government also saw the Park primarily in economic terms. Premier Thane Campbell was not yet a convert to the gospel of tourism, but was quick to see that a national park could bring other, more traditional benefits: "Campbell was a traditionalist who believed that good provinces provided good infrastructure – and great

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<sup>41</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 183.

<sup>42</sup> As quoted in MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 82.

ones got the feds to pay for it.”<sup>43</sup> Developing the Park drew over \$145,000 in federal funds into the province in the year 1938 alone, including \$40,000 for a tourist road program.<sup>44</sup> The provincial government was learning that tourist development was an excellent method of acquiring Ottawa money. Tourist development was also an excellent way of acquiring *tourist* money. Park attendance went from 2500 in 1937 to 10,000 in 1938 to over 35,000 in 1939, the year the park officially opened. Soon the Prince Edward Island National Park was the fifth most visited park in Canada.<sup>45</sup>

For Prince Edward Island, it was a win-win situation. The province now had a permanent tourist attraction that would be maintained and promoted with money from outside the province. In 1939 Arsenault and his fellow tourism boosters would again try to attract federal funds to create yet another permanent tourist attraction for the province. This time however, the permanent attraction would not be the Island’s natural beauty- it would be the Island’s history, commemorated by the federally-endorsed 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Confederation Celebration.

Commemorating the Charlottetown Conference was not a new idea in 1939. A celebration had been planned on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1914, but the outbreak of the First World War put a halt to festivities.<sup>46</sup> In 1934 the Island’s then-Premier W.J.P. MacMillan expressed a desire to commemorate the Conference’s 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Provincial Secretary H.R. Stewart suggested that a Maritime provincial Conference should be held to draw attention to the problem regional disparity and reaffirm the

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>46</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 34.

Maritime's belief in Confederation.<sup>47</sup> The Conference was never held, most likely because of the Depression era's constrained budgets coupled with the fact that the federal government was busy celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cartier's 1534 voyage.<sup>48</sup>

For the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Arsenault and his fellow boosters reworked Stewart's idea. Rather than promoting awareness of regional disparity, they wished to promote awareness of Prince Edward Island as a tourist destination of national significance. The promoters wished to create what American historian Daniel Boorstin calls a *pseudo-event*: an event organized specifically to legitimize itself.

To illustrate the definition of pseudo-event, Boorstin uses the example of a hotel celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Here I have replaced references to the hotel and its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with references to the Island and the Confederation Celebration:

They [Islanders] ask how to increase their Island's prestige and so improve their business .... He [a public relations counsel] proposes that the management stage a celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference.... The celebration is held, photographs are taken, the occasion is widely reported, and the object is accomplished.... Once the celebration has been held, the celebration itself becomes evidence that the Island really is a distinguished institution. The occasion actually gives the Island the prestige to which it is pretending.<sup>49</sup>

The object of the Island's 1939 pseudo-event was accomplished so successfully that it began a process of site sacralization in Charlottetown. By *celebrating* Charlottetown as the birthplace of Confederation, Island tourism promoters *legitimized* Charlottetown as the birthplace of Confederation in the hearts and minds of many Canadians. Although this may have not been the expressed intent of festival organizers, it would be their most lasting legacy.

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<sup>47</sup> Letter from H.R. Stewart, Deputy Provincial Secretary, to W.J.P. MacMillan, Premier, 1 June 1934, RG7, series 13, file 632, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1934. (Toronto: The Canadian Review Company Limited, 1935), 199.

<sup>49</sup> Daniel Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo Events in America. (New York: Harper Press, 1964), 10.

## A National Celebration

It is difficult to tell when planning actually started for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, but by November of 1938 Island Premier Thane Campbell had already written Mackenzie King requesting federal funds for the festival.<sup>50</sup> The first meeting of the Confederation Celebration Committee (CCC) was held two months later, in January of 1939. Premier Campbell was chosen as Chairman of the Committee, and former Premier W.J.P MacMillan as Vice-Chairman, but their roles were largely ceremonial. The lion's share of the organizational work was to be done by the convenor, a position ably filled by Justice A.E. Arsenault. The committee's choice of convenor was a telling one; it suggested the festival's primary goal was publicity and tourist dollars. This was certainly how Arsenault saw things, as he outlined in a letter to Premier Campbell in March of 1939:

I have no hesitation in saying that Prince Edward Island, this year, will receive greater publicity than ever before. This means that we can look forward to next year as a bumper tourist year, and the only thing I fear is that our housing accommodation for 1940 is going to be inadequate.<sup>51</sup>

That said, the celebration could not be sold to the public or the federal government simply as an opportunity for tourist promotion; the festival needed to be a *national* event. Arsenault knew the festival would need to have a symbiotic relationship with Ottawa, and that the birthplace myth was the key to this relationship. "I must emphasize the fact", Arsenault wrote to Premier Campbell in April of 1939, "that the whole object of the celebration is not local, but rather national":

At the time of the conference here in 1864... the provinces were scattered. At least in two of them, Upper and Lower Canada, difficulties had arisen as to the National and religious

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<sup>50</sup> Letter from Thane A. Campbell, Premier, to the Right Honourable W.L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, November 10, 1938, RG 34, Series 9, File 9, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Letter to T.A. Campbell, Premier, from A.E. Arsenault, Chairman Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau, March 17, 1939, RG 25, series 32, sub-series 1, file 3a "A" 1939, PAPEI, 1.



composition of its members. The Fathers of confederation sought to bring about a more National sentiment and a better spirit of cooperation between the scattered parts of Canada. At the present time, although this difficulty is not by any means so pronounced, still it cannot be said that there is that spirit of cooperation between the Provinces and the Dominion which should exist. The celebration would be one important means of again recalling the events of 1864 and making an appeal for a better National sentiment throughout Canada. In view of the object we have in mind, it seems to me of utmost importance that we should have present the Prime Minister of Canada, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Prime Ministers of the Different Provinces.<sup>52</sup>

The Premier, for his part, had little trouble promoting the festival to the local population; the provincial election of 18th May 1939 returned Campbell's Liberals to power 26 seats to 4.<sup>53</sup> The lopsided results strongly suggest that Island electors were not dismayed with the government's approach to either the national park or the Confederation Celebration.

Convincing the rest of Canada to support the festival would prove more difficult. Campbell's 1938 letter to King had already started making the arguments that would be heard time and time again over the winter and spring of 1939:

The suggestion is mooted here that 1939, being the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference, should be celebrated in a signal manner, and featured as a call to greater Canadian unity.... Prominent men could be invited from all over Canada, including the Dominion Cabinet and the heads of the Provincial Governments. I need not enlarge on the possibilities of such a scheme, as they will no doubt immediately present themselves to your mind.<sup>54</sup>

The birthplace myth was being presented as cement for the building blocks of national unity. A 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in PEI would in effect serve to repaint the stone of Confederation in a symbolic way. For the federal government, it was an appealing argument. National unity, particularly between French and English Canada, had always been a tenuous affair, and the government mishandling of Depression relief programs had only caused further tension. By August of 1937, the federal government had created the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, popularly known as the Rowell-

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<sup>52</sup> Letter to T.A. Campbell, from A.E. Arsenault, April 18, 1939 RG 34, series 9, file 9, PAPEI, 1-2.

<sup>53</sup> Blair Weeks, *Minding the House*, 209.

<sup>54</sup> Letter from Thane A. Campbell, Premier, to the Right Honourable W.L. MacKenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, November 10, 1938, RG 34, Series 9, File 9, PAPEI, 1.

Sirois Commission, with the express purpose of undertaking “a re-examination of the economic and financial basis of Confederation and of the distribution of legislative powers in light of economic and social developments of the last twenty years.”<sup>55</sup>

However, the Commission focused almost entirely on economic issues. A festival, argued the Island’s tourism boosters, would provide *spiritual* healing to the battered and worn fabric of Confederation.

Past festivals had attempted to promote a sense of national unity. Extravagant celebrations were held in 1908 to commemorate the Tercentenary of the founding of Quebec City.<sup>56</sup> More recent attempt at commemoration had been the aforementioned 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cartier’s 1534 voyage to Canada in 1934.<sup>57</sup> Both celebrations were forgotten soon after they ended. In the words of historian H.V. Nelles, “The imagined sharing of a common vision of the past between two peoples did not take place.”<sup>58</sup> There were simply too many competing visions of the past to create a common one.

The birthplace myth seemed to have a better chance to forge a lasting national vision. The myth involved not battles, claims or disputes, but an agreement between French and English, and between the different would-be provinces. This myth would prove more resilient than those presented in 1908 or 1934. Although 1939 would ultimately be forgotten, like so many other festivals before and after, it would help establish a national icon which the federal government would come back to repeatedly

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<sup>55</sup> As quoted in Donald V. Smiley, Ed., The Rowell/Sirois Report, Book 1. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1964), 2.

<sup>56</sup> A full account of this celebration is contained in H.V. Nelles, The Art of Nation Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec’s Tercentenary. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

<sup>57</sup> Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1934. (Toronto: The Canadian Review Company Limited, 1935), 199.

<sup>58</sup> Nelles, Art of Nation-Building, 316.

when seeking to bolster national sentiment. It would provide the Prince Edward Island with another conduit to Ottawa.

At the start of 1939, Ottawa had yet to be convinced, and agreed to contribute only \$15,000 to the festival. On 24 April 1939 Arsenault wrote Campbell explaining that \$15,000 was not enough; the committee was being forced to cut corners in every area. Arsenault pressed Ottawa for at least another \$5,000 with a twofold argument. First, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in 1914 had been slated to receive \$20,000 and Arsenault now claimed this amount as a precedent. The second argument focused on the celebration's role as a national event:

For the Cartier Celebration, which was chiefly localized at Gaspé, \$100,000 was granted; and in view of the importance of the present events, it seems to me that \$20,000 is a very moderate amount to request.<sup>59</sup>

The committee had already arranged for Charlottetown barrister George A. Tweedy, a long-time Publicity Association Executive Committee member and now a leading CCC member, to make an emergency visit Ottawa and meet with federal representatives to convince them to commit the extra funds. If the journey was to have any chance of success Tweedy would need to have the highest possible authority, and so Arsenault requested that the Premier give his blessing.<sup>60</sup> Campbell immediately wrote to C. A. Dunning, Minister of Finance and the Island's representative in the Privy Council, stressing the importance of Tweedy's mission:

The Government here feels that the Celebration is not in its nature local, but National... there are good reasons today to recall these facts [of the Father's achievements] to the memory of our Canadian people and to renew in them that same spirit of union. Mr. George Tweedy is authorized to discuss this matter further with you and to urge the need

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<sup>59</sup> Letter from A.E. Arsenault, Convenor, to T.A. Campbell, Premier, April 24, 1939, RG 34, Series 9, File 9, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 2

of a larger grant towards this Celebration than was first suggested. Much of the grant will necessarily go towards labour and will to some extent relieve unemployment.<sup>61</sup>

And so it was that George Tweedy was sent to Ottawa with the task of convincing federal politicians that Charlottetown's little festival was a party the whole country should attend.

### **Mr. Tweedy Goes to Ottawa**

Tweedy's Ottawa visit took on an almost farcical level of solemnity; one would think the barrister-turned-diplomat had been sent to the negotiations in Munich rather than Ottawa. In a letter to A.E. Arsenault handwritten on Chateau Laurier stationary and marked "Private, Personal and not for Publication!", Tweedy breathlessly related the results of his mission to Ottawa. The letter makes it evident that the Islanders hoped to secure much more than an extra \$5,000 from the federal government. "I have had two very busy but successful days," Tweedy wrote:

Last night we were able to arrange a long conference with Hon. Howe as the house was sitting. I feel sure [illegible] will be announcing in a few days that the Road from Borden to the Pier and from the Pier to Tormentine will be black surfaced. We have also the Minister's assurance that Steam will be kept on the "Prince Edward Island" and a skeleton crew kept on her so that in a very short time she could be put into action by drawing a few men of the "Confederation.".... As you suggested, I am not saying a word about the requests being granted as if there is any glory to be gained let the Politicians have it. I do feel sure though that in the next few days these matters will be announced through the proper channels. Till then, you and I will say nothing.<sup>62</sup>

The tourism boosters were learning to play Ottawa's game- national politicians received accolades (and perhaps votes) for their generosity while the Islander received federal money and their festival received the federal stamp of approval. In this way a local festival was transformed into an engine for economic development, providing much-needed infrastructure and tourist promotion dollars.

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<sup>61</sup> Letter from Thane A. Campbell, Premier, to the Honourable C.A. Dunning, M.P., P.C., Minister of Finance, April 28, 1939, RG 34, Series 9, File 3, PAPEI, 1-2.

<sup>62</sup> Letter from George A. Tweedy to A.E. Arsenault, N.D., RG 34, Series 9, File 9, PAPEI, 1-3.

Tweedy also noted that not all had gone according to plan: “I feared they would consider our celebration a Provincial one. To some extent that was the case.”<sup>63</sup> Ottawa can hardly be faulted if they suspected a petty provincial cash grab was hiding behind the festival’s veneer of national sentiment. Tweedy was unable to secure the extra \$5,000 for the celebration. Howe only made a vague promise that if the Celebration was in “the red” after the fact, the federal government would cover the losses.<sup>64</sup>

Federal political attendance at the festival was also becoming an issue. Arsenault had suggested early on that the entire federal cabinet should attend, and a special train be scheduled to take them from Ottawa to Charlottetown. That scheme soon fell apart, and it became a scramble to round up any federal presence at all. Island Member of Parliament A.E. MacLean invited the entire House of Commons and the Senate to attend the celebration,<sup>65</sup> and a memorandum was sent to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance stating: “Unless this celebration is made a National one, it will be of little value, and it will be of little value unless the leading statesmen of Canada are present.”<sup>66</sup>

Arsenault ultimately had to settle on a compromise measure of federal attendance. Distinguished visitors included five federal cabinet ministers, the premiers of Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, representatives from Ontario and Quebec and a handful of Senators and MPs. This fell far short of the numbers Arsenault had first envisioned. Most importantly, the two biggest fish - the Prime Minister and the Governor General – had both escaped the Convenor’s grasp. Arsenault must have been dispirited,

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from A.E. MacLean to Hon. Thane A. Campbell, Premier, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1939, RG 34, Series 9, File 9, PAPEL.

<sup>66</sup> Memorandum to the Prime Minister and Minister of finance, N.D., RG 34, series 9 file 9, PAPEL.

but he would make do with what he had at his disposal. There were other concerns to be dealt with.

Another attempt was made to secure the extra \$5,000, this time through the new Canadian Government Travel Bureau. More favours were called in from A. Dunning:

I have also suggested to the Minister of Transport that the Travel Bureau would be justified in giving us grants out of its fund in further assistance to the Celebration. I believe that Honourable Mr. Howe is not unfavourable to this project, and I know that a word from you would be of assistance.<sup>67</sup>

The convenor also used a more direct route and wrote Howe himself, insisting on the national relevance of the celebrations. Arsenault assured Howe they were not setting a precedent for supporting every small festival: "...I am not suggesting that every local celebration should make a demand on its funds. I have tried to impress the fact that our celebration must not be considered a local one. It is in every respect national."<sup>68</sup>

To finesse the festival's national mandate to federal politicians, Arsenault did his best to organize "national" events for the week's festivities. All three branches of the military were invited. International military attendance was even secured, with a promised visit from the American naval vessel the U.S.S. *Hamilton* and the French sloop of war *Ville d'Ys*. On the other hand, Ottawa's naval contribution to the festival seemed to demonstrate its ambivalence: it sent only two vessels, and one of them, the H.M.C.S. *Venture*, was nothing more than a three masted training ship.<sup>69</sup>

Far more original and successful was the committee's strategy of taking seemingly unrelated federal events scheduled for 1939 and weaving them into the fabric of the festival. The inauguration of the Charlottetown Airport and the first official flight

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<sup>67</sup> Letter from A.E. Arsenault, Convenor, to Honourable C.A. Dunning, May 15, 1939, RG34, Series 9, File 3, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>68</sup> Letter from A.E. Arsenault to Hon. C.D. Howe, Minister of Transport, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1939, RG 20, Vol. 1565, File T-3252-13, NAC, 2.

<sup>69</sup> "Completing Plans For Next Week's Celebration," *Patriot*, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1939, 1.

from the airport were arranged to occur during the festival. Arsenault wrote to Howe, who was to be present for the inauguration in his capacity as Minister of Transportation, that if the Charlottetown airport was not ready in time, "...then a good landing and take off can be had at Upton Port."<sup>70</sup> Ultimately, it did not matter if the airport was ready on time. What was important to the CCC was that a flight occur with Howe present, strengthening the celebration's national associations.

Other events were also rescheduled. The official opening of the Prince Edward Island National Park by T.A. Crerar, the federal Minister of Mines and Resources, was also skilfully worked into the festivities.<sup>71</sup> On a more historic note, the Committee managed to convince Professor D.C. Harvey, head of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, to unveil a series of tablets featuring short biographies the Island Fathers of Confederation during festival week.<sup>72</sup> By bringing Canadian symbols and politicians into the picture, each of these events added to the festival's legitimacy as a national event. What was more, Arsenault arranged to have the new medium of radio to broadcast this legitimacy across the entire Dominion.

The newly-created CBC was contacted and asked to do a nationwide broadcast from the Confederation Chamber in the provincial legislature. Arsenault wanted one or more preliminary broadcasts prior to the main event, remarking "such broadcasts would be important in giving the advance publicity necessary for the occasion." If the festival was to be truly national, then every Canadian had to be able to participate in it, or at least hear it. Luckily for Arsenault, the festival's national subject matter fit perfectly into the

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from F.H. Williamson, Controller, to Hon. Thane A. Campbell, Premier, June 27, 1939, RG 34, Series 9, File 9, PAPEI.

<sup>72</sup> Letter from A.E. Arsenault to D.C. Harvey, December 30, 1938, RG 34, Series 9, File 9, PAPEI.

CBC's recently-minted mandate to link the nation together. Eager to establish the national import of its own role, the organization agreed to a national broadcast from Charlottetown.

In addition, the CCC engaged in a publicity campaign larger than anything the province or the little Island Travel Bureau had tried before. Fifty thousand new tourists folders were distributed throughout the Maritimes, Maine and Quebec, and another 100,000 folders were circulated at the 1939 World's Fair in New York. Twenty thousand Confederation Booklets were printed to serve as souvenirs of the celebrations and 13,000 copies of a special Confederation edition of *The Busy East* magazine were circulated throughout the Maritimes. Ad space was bought in newspapers throughout Eastern Canada and the Northeastern United States and the moving picture *PEIsland on Parades* was shown before service clubs all across Canada. There were even 7,000 "Guest of Prince Edward Island" auto and luggage labels printed.<sup>73</sup>

The federal government finally granted the extra \$5,000 on July 15, the eve of the festival. The money had been provided just as much for the purposes of promoting tourism as to promote any sort of national sentiment- it was a marriage of a commercial strategy and a convenient aesthetic. The Privy Council Minutes referring to the funding read as follows:

That, in view of the general character of the celebration, its historical significance and interest, not only to the residents of the Province of Prince Edward Island, but to the people of the dominion as a whole, as well as to the former residents of Canada, it is deemed expedient that a suitable sum be placed at the disposal of the Committee... and as the Province of Prince Edward Island is undertaking a special campaign to induce tourists and former residents to visit the province during the period of celebration, and as such tourists would, in general, have to travel through other provinces of the Dominion in order to reach the Province of Prince Edward Island, it is considered expedient that the sum of \$20,000 be paid to the Committee...<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Memo, N.D. RG34, Series 9, File 1, PAPEI, 1-3.

<sup>74</sup> P.C. 1865, 15 July 1939, RG 20, Vol. 1565, File 3252-13, NAC.



For Arsenault and the committee, the reasoning behind the grant would prove irrelevant. What was important was that the show would go on, and little Prince Edward Island would get the chance to show to the whole dominion that little Prince Edward Island was the Cradle of Confederation.

### **History and Ritual**

The official celebrations began with a religious note on Sunday, July 16<sup>th</sup>. At 9:30am there was a military parade to the Charlottetown Exhibition grounds, where open-air religious services were held for the numerous military units visiting the Island from other parts of Canada and the world. In keeping with the festival's lofty goals of engendering peace, unity and brotherhood, prayers were offered "... for his majesty the king, for the Dominion of Canada, for peace for the representative of the British and American navies present and for the President of the U.S.A. and his people."<sup>75</sup> The military service was the most prominent of countless Church services taking place throughout the province. The Charlottetown *Patriot* noted that the "spiritual aspect of Confederation was stressed during these services suitable to the occasion."<sup>76</sup>

The rituals and symbols of the Church services had infused the festival with a mysticism of its own. The commemorative tablet that had been erected in 1914 supported the notion of Confederation's divine right with the following words: "Providence being their guide, they builded better than they knew."<sup>77</sup> Now 1939 was sharing in the divine spirit that had guided 1864. Those at the Charlottetown Exhibition Park certainly thought the occasion important enough that they could ask the Almighty to

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<sup>75</sup> "Charlottetown Begins her Memorable Celebration of the Birth of A Nation," *The Patriot*, July 17, 1939, 1.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Plaque outside of Confederation Chamber in Province House, Prince Edward Island.

bless several nations, as well as request world peace on behalf of the British and American navies. For those in the midst of a horrible depression and threatened by the shadow of war, such prayers would have held a special significance. World peace was not to be in the cards, but the heavens did bless the celebrations with beautiful weather. The heavy rain of Saturday gave way to a week of glorious sunshine, which the festival participants took full advantage of.

On Monday religious symbolism was exchanged for a different - though no less solemn - set of signs and signifiers. The historical aspect of the celebrations came to the fore as D.C. Harvey's commemorative tablets were officially unveiled at the Exhibition grounds. Every effort was made to mark the spectacle as one of national significance. The unveiling was the first CBC radio broadcast of the festival, sent live across the nation. Three levels of government lent official gravity to the occasion, with speeches by Premier Campbell, Professor D.C. Harvey and Lieutenant Governor George DeBlois.<sup>78</sup>

Even more important in establishing the unveiling as an iconic event was what can be called *historical symmetry*: the attempt to associate a present event with a past one by mimicking the details of the past event. By removing differences between the past (original) event and the present (copy) event, historical symmetry further established the authenticity of the present.

Historical symmetry at the unveiling was simple, but effective. Representatives of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario, the four original provinces to join Confederation in 1867, also spoke at the occasion.<sup>79</sup> The presence of Canada's "first four" established in the minds of all those in attendance or listening by radio, a link

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<sup>78</sup> "Charlottetown Begins," The Patriot, July 17, 1939, 1.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

between the 1864 Charlottetown Conference and the creation of the Dominion in 1867. Every such link underlined the significance of 1864 and strengthened the Island's claim to be the birthplace of Confederation. It also served to reinforce the fabric of Confederation, worn thin by the depression and provincial-federal infighting.

The unveiling's most impressive piece of historical symmetry came in the form of a 95 year-old woman. The venerable Margaret Lord was in attendance to unveil the tablet commemorating her father, Prince Edward Island native son Colonel John Hamilton Gray, who had been provincial Premier and Chairman of the Charlottetown Conference in 1864.<sup>80</sup> Of all the distinguished guests at the festival, Lord was the only one who had actually been *present* at the 1864 Charlottetown Conference. Through Lord, those attending the event could feel that they were participating not only in the festival, but the very history the festival was commemorating. An article in the *Charlottetown Patriot* described Lord as "One of the living links connecting the present with the past":

Though she was thrilled to be presented to the King and Queen, though in her day she has mingled with the great statesmen of Canada, their wives and daughters, and had helped to entertain them during the memorable conference of seventy-five years ago, and though she comes from a family that has been highly honoured in this province, and while naturally proud of the part she played in the Confederation story, Mrs. Lord has always retained her gracious, unaffected manner. She is still active physically and mentally and has a remarkable memory for one of her years.<sup>81</sup>

The unveiling was an important event, but the best was yet to come. Monday afternoon saw the historical symmetry transformed from a dignified, reserved presentation into a grand spectacle of Wagnerian proportions, in two acts: A massive historical parade, followed by a breathtaking pageant called *The Romance of Canada*.

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> "Has Vivid Recollections of the Charlottetown Conference," *Patriot*, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1939, 20.

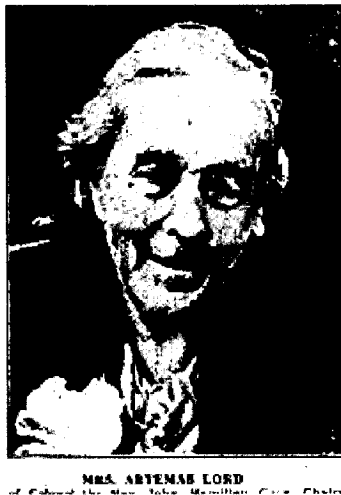


Figure 4. Margaret Lord, 1939's best example of living history ("Has Vivid Recollections of the Charlottetown Conference," *Patriot*, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1939, 20).

### **The Romance of Canada**

According to the *Patriot*, the historical parade included more than 2000 participants, as well as "...thousands of visitors and citizens [who] thronged the streets to witness one of the most colourful and interesting parades witnessed here in years...."<sup>82</sup> Every province had its own historical float, and every float depicted an event in the province's history and enshrined a set of "Canadian" values. Alberta's float, entitled "The Law Rides West," serves an excellent example. It re-enacted the arrival of the North West Mounted Police to the province in 1874 and "...depicted the hanging of a criminal outside the police barracks."<sup>83</sup> Between each provincial float marched a contingent of men re-enacting historical armies- French musketeers, Hertel soldiers, LaReine troopers, Champlain and his men, 1812 militia, Langedoc soldiers, Montcalm's elite forces, and, of course, Indian braves on horseback. Warriors who had never met - or

<sup>82</sup> "Historical Street Parade Was a Great Success," *Patriot*, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1939, 1.

<sup>83</sup> "Historical Street Parade," *Patriot*, 1.

if they had, had often fought each other to the death – now marched side by side through the streets of Charlottetown, their differences forgotten in a surging sense of common history.<sup>84</sup>

The final ‘Canada float’ emphasized this feeling of commonality. Nine princesses bore coats of arms representing each province and gathered around their queen, who represented the Dominion and was enthroned at the back of the float.<sup>85</sup> Thus the parade demonstrated to all present that the Confederation Celebration was no mere local festival. The display of provincial historical events, of ‘common’ Canadian values, the soldiers of the past marching with common cause, the Canada float, all spoke in a language of symbolism and pageantry meant to inspire those attending to join the parade’s vision of a strong and united nation. The splendour and symbolism of the parade, however, was entirely eclipsed by the historical pageant which followed that evening.

The art of historical pageants did not come from a yearning to re-enact history, but rather a desire to transform the present. Modern English historical pageantry was invented in 1905 by Louis Napoleon Parker, “a musical actor, playwright, and ardent Wagnerian,” when he staged a gala outdoor performance to celebrate the English town of Sherbourne’s founding.<sup>86</sup> After that pageantry’s popularity grew in leaps and bounds and soon spread across the Atlantic. Each pageant was an individual affair tailored to the community that performed it, but they more or less followed a basic code set out by Parker:

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<sup>84</sup> MacCannell speaks of parades, festivals and pageants as “cultural productions” and argues that they can create a sense of commonality: “Strangers who have the same cultural grounding can come together in a cultural production, each knowing what to expect next, and feel closeness or solidarity, even where no closeness exists.” *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 32.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Nelles, *Nation-Building*, 143.

In essence, Parker insisted upon the local, democratic and participatory nature of these events... The pageant should be presented not for tourists or for money but to brighten and ennoble the lives of the citizens and the community, 'to re-awaken civic pride' and 'increase self-respect....' Above all, a proper historical pageant in Parker's formulation had explicit anti-modern impulses. The aim, apart from community education and entertainment, was to combat the spirit of the age.... Reason and commerce had literally disenchanting society; historical pageantry aimed at nothing less than the re-enchantment of daily life.<sup>87</sup>

By 1939 the glory days of pageanting had long since ended; the art form was hard-pressed to compete with motion pictures and lost much its idealism after horrors of the First World War.<sup>88</sup> However, for one brief evening in Charlottetown, pageanting enjoyed a spectacular rebirth. In a city not much more than ten thousand, over eight thousand souls crowded onto the exhibition grounds to witness a production called *The Romance of Canada*. In keeping with Parker's dictum, the pageant was a community production, featuring over 80 amateur performers accompanied by an 80-person chorus and a 20-piece orchestra, all from the Island. In an ironic twist, modern technology proved the key to presenting the pageant's anti-modern ideals to the assembled audience. The *Patriot* reported that a state-of-the-art loudspeaker system and an extensive array of electric lights "...enhanced the stage setting."<sup>89</sup>

The *Romance of Canada* was a performance in two parts. The first part focused on the Fathers of Confederation. The "Fathers" took positions onstage to create a tableau of Island artist Robert Harris' famous 1883 painting of the Fathers meeting in Quebec City.<sup>90</sup> The tableau then came to life as the Fathers stepped forward to address the audience. The entire affair had a surreal, dreamlike quality. The pageant broke down the walls of time and space, placing the spectators in the same fictional blend of present and

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 144.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>90</sup> The painting was destroyed by fire on Parliament hill in 1916, and only a black and white photograph remains.

past as the performers. Colonel John Hamilton Gray's address to his fellow delegates of 1864 amply demonstrated the pageant's perception-altering qualities:

You find great changes here and great progress has been made in these seventy-five years that have elapsed since your historic visit of 1864. But amongst all those changes there is one thing that has not changed and that is our great spirit of hospitality, and as in 1864 we opened our hearts and our homes to you, so do we in this year of 1939 extend to you that same degree of friendship and hospitality. I now request you, Sir John A. McDonald, as our great leader, to once again address to us words of knowledge and wisdom.<sup>91</sup>

In this surreal environment, the Fathers were presented as the stuff of legends. Sir John and his men were presented as Canadian Knights of the Round Table, and Charlottetown was their Camelot. The mythical undertones became no more subtle in the *Romance*'s second act. Performers ceased to be specific historical characters and instead became icons and symbols, meant to embody specific "Canadian" virtues and characteristics.

As in the parade, each province was represented by a young woman who was accompanied by two figures from provincial history. Other women appeared on stage portraying mythical characters as the Goddess of Fame, the Snow Queen and Britannia, the female embodiment of the British Empire. The traditional association of femininity with abstract ideals and virtues was used to convey past and present in an easily-interpreted language of symbols and images.

Not all of the pageant was dedicated to the glory of goddesses and statesmen. Among the cast were less regal, although no less iconic, representatives of the nation's working classes throughout history: the preacher, soldier, nursing sister, fisherman and sailor. The pageant lauded these individuals as the true foundations of Canadian Confederation, but gave the pioneer family the position of greatest honour:

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<sup>91</sup> Loose page of script for "The Romance of Canada," N.D., RG34, Series 9, File 22, PAPEI.

The general theme was stressed when the Goddess of Fame appeared in her temple and lest Canadians forget their obligations to the pioneers and inspire them with the will to do future service, she recalled the past and those who made possible the Canada of today.<sup>92</sup>

The message was clear; to succeed in the future, Canadians must look to the values of the past. The *Patriot* even suggested that the "...climax [of the pageant] was reached when Britannia crowned the pioneer mother as the most worthy to receive the homage of all Canadians."<sup>93</sup> By placing the simple, austere life of the pioneers on the highest pedestal of virtue, the "Romance of Canada" was giving homage to the anti-modern values of pageantry. Louis Napoleon Parker would have heartily approved.

### **"A Saturnalia of Merrymaking"**

The constant barrage of symbols and signifiers paused for breath on Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup> as the festival exchanged didactic purpose for less political entertainment. For a time the celebrations began to more closely resemble a local festival, although the event's national aspirations never dropped completely out of sight. A fireman's parade to Victoria Park occupied the morning while yacht races filled the afternoon. The visiting Disciples of Massanet Choir of Montreal presented a concert that evening. Islanders and visitors alike obviously enjoyed the celebrations, as the *Charlottetown Guardian* reported that attendance remained in the thousands.<sup>94</sup>

Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> saw a return to the motifs of the first two days. The Prince Edward Island National Park was officially opened by the federal Minister of Mines and Resources T.A. Crerar. Afterward, a crowd of approximately 500 watched Crerar play a much anticipated nine-hole golf match against the Minister of Transport, C.D. Howe on the Parks newly-completed Anne of Green Gables Golf course. If one believed the

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<sup>92</sup> "Confederation Pageant was a Magnificent Sight," *Patriot*, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1939, 1.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> "Massanet Choir is Head in Fine Program," *Charlottetown Guardian*, July 19, 1939, 1.



*Patriot* newspaper (a well-known backer of the provincial Liberal party), both men were professional golfer material:

The two [opening] drives by Hon. T.A. Crerar... and Hon. C.D. Howe... might well do credit to any golf professional, both drives being over 200 yards. They went at it in real golfer's style and continued the game until the 7<sup>th</sup> hole, when Mr. Howe was decided the winner with four up. They played the game in the earnest and serious manner in which they do their ministerial work.<sup>95</sup>

High above this clash of would-be titans of the green flew a detachment of R.C.A.F airplanes out of Halifax. Aircraft were still a rarity on Prince Edward Island in 1939, and so the arrival of the flying machines caused much excitement. After circling the Green Gables Golf match the planes turned towards the Charlottetown Exhibition Grounds and delighted the large crowds that had gathered for the Firemen's Tournament transpiring that afternoon.<sup>96</sup> The opening of the federally-funded park and the appearance of Canada's fledgling air force once again drew attention to the festival's national implications.

Wednesday night began with the crowning of the Carnival Queen, selected from eight women, each representing an Island community. Fittingly enough, Charlottetown's candidate, Miss Sally Hughes, won out. Premier Campbell declared at Miss Hughes' coronation that the Island was not only the birthplace of Confederation, but also the home of beauty.<sup>97</sup> This was the last mention of Confederation for the evening; any thought of the festival's national implications were forgotten in the massive Mardi Gras Parade and Carnival that followed the coronation. It seemed to matter little to anyone present that Mardi Gras had nothing to do with the Island's history or culture and traditionally took place in winter. The *Patriot* reported that Charlottetown celebrated like never before:

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<sup>95</sup> "Minister of Transport Won the Historic Golf Match Today," *Patriot*, July 19, 1939, 1.

<sup>96</sup> "Opening of Golf Course Seen From the Air," *Patriot*, July 19, 1939, 1.

<sup>97</sup> "Queen of Carnival Was Crowned IN State," *Patriot*, July 20, 1939, 1.

Never, it is believed, has a larger crowd been seen on the city streets than that which viewed the Mardi Gras parade from the Forum to Market Square last evening. Both sides of the streets were packed with a crowd that enjoyed the unique spectacle and many humorous characters. Popeye was there on his boat with Mickey Mouse, Golden Bear, and other funny characters in addition to cowboys, Indians, Roman soldiers, etc.<sup>98</sup>

The carnival that followed was no less frenetic. At midnight an impromptu parade through the city was organized. One group broke off from this parade to form yet *another* march, this one down Richmond Street.<sup>99</sup> The *Guardian* reported that the celebrations went on in this vein into the early morning hours. The newspaper rhetoric has to be taken with a grain of salt, but there can be no doubt that both Islanders and visitors were enjoying the festivities:

The carnival spirit reached its climax during the hilarious hours of Wednesday night and Thursday morning, when masqueraders, firemen, soldiers, sailors and swarms of gleeful youngsters joined in a saturnalia of merrymaking.<sup>100</sup>

Thursday morning the mood returned to one of sober celebration. Federal Transportation Minister C.D. Howe oversaw the first transcontinental flight from Charlottetown's new airport. The remainder of the day was lower key, featuring a farmer picnic at the Experimental Farm in Charlottetown and horse racing at the Exhibition grounds. That evening the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides staged a massive campfire at Victoria Park.<sup>101</sup> Attendance was excellent, numbering between 4,000 and 5,000 persons, who joined in the singing and witnessed a "brilliant display" of fireworks at the end of the night.<sup>102</sup>

The final day of the conference was devoted to military exercises at the Exhibition grounds, attended by a crowd of 7,000. In hindsight, it can be said that the military demonstration, which included "gas mask" drills, was an ominous end to

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> "The Carnival Spirit," The Guardian, July 21, 1939, 4.

<sup>101</sup> "Confederation Anniversary Celebration: Programme," Guardian, July 11, 1939, 1.

<sup>102</sup> "The Camp Fire at Victoria Park," Patriot, July 21, 1939, 4.

Confederation week and a sign of the coming conflict in Europe. Ominous too were the newspaper headlines that the festival shared its front-page space with. *Patriot* headline “Hectic, Happy “Confederation Week” Ends” competed with a photo of an air raid drill in London, England and the title “Germany is 100 Per Cent Optimistic There Will Be No War.”<sup>103</sup> Despite such warning signals, the storm clouds gathering over Europe would not burst until September of 1939. Islanders and tourists alike had the chance to return to their homes and regular lives. There was time to stop and reminisce about the events of Confederation Week and what it had all meant.

### **In the Spotlight**

Charlottetown’s newspapers immediately began to bask in the glory of the week that had been. An editorial in the *Patriot* admonished its readers to forever remember the true meaning of Confederation Week:

Now that the parades are over and the music of the bands, the sound of marching feet, and tumult and shouting have died away, we should not forget as we pointed out on the eve of the celebrations, the immortal words of Joseph Howe. [M]ake room for the dead – for those immortals who created our Dominion.<sup>104</sup>

Editorials in the rival *Guardian* echoed these sentiments:

Like the historic conference which the events, in the main, were intended to commemorate, this week will go down in history. Old men and women who are now children will recall the details, and many who are not children will shortly begin to wonder whether they really happened.<sup>105</sup>

For A.E. Arsenault and the CCC, Confederation Week vindicated over seven months of planning, preparing, negotiating and begging. For one week the eyes and ears of the entire Dominion turned towards Charlottetown. The province had stood alone in the spotlight:

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<sup>103</sup> “Germany is 100 Per Cent Optimistic There Will Be No War,” *Guardian*, July 22, 1939, 1.

<sup>104</sup> “An Eventful Week,” *Patriot*, July 22, 1939,

<sup>105</sup> “A Red-Letter Week,” *Guardian*, July 21, 1939, 4.

Charlottetown had been the scene of many memorable celebrations, but certainly none which has been carried out more successfully, or on such an ambitious scale... Not only are all citizens and visitors in agreement on this point, but the Province, as a result, has received more front-page publicity from coast to coast than on any other occasion, not excepting the Royal Visit in which, naturally, we shared the spotlight with other provinces.<sup>106</sup>

The newborn Prince Edward Island National Park had also enjoyed the benefits of the spotlight. After the festival, National Parks Bureau representative Robert J.C. Stead wrote Arsenault to praise the celebrations and stress the symbiotic relationship between Park and province:

As I have said to you on various occasions, I felt that publicity for the national park in Prince Edward Island and general publicity for the Island are one and inseparable. That is our attitude in dealing with publicity for the park and I believe it is also your attitude in dealing with the more general publicity for the province as a whole.<sup>107</sup>

For Island tourism promoters who wanted as much assistance as possible in their promotional efforts, such words were music to their ears.

There was no denying that the festival had given an immediate boost to the Island's tourism industry. The Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau reported a more than 100 percent increase in inquiries for the month of June over the same month in 1938.<sup>108</sup> The Island's transportation facilities were barely able to handle the overflow of visitors; the extra Borden-Tormentine ferry George Tweedy had secured on his mission to Ottawa saved the day, running extra trips across the strait for the duration of Confederation Week.<sup>109</sup> While the exact number of tourists attending the festival was not recorded, both Charlottetown newspapers estimated that tourist attendance at festival events numbered consistently in the hundreds. Most importantly, the Island was leaving its mark on the visitors. One *Guardian* editorial noted: "The unanimous verdict of visitors during the

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Letter From Robert J.C. Stead to Judge A.E. Arsenault, 26 July 1939, RG34, Series 9, File 9, PAPEL.

<sup>108</sup> "Look for Big Increase in Tourist Traffic," *Patriot*, July 8, 1939, 1.

<sup>109</sup> "Extra Ferry Service Between Island and Mainland Next Week," *Guardian*, 13 July 1939, 1.

week is ‘We have had the best time ever.’”<sup>110</sup> Prospect for tourism’s future had never looked brighter.

Confederation Week’s primary yet covert goal may have been to promote the province’s tourism industry, but few who attended believed this was the festival’s true *raison d’être*. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations had a much loftier and more overt goal: to rekindle the “Confederation Spirit” and help create a shared national myth. It is difficult to say whether Arsenault and the CCC were simply shrewd businessmen and politicians using the birthplace myth to their province’s advantage or whether they were visionaries creating a permanent shrine to the Canadian nation at Charlottetown; most likely there is some truth to both these portraits. Regardless of the actual intent, the 1939 festival succeeded in transforming Charlottetown into a national shrine in the minds of millions of Canadians.

The true meaning of Confederation Week was made evident in a July 17

*Guardian* editorial entitled “Why We Are Celebrating”:

The great fact of this week’s celebrations emphasizes is the existence of a united dominion, - that fact that our sectional problems, important as they are from a provincial standpoint, are of infinitely less importance than the ties which knit us together. We are celebrating this event not as individual Provinces, but as a single united family.... That is what this week’s celebration is for – to get together round the old family hearth, to draw inspiration from the vision and initiative of our forbears, and seek new common ground in facing the problems of present and future.<sup>111</sup>

Ottawa might be the political heart of the Dominion, but Charlottetown was the spiritual centre, a shrine to which a beleaguered nation could make a regular pilgrimage to heal its depression-splintered soul. This was not just the opinion of the Island’s newspapers. The *Montreal Gazette* suggested Charlottetown could offer a spiritual solution to current political discord, by infusing politicians with the “Confederation

<sup>110</sup> “Editorial Notes,” *The Guardian*, 22 July 1939, 4.

<sup>111</sup> “Why We Are Celebrating,” *Guardian*, 17 July 1939, 4.

Spirit” of the 1864 meetings: “It should be possible, for these meetings to recreate, or at least, to revive, the Confederation Spirit and to show by what means the difficulties which now beset the dominion might be overcome.”<sup>112</sup> The *Ottawa Journal* similarly argued that the success of Charlottetown’s celebration proved the existence of a strong, united Canada:

What does the celebration tell? Overwhelmingly, we think, that talk about the break-up of Confederation is nonsensical talk... the long-term factors of national unity and evolution continue to operate imperceptibly. Charlottetown’s celebration is proof of that.<sup>113</sup>

Whether it was reviving a long-sleeping “Spirit of Confederation” or simply giving a means of expression to a pre-existing national sentiment, it was agreed that Canada’s sense of purpose and unity had received a much-needed symbolic shot in the arm on the streets of Charlottetown. The spectators had taken meaning from the continuous barrage of symbols and icons on display during Confederation week.

The pageant was perhaps the most successful event in terms of delivering a message of a common history and a common vision for all Canadians. The *Moncton Daily Times* reported that P. Campbell Johnston, son of the New Brunswick Father of Confederation the Hon. John M. Johnston, declared “...the Confederation pageant presented during the week as the finest pageantry he had ever witnessed.”<sup>114</sup> Senator Harry Mullins of Toronto was so impressed by the pageant that he suggested it should be put on as a touring show across Canada.<sup>115</sup> In a letter of thanks to pageant director Barbara Roper, Arsenault noted that many other distinguished visitors had “...said that this pageant was so outstanding and so well performed that it should be repeated all over

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<sup>112</sup> “Looking to Charlottetown,” *Guardian*, 21 July 1939, 4.

<sup>113</sup> “Ottawa Comment,” *Guardian*, 25 July 1939, 4.

<sup>114</sup> “High Praise for Confederation Celebration P.E.I.,” *Moncton Daily Times*, N.D., RG34, series 9, file 1, PAPEI.

<sup>115</sup> “Senator Has High Praise For Pageant,” *Guardian*, Saturday, 22 July 1939, 1.

Canada.” The federal Minister of Mines and Resources also agreed the pageant should tour the nation: “Mr. Howe said this publicly at the luncheon at Dalvay and said that he had never experienced more pleasure and more satisfaction in a performance.”<sup>116</sup> The *Guardian*’s July 22 editorial included an impressive list of notables who thought the *Romance of Canada* “should be presented right across Canada as an inspiration to unity and patriotic sentiment.”<sup>117</sup>

The pageant’s message of unity and history struck a chord with many who had attended. Ironically, the pageant was the most persuasive example of how the past was being made subservient to the present at the Confederation Celebration. The *Guardian* declared that the pageant “...faithfully portrays the founding of Canada.”<sup>118</sup> It did nothing of the sort. The pageant mixed and matched historical eras and characters to create a non-existent universe where a non-existent vision of Canada’s identity could be presented to the world. The pageant, as well as all of Confederation week, was using history to help start Charlottetown’s transformation into a national shrine, a process MacCannell calls *site sacralization*.<sup>119</sup> The festival marked the Island as separate from other regions, and worthy of national and tourist attention, based on its value as the site of a historical event.

Although they claimed that they championed tourism as a way to support the Island’s needs, Arsenault and the Publicity Association had always bent the Island’s anti-modern aesthetic to support tourism’s needs. Now the same thing was happening with its

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<sup>116</sup> Letter from A.E. Arsenault, Convenor, to Barbara Roper, 21 July 1939, RG34, series 9, file 3, PAPEI.

<sup>117</sup> “Red Letter Week,” *Guardian*.

<sup>118</sup> “Confederation Anniversary Celebration: Programme,” *Guardian*, 11 July, 1939, 11.

<sup>119</sup> MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 43-44. MacCannell notes that there may be some sights “...which are so spectacular in themselves that no institutional support is required to mark them off as attractions.” In comparison, most modern attractions “... are not so evidently reflective of important social values,” and so “[m]assive institutional support is often required for sight sacralization in the modern world.

history. D.C. Harvey, head of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, had initially harboured reservations about the timing of Confederation Week and wrote as much in a letter to Arsenault:

In regard to your celebration of July 17<sup>th</sup> I am a little concerned about the date, as the event which you celebrate took place the week of September 1<sup>st</sup>. I had been pushing for the erection of Tablets to the Fathers of Confederation and had hoped to have seven erected for that date...<sup>120</sup>

The convenor replied to Harvey with a series of reasoned arguments. The September date could interfere with the provincial exhibition as well as the fall harvest in the province. Furthermore, September's weather was much less reliable than July's and there would a greater chance the Celebrations could be ruined by rain. Arsenault saved the most telling argument for last: "Fourthly, our summer resorts close on the last day of August and our visitors would not have the advantage of visiting and enjoying our beaches."<sup>121</sup> Tourism dollars had the final word in any arguments concerning the celebrations.

1939 had also brought the Island's general population into closer contact with the tourism industry. Confederation Week exposed regular Islanders to the tourism industry like never before. The festival relied heavily on volunteer labour, from the pageant performers to those serving on the CCC. A massive recruitment drive stressed the importance of the celebrations to all Islanders, regardless of their social status or vocation. Ads in both the *Guardian* and the *Patriot* read "A National Celebration --- A lifetime event... YOU may be of vital importance in making the events a success." Islanders were challenged to "give visitors something to remember the "Island" by."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Letter from D.C. Harvey to A.E. Arsenault, 30 December 1938, RG34, series 9, file 9, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>121</sup> Letter from A.E. Arsenault to D.C. Harvey, 30 December 1938, RG34, series 9, file 9, PAPEI.

<sup>122</sup> "Confederation Celebration," Advertisement in the *Guardian*, 6 July, 1939, 8.



Recruiting ads also targeted specific groups in Charlottetown's population, such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, merchants or car owners. One newspaper ad was addressed directly to the "ladies":

Merchants, Car owners and others are decorating with flags, bunting and lights. YOU can help greatly by getting out the CHRISTMAS lighting decorations and trimming your windows for this great occasion. May we look to your cooperation in this?<sup>123</sup>

The entire population of Charlottetown, along with much of the rest of province, had been mobilized for Confederation Week. Citizens were all but told it was their duty to help make the festival a success, but were offered no financial recompense for their work. The Island's tourism boosters were continuing to assume that publicity equalled prosperity, but not stopping to think too hard about prosperity for whom.

Islanders did acquire one benefit in exchange for their volunteer labour; a chance to participate in the celebrations. Whereas previously tourism had drawn a firm line between host and guest, this line dissolved in the speeches, dances and parades of Confederation Week. Islanders turned out in the thousands for almost every event, and learned they could enjoy the recreational benefits of the tourism industry. They also developed a love of spectacle on a grand scale, if one believes the glowing accounts of the *Guardian* and *Patriot*. The Confederation Celebration was the one of the first real signs that the average Islander's disinterested attitude towards the tourism industry was beginning to change.

There was no denying that Confederation Week had been a spectacular success. It had satisfied the local population with tremendous spectacle and celebration. It had met the needs of federal politicians, who used it as a platform to promote tourism, take credit for economic development and champion the cause of national unity. Most

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

importantly, it had exceeded the wildest dreams of Island tourism boosters by providing unprecedented publicity for the province and establishing Charlottetown as the birthplace of Confederation. Along with the national park, the birthplace myth now seemed set to serve as a permanent funnel to draw federal and tourist funds into the province. Yet this did not happen. Instead, the events of Confederation Week were almost immediately forgotten by the entire nation.

Today the Confederation Celebration does not occupy a single line in Canadian history books, or even the Island's history books. The 1939 Celebration disappeared into the massive shadow of the Second World War that began in September of that year. It would be 25 years before a national celebration would once again be held in the birthplace of Confederation. Despite this, the festival was still a significant event in the history of Island tourism. It demonstrated the potential power of the birthplace myth and served as a model for future celebrations. Most importantly, the 1939 festival convinced many of the Island's political and commercial elite that their industry's full potential could only be exploited with the aid of the provincial and federal governments.

## Chapter Two:

### Seeding the Garden: The Struggle to Develop Tourism's Potential, 1939-1950.

Lastly I wish to commend the Premier and the Government for having recognized the importance and value of the Tourist Industry.

-- A.E. Arsenault, circa early 1940s<sup>1</sup>

There is no question but that there is a great tourist future for Prince Edward Island if those in authority would only realize it.... We have a regular gold mine here but we are doing little to extract the gold....

-- A.E. Arsenault, circa late 1940s<sup>2</sup>

The self-congratulatory afterglow of the Confederation celebration ended abruptly on Friday, 1 September when the German army began its invasion of Poland. By 3 September Great Britain had declared war on Hitler's Reich and the Dominion of Canada followed suit on 10 September, after a three-day debate in Parliament.<sup>3</sup> For the next six years the war would come to dominate the lives of all Canadians, and Islanders were no exception to this rule.

Canada's smallest province threw itself into the war effort wholeheartedly. 49.6% of all Island males between the ages of 18 and 45 ended up serving in the armed forces.<sup>4</sup> Islanders also contributed over \$25 million to the victory loan campaign – an amazing amount for a province of "...only 94,000, the bulk of whom still practiced subsistence farming." In a national plebiscite on conscription held in April 1942, 82.4 percent of Islanders came out in favour of conscription, the highest average of any province.<sup>5</sup> From 1939 until 1945, the war effort received the full patriotic attention of Islanders; everything else came after, and that included tourism.

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<sup>1</sup> "Credit to Whom Credit is Due" Transcript of Speech by A.E. Arsenault, Ex President and chairman of the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau, c.1941-1942, Acc. No. 4135, Vol. 21, File 21, PAPEI, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from A.E. Arsenault to Leo Dolan, c. late 1940s, Accession No. 4135, Vol. 2, file 21, PAPEI, 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Wright, Ed. *The World at Arms*. (Montreal: Reader's Digest Association Ltd., 1989), 25.

<sup>4</sup> Edward MacDonald, *If You're Stronghearted: Prince Edward Island in the Twentieth Century*. (Summerside: Williams and Crue Ltd., 2000), 187.

<sup>5</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 193-94

Preoccupation with the war effort hampered tourism's growth for a time, but the industry was now firmly rooted in the Island's soil. After an initial slowdown, tourist numbers began to grow again and were soon surpassing prewar levels. By the war's end in 1945, the Island's tourism boosters were wildly optimistic, convinced that a new age of affluence in post-war North America would spark a golden age for their industry. Many were already predicting tourism would grow to be Prince Edward Island's most important industry after agriculture. In the immediate post-war era, however, these tourism dreams did not coincide with reality. Despite a post-war tourism boom, Island boosters found themselves hard pressed to take advantage of it, struggling with insufficient funding and government indifference. Tourism promoters would work through the disappointment, however, and by the end of the 1940s they could look to the future with hope once again.

### **The War Years**

In 1939 any thoughts of a golden age for tourism were still a long way off. With the outbreak of war, the industry faced a number of handicaps. First was the government's preoccupation with the war effort. Wartime austerity, in the form of gas rationing, food rationing and increased security measures all curtailed mobility and made it increasingly difficult to cater to tourists. Moreover, as a non-essential industry, tourism found itself neglected in favour of the Island's traditional farming and fishing economy. Over the course of the conflict, both industries grew exponentially in order to help feed the war effort. Between 1940 and 1946, the value of fish landings in the province increased six fold, while the Island's farm cash income rose from \$6.4 million in 1939 to \$13.8 million by 1944.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> MacDonald, Stronghearted, 202.

Prior to the war, tourism had always suffered from the notion that it was a less stable and dignified means of making a living than farming or fishing.<sup>7</sup> During the 1930s tourism's resiliency in the face of the Depression had done much to change those perceptions. The Island's traditional industries, however, were flourishing once again. One of the prime motivations for supporting tourism growth-- supplementing a failing traditional economy-- had been temporarily removed.

Nationally, the tourism industry still received some encouragement, since it provided capital that could be invested into wartime production. The federal government, in conjunction with the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, began a campaign almost immediately in 1939 to convince the still neutral United States – where almost all of Canada's international tourists came from – that the dominion was still an excellent vacation destination. Magazines such as *National Geographic*, whose affluent readership was considered Canada's target tourist market, carried advertisements where the Prime Minister himself assured potential travelers that “The fact we are at war will not occasion the slightest interference with your enjoyment and freedom.”<sup>8</sup>

However badly tourism suffered while the Americans stayed out of the war, it suffered much more acutely once the United States joined the Allied cause in December 1941. The flood of American tourist traffic to Canada was reduced to a trickle as the U.S.A. turned their attention away from leisure activity and towards the winning the War. The following table provides the total number of passengers and vehicles traveling to and from Prince Edward Island on the Borden-Tormentine Ferry Route, the province's main link to the mainland:

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<sup>7</sup> MacEachern, “No Island,” Abstract. See also the previous chapter's description of the Publicity Association's difficulty in gathering any contributions from rural Prince Edward Island.

<sup>8</sup> “Canada Speaks” Advertisement in *National Geographic*, May, 1941 Vol. LXXIX, Number 5.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Number of Passengers, Borden-Tormentine Ferry</b>	<b>Total Number of Vehicles, Borden-Tormentine Ferry</b>
1939	109,292	Not available
1940	127,586	Not available
1941	157,316	25,093
1942	126,712	9,446
1943	149,849	10,027
1944	175,662	12,052
1945	177,737	18,213 <sup>9</sup>

It goes without saying that not all the traffic shown above was tourist traffic.

While there is no way to determine exactly how many of these passengers were tourists, some conclusions can be drawn from these statistics. The year 1942, the first full year of American participation in the war, saw the annual number of passenger crossing the Strait *decrease* for the first time since at least the 1920s. Even more significant was the drop in the number of vehicles making the trip. While the passenger count fell by about 19 percent, vehicle numbers plummeted by a whopping 62 percent. By 1942 Prince Edward Island's tourism industry had long been dependent on the automobile and the freedom of movement it granted to affluent North Americans. It is likely that the absence of American motorists was largely responsible for the sudden decrease of 1942.

To the relief of Island tourism operators, the decline was short-lived. In 1943 numbers began to increase again and by 1945 had surpassed the previous high-water

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<sup>9</sup> B.Graham Rogers, 1963 Prince Edward Island Traffic Figures with Comparisons, Borden – P.E.I., - Cape Tormentine, N.B., RG25/34, Matheson Papers, Transportation Files, PAPEI, 1, and “Borden – Tormentine Route, Total Passenger Traffic for Years 1928 – 1944 Inclusive,” RG25/33, J. Walter Jones Papers, Vol. 3, Carferry File, PAPEI, 1.

mark of 1941, although vehicle numbers would not beat the 1941 count until 1946.<sup>10</sup> Other points of entry into the province also experienced modest increases. Traffic on the new Wood Islands-Caribou ferry route, introduced in 1941, and on Maritime Central Airways, begun in 1942, increased steadily throughout the war.<sup>11</sup> As aforementioned, statistics of the day were only vague indicators of tourist numbers- military activity such as the Island's several British Commonwealth Air Training Plan bases would have stimulated traffic as well. There were other ways of judging tourism's success, however.

The Island's political and commercial elite, impressed by the successes of the 1930s, had certainly not given up on tourism during the war years. In January of 1940 the provincial government demonstrated its faith in the industry's potential when it took over the Publicity Association's Travel Bureau, placing it under the Department of the Provincial Secretary. B. Graham Rogers, a career civil servant, was named Bureau Director. By 1943 Rogers felt able to boast that the Island's tourism industry was coping better with the war than tourism operations in most parts of the country:

Even though travel in many directions was greatly curtailed everywhere in Canada, yet, in this we had an exceptionally good tourist year on Prince Edward Island which is again an outstanding evidence of the appealing attractions this province has to offer, and evidence also of the fact that the work of your government through the Travel Bureau in disseminating information regarding Prince Edward Island is proving of great value to our province.<sup>12</sup>

The Travel Bureau supervisor noted that people visiting the province in 1943 stayed longer, on average, than in 1942.<sup>13</sup> Statistics dealing specifically with tourism were often based mainly on educated guesses and so conclusions such as the previous one must be taken with a grain of salt. There was no doubt, however, that tourism on Prince Edward

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> B. Graham Rogers, 1963 Prince Edward Island Traffic Figures With Comparisons, 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> B. Graham Rogers, 1943 Report of the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau. (Jones Fonds, Vol. 4 Tourist Promotion File. RG25/33, PAPEI), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Island was perceived as doing a brisk business by war's end. MacDonald notes that "...tourist resorts on the North Shore were reporting a successful season in August 1944, although the majority of guests were said to be from Montreal instead of the usual Americans."<sup>14</sup> In a letter written in 1941 or 1942, A.E. Arsenault, who was already seen as the founding father of the Island tourism industry, commended the premier and the provincial government for "having recognized the importance and value of the Tourist industry."<sup>15</sup>

There had never been any real danger that the austerity of the war years would wipe out the Island's tourism industry. As the conflict drew to a close in 1945, tourism seemed poised to resume the rapid rate of growth it had enjoyed during the pre-war era. Canada's political and business elite expected North America's new affluence to result in a tourism boom, and advocated Keynesian economic measures in order to best exploit it.

### **Tourism and the New Age of Affluence**

In 1944 the National Advisory Tourist Committee was created to prepare Canada's tourist industry for the postwar world. At the committee's first meeting in Windsor, Ontario, the organization's chairman, Major-General the Hon. L.R. LaFleche, stated that Canada's tourism boosters needed to work today to be competitive tomorrow:

"I would not want our people to get the impression that our chief task is anything but the winning of the war and the peace nor that we can ease our efforts in these directions," said General LaFleche. "But I do feel that we must prepare now so that we can meet the highly competitive conditions that will prevail in the tourist industry immediately following the war. Canada must be ready when the time comes."<sup>16</sup>

General LaFleche was not alone in his views. The nation's political elite considered the task of preparing the tourism industry for the postwar era of the utmost importance:

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<sup>14</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 201.

<sup>15</sup> "Credit to Whom Credit is Due," Acc. No. 4135, Vol. 21, File 21, PAPEI, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Report of Discussion by National Advisory Tourist Committee at Windsor, Ontario September 25, 26, 27, 1944. Jones Fonds, Vol. 4 National Tourist Advisory Committee File, RG 25/33, PAPEI, 3.



Delegates from all over Canada welcomed the opening session of the three-day meeting. They heard greetings from cabinet members of all provinces and received promises of wholehearted support of provincial departments in the job of promoting the tourist trade. To lend emphasis to these promises, several provincial treasurers were among those on hand.<sup>17</sup>

Speakers at the conference, particularly Leo Dolan, head of the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, emphasized the competitive nature the postwar tourism industry would have. “We can’t go back to the organization we had before the war,” Dolan stated: “We have been out of the tourist business for nearly five years because of the war and it is not going to be so easy as some think to break in again.” The Bureau chief warned “... we are competing with forces who are being given more money to spend than we have.”<sup>18</sup>

The “forces” Dolan was referring to were tourism boosters in the United States of America. It was noted that many individual states in the Union spent more on tourist promotion than the entire dominion had at its prewar peak of \$500,000. The Committee recommended that the tourist promotion budget of the federal government should be raised to a minimum of \$750,000 as soon as possible after the end of the war. The Committee report remarked that if this amount seemed unreasonably high, it was still a drop in the bucket compared to American expenditures: It was noted that Wisconsin and Michigan each currently spent over one million dollars annually in tourist promotion.<sup>19</sup>

Recommendations were made by delegates at the Windsor meeting for an enlargement of the Canadian Government Travel Bureau and standardization of tourist accommodations in each province.<sup>20</sup> To achieve success in the postwar area, Canadian tourism boosters and operators needed to organize, standardize and professionalize. In

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

short, they needed to begin treating tourism like an *industry* that must be manipulated and managed. The classical theory that the economy would generate the industry in a *sui generis* fashion was rejected; Keynesianism held that government and business must intervene to make tourism a success. G.H. Lash, the director of publicity at Canadian National Railways, put it succinctly, as the conference minutes noted:

“The tourist business is a big and important industry,” he declared; “either that or we are merely talking fiction. Surely, if it is a big and important business, we should be able to find support from the proper sources. If it is found necessary, compulsion should be used to make others see the importance of the tourist industry in this country.”<sup>21</sup>

Lash was convinced that tourism was big business and would become even bigger in the postwar era, if only there was proper investment in infrastructure, promotion and accommodation. He was not alone in this view. The Canadian government had adopted an overwhelmingly Keynesian attitude towards the nation’s post-war economy and Canadians generally supported this attitude. Economist Donald Savoie explains:

They [the Canadian public] had emerged from the war determined never to permit another depression of the kind witnessed in the 1930s. By war’s end, the public’s belief in the ability of government to intervene and to manage the economy was high.<sup>22</sup>

Canada’s Keynesian outlook included the tourism industry. An article entitled *Public Investment in Canada* painted the following picture of the nation’s postwar tourism industry:

There can be no question that the removal of restrictions imposed by the war, and the mental reactions following the return of peace will enlarge the possibilities of tourist travel in Canada to a scale never before realized or even contemplated.<sup>23</sup>

Canada’s business community was in full agreement. An April 1945 article in the Royal Bank of Canada’s *Monthly Letter* attempted to increase awareness of this new economic frontier, noting that “...at war’s end there will be loosed a great flow of

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Donald Savoie, *The Politics of Public Spending in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 14-15.

<sup>23</sup> *Public Investment in Canada*, (RG34, Series 10, File 29, PAPEI), 21.

friendly people between provinces and across the international border.”<sup>24</sup> The Royal Bank article was indicative of the high hopes the national business community had for the tourist industry: “It has been said that Canada can make the tourist business its greatest source of income and natural wealth next to agriculture and mining.”<sup>25</sup>

Both government and business believed they knew the root causes of the coming tourist wave. The Royal Bank article singled out increased mobility and affluence:

For thousands of years men walked. For thousands more they used animal transportation. And now, suddenly, startlingly, within this past brief century, the damned -up desire for roving has been set free by invention of trains, automobiles, steamships, and airplanes.<sup>26</sup>

*Public Investment in Canada* agreed entirely. More than any other form of transportation, the automobile was responsible for past tourism growth, and would be responsible for future growth as well. The report also noted that tourism was no longer the preserve of the wealthy, remarking that “...it [tourism] now embraces practically every economic group.”<sup>27</sup>

Tourism historians Carlton S. Van Doren and Sam A. Lollar identify the years of 1946 to 1958 as the era of “mass recreation”:

After World War II and until 1958 the era of mass recreation resumed a phenomenal growth. Postwar prosperity and population growth led to an upsurge of travelling by the middle class. Servicemen returning from tours of duty desired to spend their vacation time from newly found civilian jobs touring their own country, as well as foreign lands. Postwar women, given a sense of independence by working outside the home during the War, were eager to travel as well.<sup>28</sup>

The automobile was by far the most widely used means for the newly affluent to travel in the post-war era. Van Doren and Lollar note that in 1947 private automobiles accounted

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<sup>24</sup> The Royal Bank of Canada, No Title, (RG34, Series 10, File 23, PAPEI), 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Public Investment*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> Carlton S. Van Doren and Sam A. Lollar. “The Consequences of Forty Years of Tourism Growth.” *Annals of Tourism Research*. (Vol. 12, 1985), 481-82.

for 81.6% of the domestic inter-city passenger miles in the United States.<sup>29</sup> Canadian tourism boosters desperately wanted to attract as many American automobiles and their affluent, big-spending passengers as they could. However, tourism boosters certainly were not averse to attracting motorists from their own country.

*Public Investment in Canada* and the Royal Bank article suggested extensive road building programs to develop tourism's potential. The Royal Bank article noted that "It is not enough to have some good roads in some parts of the country..."<sup>30</sup> Roads needed to be built wherever a tourist might possibly go. In the postwar era, road builders everywhere continued to use the economic carrot of touring motorists to convince governments to invest in highways.<sup>31</sup>

Tourism development was to be part of a broad economic plan for the nation. The lean years of the depression and the success of the wartime command economy had convinced both federal and provincial politicians to adopt an aggressive, Keynesian approach towards the economy. Historian Carman Miller relates how Mackenzie King's Liberal government, afraid of the possible political repercussions of a post-war recession, created a Department of Reconstruction to help prepare the Canadian economy for the post-war world. The provinces were asked to form their own reconstruction committees and cooperate with the department's planners.<sup>32</sup>

The Maritime provinces each submitted extensive reconstruction reports, and by 1945 Ottawa was proposing extensive plans for increased provincial subsidies, economic development grants and public works projects. Despite all this sound and fury, little

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 471.

<sup>30</sup> Royal Bank of Canada, 2.

<sup>31</sup> John Jakle, *The Tourist*, 127.

<sup>32</sup> Carman Miller, "The 1940s: War and Rehabilitation," in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, ed. *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 321.

came of the reconstruction efforts. The feared postwar recession never really struck, and the Department of Reconstruction experienced strong resistance from wealthy Ontario and Quebec, who feared they might end up paying for the reconstruction projects of the poorer provinces.<sup>33</sup> Provincial reconstruction reports, and most of the hopes and dreams they contained, were shelved and left to gather dust for decades.

Sometimes history's unfulfilled hopes and dreams can be just as revealing as its concrete accomplishments. Prince Edward Island's contribution to the reconstruction effort consisted of the 1945 *Interim Report of the Prince Edward Island Advisory Reconstruction Committee*, and although it remained unrequited, it provides excellent insight into how the Island's political and business elite perceived the economic future of their province.

### **The *Interim Report***

Prince Edward Island's Advisory Reconstruction Committee was formed on February 19, 1945 by a provincial Order-in-Council. The province was unable to submit a full report, having neither the funds nor the technical expertise to do so. Despite this the goal of the Island Committee was influenced by the same Keynesian economic thinking as in the other provinces. According to the Prince Edward Island Reconstruction Committee Act, the Advisory Reconstruction Committee's purpose was:

...[To] study and report on a programme of postwar insofar as it affects this Province and to act in cooperation with federal and provincial authorities in formulating policies and measures necessary to deal with the problems involved.<sup>34</sup>

A number of technical committees were created within the Advisory Reconstruction Committee, and each focused on a particular niche of the province's

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<sup>33</sup> Donald Savoie, Regional Economic Development: Canada's Search For Solutions. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 26

<sup>34</sup> Prince Advisory Reconstruction Committee. Interim Report, 5.

economy or society. The technical committees contacted the various Island organizations associated with their niche requesting opinions and statistical information that was then used to create a report. There were technical committees for education, agriculture, fisheries, public health and welfare, public services, forestry, housing and last but not least, tourist promotion and transportation.<sup>35</sup>

Tourism's fledgling status in the Island's economy and society was revealed by the fact that it was squeezed into a single technical committee with transportation.<sup>36</sup> On one front, the coupling demonstrated just how closely postwar tourism growth was associated with the increasing use of the automobile. On a more negative note, the matching also hinted that tourism, for all its successes, had not yet proven itself deserving of the separate treatment given to the province's traditional industries of agriculture and fisheries.

Tourism's second-class status in the *Interim Report* did not prevent the seven-member tourism and transportation technical committee, which included tourism godfather A.E. Arsenault and provincial Travel Bureau chief B. Graham Rogers, from expressing unbridled optimism regarding the industry's postwar future. A separate 12-page tourist promotion report was written up by the joint technical committee, and it sang the industry's praise from beginning to end.

The tourism committee's report opened with a confident assessment of tourism's potential:

The keynote of the success of the Tourist Industry on Prince Edward Island is the two matters of Accommodation and Transportation, because our natural attractions are so great that if those two matters are properly taken care of the tourist industry will

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

within a few years rank second in importance to Agriculture in this province in amount of revenue brought into the Province.<sup>37</sup>

The “natural attractions” that the report referred to were, of course, the Island’s pristine beaches and pastoral landscape. The committee acknowledged, more overtly than had been done in the past, that the province’s anti-modern aesthetic was a natural resource that could be exploited. Best of all, it was a *renewable* resource:

We wish to impress on the main Reconstruction Committee that it is the considered opinion of your Technical Committee dealing with tourist development that the tourist industry on Prince Edward Island can become our second largest business in point of money brought into the Province. *Furthermore, the tourist industry is not one requiring export of articles produced. Our tourist attractions are permanent and always with us.* The development of this asset and the resultant profits to our population is a matter that should be pursued with the utmost vigor [Italics added].<sup>38</sup>

The committee believed the key to accessing the wealth of the province’s “natural resources” lay in establishing sufficient transportation and accommodation facilities to take advantage of the postwar tourism boom. In this respect, the 1945 report set the tone for the postwar era, where the twin issues of accommodation and transportation would continue to dominate industry concerns well into the 1960s. However, the *Interim Report*’s tourism chapter took the focus on roads and rooms to extremes.

The tourism chapter of the *Interim report* was called “Tourist Promotion” but contained almost nothing at all pertaining to advertising or promotion. The technical committee seemed satisfied with the work of the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau, whose budget was over \$16,000 by 1945. The technical committee’s report could have been more fittingly titled “Tourism Infrastructure Construction.” The report suggested the construction of hundreds of miles of roadway and multitudes of tourist homes. If one

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

took the arguments of the tourism committee at face value, all that was necessary to attract tourists to any given area was a strip of asphalt and some cottages.

One of the reports' more ambitious recommendations was the construction of at least two bridges across the West River, the most important being the "Brighton Bridge" from Charlottetown to Rocky Point- something that would be a massive (and expensive) undertaking (even today). The bridges would link Charlottetown to the Island's Southern Shoreline between Rocky Point and Borden, presumably making the area more accessible to motoring tourists. The technical committee predicted spectacular economic spin offs:

Such a bridge would not only be of great value from a tourist standpoint but also the the farmers living in that area. If the Brighton Bridge and another West River Bridge were built it would benefit the entire South Shore area which would undoubtedly develop then into a tourist area rivalling [sic] the national park area.<sup>39</sup>

The technical committee might believe the South Shore could rival the National Park as a tourist destination, but that did not mean that it thought the National Park had reached its full tourism potential. The *Report* called for the National Parks Bureau and the Island government to engage in the "improvement and paving of all the main roads leading to the Park and those in the Park area itself."<sup>40</sup> To this it tacked on a request for "Immediate construction of more accommodation for tourists."<sup>41</sup> The chapter did not stop with roads and accommodations, however. The construction of additional ferries designed *only* to carry automobiles, buses and trucks was urged, along with the resumption of a regular steamship service between Montreal and Charlottetown. The reinstatement of a through sleeping car train service between the same two cities was also recommended.<sup>42</sup> Air transportation, still a fledgling industry at the time, was to be

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<sup>39</sup> Interim Report, 238.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 233.



further developed, and additional paved roads and bridges were to be built almost everywhere.

The tourism report stressed that if you built it they would come, although details were frustratingly vague as to what would happen after that. The technical committee promised “development” of areas such as the Island’s South shore, but said surprisingly little about what such development would consist of, other than a road and rental cottages. The final paragraph of the report even suggested that tourist possibilities were not limited by the seasons, remarking “there is an excellent possibility that in a few years time through the increase in our air travel that it might also be a winter resort of considerable proportions.”<sup>43</sup> The issue of what exactly tourists would be coming to see during the winter months was not addressed.

Some of the *Report*’s few non-transportation and accommodation suggestions did hint at the nature of the tourist development the technical committee had in mind. The report suggested riverboat cruises up the Island’s larger rivers be established for tourists. It also asked the government to encourage farmers, particularly those around the Prince Edward Island National Park, to open up their homes to tourists.<sup>44</sup> As well, recommendations were made to encourage both deep-sea fishing and small game hunting.<sup>45</sup> This suggested tourism was becoming increasingly oriented towards entertainment and recreation, rather than nature appreciation and relaxation. While useful, such suggestions were hardly innovative ideas in by 1945. On the surface of things, the technical committee seemed committed to the notion that roads, rooms and the Island’s “natural attractions” would do the trick. Under the surface however, there was a

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 239

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*,

grudging acknowledgement that something *more* was needed. Modern tourism required not just extensive road construction, but calculated image construction as well.

For tourism to work, it was vital that tourists see the province - landscape, inhabitants and all - as a place far removed from the sordid, overpopulated modern world. The province needed to create a niche for itself in the North American tourism market; it needed to show tourists why it was different from anywhere else they could travel. To create this niche, tourism promoters would need at least the partial cooperation of the general population. If Islanders did not fit tourists' perceptions of a sylvan "land out of time," then they should be *made* to fit. Otherwise the Island's anti-modern image would not ring true. Tourism boosters had long held that the industry was everybody's business, although they rarely provided details on how everyone could benefit from the business. The 1945 report followed this philosophy closely. Tourism had come to be not just a question of infrastructure development but also a question of social engineering.

To begin with, every Islander was to be encouraged to maintain their province's "natural attractions," particularly where tourists would see them:

We also recommend that substantial prizes be given each year to the farmer living along along a certain length of highway who makes the most improvement in the general appearance of his lawns, home, barns, fences, etc. - - particularly those which border along a highway. The white-washing plan undertaken at Rustico a few years ago should be revived in this as well as other villages throughout the Province. The road signs along the highways must be under strict inspection and any broken, unsightly or damaged signs should either be repaired or immediately removed.<sup>46</sup>

The committee further suggested that "... all of the rural schools be asked to keep the Union Jack flying on their schools whether such schools are open or during the holidays."<sup>47</sup> In keeping with the province's garden image, the report suggested encouraging the production of fine poultry and fresh fish, as well as fruits and vegetables,

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

for the tourist trade.<sup>48</sup> It was also recommended that a stock of lobster be kept alive over the winter, so they could be served to tourists arriving early in the tourist season, before the new catch of lobster was in.<sup>49</sup> After all, if the Island was going to sell itself as a garden, tourists had to be able to enjoy the garden's bounty.

All these measures were meant to create a particular anti-modern image for Prince Edward Island, an image that would set the province apart in the minds of visiting tourists and meet their expectations of what an anti-modern paradise should be. The technical committee would not have suggested that Island schools fly the Union Jack unless a good number of schools did not. The committee was not concerned with whether or not the practice of flying British flags was true to Island tradition; they were concerned with whether the practice was true the Island's *tourist image*. In this case, the Union Jack would emphasize the Island's "Britishness" as well as associations with heritage and tradition. Particularly for American tourists, the flag would remind visitors they were in a foreign, even exotic country.

Historian Duncan McDowall identifies the process of convincing a population to play along with a constructed image "social control" and relates how this process worked on the Island of Bermuda during the early twentieth century:

In the twenties, Bermudians acquired the universally-felt instinct that Bermuda *was* tourism and that certain types of behavior – discourtesy, rowdyism, littering – were in fact anti-social actions that threatened not just the colonial livelihood but the very essence of Bermudian life.<sup>50</sup>

Sociologist MacCannell also describes this process, but calls it "reconstructed ethnicity," and identifies it as the attempt to impose certain traits on a pre-existing culture:

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>50</sup> Duncan McDowall, *Another World: Bermuda and the Rise of Modern Tourism*. (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1999), 98.

*Reconstructed ethnicity* is the maintenance and preservation of ethnic forms for the entertainment of ethnically different others... The new reconstructed ethnic forms are produced once almost all the groups in the world are located in a global network of interactions and they begin to use their former colorful ways both as commodities to be bought and sold, and as rhetorical weaponry in their dealings with one another, suddenly it is not just ethnicity anymore, but it is understood as rhetoric, as symbolic expression with a purpose or a use-value in a larger system.<sup>51</sup>

In 1945, Prince Edward Island tourism promoters had yet to equate Prince Edward Island chiefly with tourism and had failed to convince the population that they all had a stake in the industry.<sup>52</sup> Social control had not been established. The tourism technical committee still remained optimistic that Island tourism was destined for a glorious future in the postwar world. Following the war's end, however, the optimism of the *Interim Report* no longer coincided with reality. For the remainder of the decade, Island tourism promoters would struggle as their dreams of a golden age shattered against the rocks of popular and government indifference.

### **The Farmer Premier and Tourism**

Even before the war had ended, tourism boosters were becoming increasingly worried about their industry's status in Island society. In a July 1945 letter to Liberal Premier John Walter Jones, provincial Travel Bureau chief B. Graham Rogers warned of a general apathy towards tourism and other non-traditional enterprises:

One of the most serious things this Province has had to contend with over a great many years is the fact that when things are started in Prince Edward Island we all fail to allow for growth and expansion, and too many people think that what is good enough today is going to be good enough or big enough for tomorrow.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Dean MacCannell, "Reconstructed Ethnicity: Tourism and Cultural Identity in Third World Communities." *Annals of Tourism Research*, (Vol. 11, 1984), 385.

<sup>52</sup> Alan MacEachern, remarks that "Though successful in selling Prince Edward Island to tourists, promoters failed in selling tourism to Prince Edward Islanders" *No Island*, 85.

<sup>53</sup> Letter, B. Graham Rogers to J. Walter Jones, Premier of Prince Edward Island, July 17, 1945, Jones Fonds, Vol. 4, Northumberland Ferries File, RG25/33, 2.

The parochial attitudes described by Rogers were not just restricted to the general populace. Some politicians saw tourism as a distraction that disrupted the province's agrarian way of life, and believed no move should be made to encourage tourism growth.

For J. Walter Jones, who had succeeded Thane Campbell as Premier in May 1943 and remained in office until May 1953, tourism took a back seat to agriculture. Known as "the Farmer Premier," Jones had come to power as a champion of the province's agricultural community and was known for his unwavering commitment to the Island's rural way of life. One of his more famous remarks was "...If the farmers all go foolish like the people in the towns, good-bye Prince Edward Island."<sup>54</sup> Jones was hardly the man to usher in the golden age of tourism that Island boosters had so ardently hoped for.

J. Walter Jones wanted no part in the postwar industrial growth occurring elsewhere in North America. Although the farmer Premier did introduce many modern improvements to the province, these were chiefly established because it was believed they would be beneficial to agriculture in the province. Jones established improved veterinary services and began programs of rural electrification and provincial soil analysis, all designed to enhance the lives of Island farmers.<sup>55</sup> Jones also engaged in extensive road construction, although this was done just as much for the transportation of agricultural goods as it was for the transportation of tourists.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Blair Weeks, Ed., Minding the House: A Biographical Guide to Prince Edward Island MLAs, 1873-1993. (Charlottetown: The Acorn Press & The Association of Former Members of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 2002), 90. Milne notes that Jones would make "...a virtual equation of Prince Edward Island with the rural farm interest on every available occasion, and the strategy secured him the farm vote every time." David Milne, "Politics in a Beleaguered Garden," in Verner Smiththeram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta, ed., The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980. (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982), 43.

<sup>55</sup> Blair Weeks, Ed., Minding the House, 90.

<sup>56</sup> Radio speech by Walter Jones, undated, Jones Fonds, Vol. 4, Speeches file, RG25/33, PAPEI, 5.

Perhaps the best example of Jones' support for the Island's rural way of life and his rejection of outside influences took place during the Canada Packers strike of 1947, when seventy members of Local 282, United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) walked off the job in Charlottetown as part of a national strike for higher wages.<sup>57</sup> Jones immediately broke the Charlottetown manifestation of the strike and then hastily passed provincial legislation declaring membership in national or international labour organizations illegal. The premier was condemned across Canada as an enemy of labour, but Jones maintained he had acted to protect the interests of the farmers. A 1950 article in *Saturday Night*, written by two Islanders, admitted the Premier's actions had been harsh, but believed the ends justified the means. Jones had "...broke the strike almost single-handed and saved the farmers from heavy losses in their hog receipts."<sup>58</sup> It is worth noting that in the provincial election immediately following the strike, Jones not only won the election, but increased his popular vote.<sup>59</sup>

Jones' attitude towards tourism was less hostile than towards labour, but none the less lacked the enthusiasm tourism boosters were hoping for. The Farmer Premier was willing to accept money for tourism if Ottawa was willing to give it, but did not aggressively pursue an autonomous program of tourist development. This attitude was aptly demonstrated in a series of 1944 letters to Leo Dolan, longtime head of the Canadian Government Travel Bureau. Jones had graciously accepted a position on the National Tourist Advisory Committee, of which Dolan was also the executive director.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 234.

<sup>58</sup> George V. Fraser and Melwyn Breen, "PEI: A Treasure Island Too." In *Saturday Night*, (December 5, 1950), page not marked. Tourism Vertical File C, PEI Collection, UPEI.

<sup>59</sup> David Milne, "Politics in the Garden," in *The Garden Transformed*, 44.

<sup>60</sup> Letter, J. Walter Jones to D. Leo Dolan, Esq., Chief of the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1944, Jones Fonds, Vol. 4, National Tourist Advisory Committee file, RG25/33, PAPEI.

However, when a meeting of the Committee was called for September 25, 1944 in Windsor, Ontario, the premier became less gracious. Jones wrote the following reply to Dolan's invitation on August 24<sup>th</sup> 1944, and it is worth quoting in its entirety:

It is a long distance to Windsor, Ontario, and I know I have a date in Halifax on September 27<sup>th</sup>. I am wondering if there is anything likely to transpire at your conference that would demand our attendance on Prince Edward Island. We are a small Province and *I am continually being questioned by the Government regarding the expenses of this particular Department*. For the past two or three years we have been getting *as many or more tourists than we can possibly accommodate*, and unless there is some program at your conference which would indicate to us how we might construct more accommodation for the many tourists that insist on coming here, I do not think we would be otherwise interested. Possibly I will hear from you further on the subject [italics added].<sup>61</sup>

Jones was being a very shrewd politician. The premier was not going to waste any time or money on the committee if it didn't hold the promise of federal funds for his province. While Jones' claim that the provincial legislature opposed spending on the tourist industry was most likely exaggerated, it can still be seen as evidence that the Island's tourism boosters had not convinced all of the political elite, or crucially, Jones himself, of the industry's paramount importance. Someone who says tourists "insist" on visiting their province is not playing the role of happy host.

Dolan quickly responded to the premier's letter with subtle hints and predictions of prosperity. Dolan tried to answer each excuse individually, starting with the government's questioning:

As you so well say the tourist possibilities of Prince Edward Island are now beginning to be realized by a great many people; for that reason I cannot conceive of any honest criticism that could be directed towards you if you attended this conference of tourist leaders from all parts of Canada.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Letter, J. Walter Jones to D. Leo Dolan, Esq. , Executive-Director, National Tourist Advisory Committee, August 24, 1944, Jones Fonds, National Tourist Advisory Committee file, RG 25/33, PAPEI.

<sup>62</sup> Letter, D. Leo Dolan, to J. Walter Jones Premier of Prince Edward Island, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1944, Jones Fonds, National Tourist Advisory Committee file, RG25/33, PAPEI, 1.

Dolan did not answer the veiled request for federal funds. Instead, he only promised the sympathy of the other provinces, making the vague claim that Jones “would find support, [for the problem of accommodation] I am sure, from all quarters.”<sup>63</sup> A dismayed A.E. Arsenault also wrote to Jones in an attempt to convince him to attend the meeting. Arsenault even threatened to abandon tourism altogether if the premier did not attend: “If, however, I cannot be of service in this respect, I see little use of keeping up any further interest in this industry.”<sup>64</sup>

For Jones, Dolan’s gentle persuasion and Arsenault’s threats were not enough. When the National Advisory Tourist Committee met in Windsor on September 25, 1944, Frank Dunn, a newspaperman from Montreal, agreed to represent Prince Edward Island in the absence of any proper representative.<sup>65</sup> However, Jones’ stand-offish attitude towards tourism did not end with the Windsor meetings. When Dolan forwarded a copy of the Windsor Discussions, Jones gave the following reply:

I regret that our Province is unable to accept invitations to all meetings which you sponsor. This I presume is largely on account of our small size and also of the immediate fact that we have more tourists than we can handle, who have to travel here under the most primitive travelling conditions. We cannot take an active part in further promoting our tourist trade until the transportation difficulties are lessened in some respect.<sup>66</sup>

Jones’ attitude toward tourism in the letters to Dolan could be interpreted as a strategy of playing hard-to-get and holding out until Ottawa promised substantial financial commitments, such as grants for the construction of roads or accommodations. However, to the Island’s tourism boosters it seemed the provincial government was

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Letter from A.E. Arsenault to Hon. J. Walter Jones, 28 August 1944, RG 25/33, Premier’s Office Fonds, Correspondence Files, PAPEI, 2.

<sup>65</sup> Report of Discussion, Jones Fonds, Vol. 4 National Tourist Advisory Committee File, RG 25/33, PAPEI.

<sup>66</sup> Letter, J. Walter Jones to D. Leo Dolan, Executive Director, National Tourist Advisory Committee, October 26, 1944, Jones Fonds, Vol. 4, National Tourist Advisory Committee file, RG25/33, PAPEI.



exhibiting symptoms of parochialism and economic illiteracy and that Jones had all but given up on the tourism industry. A dispirited A.E. Arsenault wrote to Dolan shortly after the end of the war, lamenting the Island government's lack of initiative:

There is no question but that there is a great tourist future for Prince Edward Island if those in authority would only realize it. During the past three years we could have roped many thousands of dollars from prospective visitors if we had had the accommodation for them.... We have a regular gold mine here but we are doing little to extract the gold- I have again and again urged the government to take action but my representations have for the most part met with little response.<sup>67</sup>

Prince Edward Island's tourism industry was entering the postwar era without adequate funding, social/political awareness or direction. Arsenault's Publicity Association had faded away during the war years and the only organization left to fill the industry's leadership vacuum was the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau. This was not a role that the Bureau was yet ready to take.

As it always had, the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau focused chiefly on promotion. In the 1945-46 budget, \$19,601.38 went to the Bureau. Of that amount \$12,893.84 was spent on promotional literature and another \$3,941.33 went to salaries for bureau staff. Nothing was left over for accommodation or recreation development. The Bureau's finances were small compared to other department budgets. In comparison, expenditure on agriculture amounted to \$59,663.08 while transportation was financed to the tune of \$700,315.39. Even the expenses of the Executive Council beat out tourism, weighing in at \$21,051.12.<sup>68</sup>

There was little that the Travel Bureau could do about problems of accommodation and tourist development except bring them to the attention of the provincial government. In 1947 B. Graham Rogers was moved to the provincial

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<sup>67</sup> Letter from A.E. Arsenault to Leo Dolan, c. late 1940s, Accession No. 4135, Vol. 2, file 21, PAPEI, 1-3.

<sup>68</sup> Prince Edward Island Public Accounts, 1945-46, (Charlottetown: Dillon Printing Company, UPEI Library, PEI Collection), 13.

department of transportation and replaced at the Travel Bureau by Brigadier W.W. Reid, a man whose shaky health prevented him from properly fulfilling his duties as Director.<sup>69</sup> Reid nonetheless tried his best to convince the government to invest further in tourism, making pleas in each of his annual reports:

As reported in past years by this Department, still more good tourist accommodation is necessary on the Island if we hope to expand the industry to the spot it really should hold in our economic life, and it is hoped that more of the Island's citizens will enter the industry with a determination to provide a really good type of accommodation for our visitors.<sup>70</sup>

Improvements that the government had already made to the industry had to be praised and reaffirmed, as if without such praise the government might withdraw the improvements. This applied even to such obvious attractions as Province House, where the embers of the 'Confederation Spirit' set alight by the 1939 celebrations still glowed:

As in the past, the Confederation Chamber in our Provincial Building has been the outstanding spot by way of attraction to the visitor, so much so that we feel the efforts of your Government in keeping it in good condition and maintaining an attendant there are certainly more than worthwhile.<sup>71</sup>

### **A New Beginning**

For tourism boosters like A.E. Arsenault, it seemed that Jones had turned his back on the industry. Despite this, tourism growth continued in the postwar era, under-funded or not. Tourism growth in the rest of North America continued to spill over onto the Island, even in the absence of a concerted effort to attract tourists on the part of the provincial government. The Island's post-war tourism industry began in essence as an accidental tourism industry. On the Borden-Tormentine ferry route between 1946 and 1950, the number of passengers increased from approximately 175,000 to 218,068. More significantly, the number of vehicles more than tripled, from 18,213 to 63,978:

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<sup>69</sup> Prince Edward Island Public Accounts, 1947-48, 73, 1948-49, 69 and 1949-50, 77.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 5.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Number of Passengers, Borden-Tormentine Ferry</b>	<b>Total Number of Vehicles, Borden-Tormentine Ferry</b>
1946	175,000	27,862
1947	175,642	27,767
1948	185,240	45,698
1949	205,502	53,937
1950	218,068	63,978 <sup>72</sup>

At the Wood Islands-Caribou route, vehicular traffic had almost doubled by 1950:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Number of Passengers, Wood Islands-Caribou Ferry</b>	<b>Total Number of Vehicles, Wood Islands-Caribou Ferry</b>
1946	53,706	12,825
1947	54,785	15,741
1948	64,660	20,428
1949	67,438	21,611
1950	74,527	24,769 <sup>73</sup>

While there remained no way to differentiate tourist traffic from local traffic, the numbers did indicate an upward trend that could not be accounted for by the region's slow rate of population growth.

In light of such growth trends, the Island tourism industry slowly began to take a more proactive stance towards encouraging development. In 1947 the Island legislature passed the Innkeepers' Act, which created the Prince Edward Island Innkeeper's

<sup>72</sup> B.Graham Rogers, 1963 Prince Edward Island Traffic Figures, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 1.

Association.<sup>74</sup> The new organization immediately stepped into the leadership vacuum left by the disappearance of Arsenault's Publicity Association. Unlike the old organization, which had been made up chiefly of public-minded citizens, the Innkeeper's Association represented businessmen and businesswomen - hotel, cottage, tourist home and restaurant operators - with a direct interest in the tourism industry.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, the Innkeepers could act as a lobby group for their industry, dedicated to improving and expanding the tourist facilities available on Prince Edward Island.

In 1947, the fledgling Association's first act was lobbying the federal government to improve the lifesaving facilities at the Prince Edward Island National Park. As early as 1937 park foreman A.L. MacKay had written to National Parks Bureau Controller F.H.H. Williamson recommending that lifesaving equipment should be carefully considered "in order that the organization and the Department will absolutely be free of any liability incurred, through accidents and tragedies on the beaches."<sup>76</sup> In keeping with MacKay's suggestions, the Park maintained minimal lifesaving equipment to ensure limited liability in case of an accident.

This policy was to result in tragedy. On 17 August 1947, a 17 year-old Halifax man was trapped in a powerful undertow while swimming about 100 feet off the shore of Cavendish beach. Onlookers attempted to come to the man's rescue by forming a human chain out to the victim, but when one individual slipped and broke the chain, six more people suddenly needed rescuing. In the end, four men drowned in the treacherous

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<sup>74</sup> "An Act to Regulate and License Inns and Restaurants," in Acts of the General Assembly of Prince Edward Island, (Charlottetown: King's Printer, 1947) 139.

<sup>75</sup> This is not to say that no public-spirited citizens were included in the Association's membership at all - the Association's first secretary was none other than former Provincial Travel Bureau chief B. Graham Rogers. Letter from B. Graham Rogers, to National Parks Branch, 12 September 1947, RG84, A-2-a, Vol. 172, File PEI13-431, Pt. 1, NAC.

<sup>76</sup> Letter from A.L. MacKay, Foreman, to F.H.H. Williamson, Controller, National Parks Bureau, 31 August 1937, RG84, A-2-a, Vol. 172, File PEI13-431, Pt. 1, NAC.

waters. Practically no lifesaving equipment was available at the beach. Rescuers had been forced to travel two miles to find a serviceable rowboat and used a clothesline in lieu of a rope. Witness Dr. Harold N. Segall, who wrote letters of complaint to both Premier J. Walter Jones and Prime Minister Mackenzie King, claimed that the lack of adequate lifesaving equipment had hampered rescue efforts:

All who witnessed this tragedy in whole or in part saw clearly that a beach which can draw 500 people on a Sunday afternoon and does not have facilities for life saving is being managed by people who have neglected their duty.<sup>77</sup>

Among the flurry of letters protesting the Park's failure to adequately protect beach-goers was a transcript from the Innkeepers Association. While most letters simply expressed indignation at the unnecessary loss of life, the Association demonstrated other priorities:

The recent sad drownings at Cavendish are not only exceedingly to be regretted from the standpoint of loss of valuable lives, but also from the standpoint of very unfavorable publicity to these lovely beaches and to the Prince Edward Island National Park as well as the Prince Edward Island Tourist industry in general.<sup>78</sup>

There is little doubt that the Parks branch would have been forced to respond to the Cavendish tragedy regardless of whether or not the Innkeepers Association had written; like any playground, the Island had to be a safe playground. The letter does, however, reveal the goals and priorities of a new and dynamic organization that was moving to the forefront of the Island's tourism industry.

Positive action was not just occurring in the Island's private sector. Premier J. Walter Jones was slowly proving to be less farmer-oriented than tourism boosters had initially thought. In 1947 Jones' government passed the Tourist Accommodation Loan

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<sup>77</sup> Harold N. Segall, "Report of Cavendish Tragedy by Witness Dr. Harold N. Segall," N.D., RG84, A-2-a, Vol. 172, File PEI13-431, Pt. 1, NAC, 3.

<sup>78</sup> Letter from B. Graham Rogers, Secretary of the Prince Edward Island Innkeeper's Association to National Parks Branch, 12 September 1947, RG84, A-2-a, Vol. 172, File PEI13-431, Pt. 1, NAC.

Act, which provided money to entrepreneurs building tourist accommodations such as hotels, motels, cottages and cabins or expanding on existing accommodations. In the 1948-49 fiscal year, the Act's first full year of operation, the provincial government handed out \$72,825.00 in loans to various tourist operators, which more than twice as much as the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau's Budget for the same year.<sup>79</sup> The Bureau applauded the Jones government's new initiative, but was uncertain as to whether the loans would continue. Bureau chief W.W. Reid expressed cautious hope in the 1948 Annual Report:

As in 1947, the Fund established by your government for the promotion of the tourist industry has, we feel, been of assistance and has given a start to helping those in the business, and others entering the business, to get better facilities and more of the same. As mentioned in our 1947 report, we again repeat it is hoped that your government will again consider placing at the disposal of your Tourist Promotion Loan Committee a similar amount for the year 1949.<sup>80</sup>

Reid's apprehension was not unfounded; Jones' government did not maintain the amount of money given out through the loan program. Tourist Accommodation Loans amounted to only \$19,500.67 in the fiscal year 1949-50, and then fell to a paltry \$620.09 for the 1950-1951 fiscal year.<sup>81</sup> This was only a temporary setback, however; a new era was dawning for Island tourism, for in 1951 a major and positive transformation occurred in the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau. Premier Jones, nearing the end of his time in office, appointed Island-born journalist George V. Fraser as chairman of the new Prince Edward Island Tourist and Information Branch, which included the Travel Bureau and reported to the Department of the Provincial Secretary. Fraser would run the Bureau for most of the following 17 years.

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<sup>79</sup> Prince Edward Island Public Accounts, 1948-49, 13, 17.

<sup>80</sup> W.W. Reid, Report of the Travel Bureau, Annual Report, Tourism 1948, PAPEI, 2.

<sup>81</sup> Prince Edward Island Public Accounts, 1950-51, 13.

In less than a decade, Prince Edward Island's tourism industry had come full circle. Tourism had entered the 1940s with great hopes inspired by the new National Park, the 1939 celebration and the adoption of the Travel Bureau by the provincial government. The war had temporarily curtailed tourism development, but industry boosters remained convinced that tourism could grow exponentially in the post-war era, if only the provincial government was willing to invest in transportation and accommodation infrastructure to take advantage of this growth.

The government, however, in the words of A.E. Arsenault, sat on the gold mine and did nothing to extract the gold. Premier Jones and the political elite stayed locked in economic parochialism, and a wish to play the age-old federal-provincial games. In Jones' mind, tourists "insisted" on coming to Prince Edward Island. This was actually not far from the truth. The Island was once more at the mercy of external social and economic trends, and this time the trend was the exponential growth of motorcar tourism in post-war North America. Tourists "insisted" on coming to Prince Edward Island in ever-increasing numbers. The provincial government gradually began to respond to this outside pressure, first with the Innkeeper's Act and the Tourist Accommodations Loan Act, then with the revamping of the Travel Bureau under a new director, George V. Fraser. During the 1950s Fraser's Travel Bureau would form an unofficial partnership with the fledgling Innkeeper's Association. This partnership would be the driving force behind the establishment of a professional tourist industry in Prince Edward Island. It would be on Fraser's watch that the golden age dreams of the *Interim Report's* tourism technical committee would finally come to pass.

### Chapter Three:

#### Creating Paradise: George Fraser and the Innkeepers Association, 1951-1960

Pave the roads but maintain the atmosphere of simple life and plain wholesome people.  
--Suggestions of a tourist from New York, 1952<sup>1</sup>

There are [is] still much to be desired before this place is a tourist paradise it will be up to us as an Association to do the very best we can with what we have and keep hammering away for the things we want.  
--Wallace Rodd, President of the Prince Edward Island Innkeeper's Association, 1955<sup>2</sup>

When George Fraser returned to Prince Edward Island from Montreal to become the director of the provincial Travel Bureau in 1951, he was obliged to begin building paradise almost from scratch. The raw materials were there – the beautiful pastoral landscape, quiet beaches and an anti-modern charm – but Islanders were unable or unwilling to properly market these natural resources and lacked the infrastructure needed to successfully manage tourism growth. Fraser's daughter Jeannine recalls, for instance, that in the beginning her father had to write much of the promotional material himself, take his own photographs of the Island and use his own children as models.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this inauspicious beginning, Fraser persevered. Fraser's son George Jr., only about ten years old at the time, remembers a particular car ride with his father through the Island countryside. A small truck plodded along in front of their car, carrying a strange-looking table, the likes of which George Jr. had never seen. Eventually the two vehicles pulled off the main highway and stopped in a recreational park area, where the mysterious table was unloaded onto the grass. George Sr. turned to his son and explained that the odd piece of furniture was actually the first public picnic

<sup>1</sup> Official Survey of the Prince Edward Island Tourist Industry, 1952, (RG32, Box 98-004, File 3, PAPEI), 14.

<sup>2</sup> President's Report –1955, (RG32, Box 98-004, File 3, PAPEI).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Jeanine Fraser, Feb 3, 2002.



table to be placed on Prince Edward Island – and that in another few years, such tables would be everywhere in the province.<sup>4</sup>

This anecdote serves to illustrate how far the Island's tourism industry still had to go before the province could be considered a tourist paradise. Perhaps more importantly, it demonstrated George Fraser's determination to create a professional, well-funded tourism industry that could accommodate and profit from the post-war North American tourism boom. Fraser understood that tourism had to be proactive, seeking its own market and creating an infrastructure that would attract and keep tourists in the province. This proactive attitude had been lacking for some time on Prince Edward Island, but Fraser's arrival in 1951 signalled a shift in the provincial elite's approach to tourism.

Fraser's Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau and the Prince Edward Island Innkeeper's Association provided the tourism industry with much-needed leadership throughout the 1950s. The two organizations facilitated the formation of a united front which was used to lobby the provincial and federal governments for financial and material assistance and to present a positive image of tourism to the Island public. Unfortunately, Fraser and the Association still had to struggle with a strong undercurrent of parochialism among the Island's political elite and the general population. This resistance to change was perhaps the industry's abiding Achilles Heel in the 1950s, much as it had been in the 1940s. Ultimately, external forces such as vacation-promoting demographic trends and changes in federal approaches to taxation and spending influenced tourism development on Prince Edward Island equally or more than the efforts of Fraser and the Innkeepers. However, these efforts cannot be overlooked, as they established the foundations for the increasingly complex tourism infrastructure that

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Dr. George Fraser, Feb 4, 2002.



Figure 5. Tourism's man of the moment: George V. Fraser in the mid-1950s (44 (32), Nov. 98, 1955, *Wesleyan PAPERS*).

appeared during the 1960s and 70s. The chief architect of the efforts of the 1950s was undeniably George Fraser, a man who had originally set out to be a journalist but would end up dedicating the better years of his life to the Island's tourism industry.

### **The Early Years: Making the Man of the Moment**

George Fraser was one of the Island's native sons, born 4 October 1913 in the Eastern town of Montague.<sup>5</sup> Fraser's early years had been quiet ones; he earned a bachelor's degree from St. Dunstan's University in Charlottetown (now UPEI) and worked as a schoolteacher in several small Island communities. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 Fraser's quiet life disappeared for good. Fraser was hired as a reporter by the Charlottetown *Guardian*, where his natural abilities as a writer, editor and promoter soon attracted attention. Before long Fraser was a reporter and news editor

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<sup>5</sup> "George Fraser dies in hospital", in *The Evening Patriot*, N.D., Courtesy of George Fraser Jr.

for both the *Guardian* and the then-rival *Patriot* and was also a part-time publicity representative with the federal Wartime Prices and Trade Board.<sup>6</sup>

Fraser's talents were soon being noted on the mainland as well. In 1943 he was hired by the British United Press (now United Press International) to set up a Maritime headquarters office in Moncton, New Brunswick. From there Fraser was transferred to Halifax, where he became the bureau manager for the Atlantic region and a war correspondent, covering high-profile issues such as the second Halifax explosion, at the Bedford navy arsenal in 1945.<sup>7</sup>

After the war, Fraser's star continued to rise. He served as United Press Head Office Manager in Montreal and as Division Director in both Toronto and Winnipeg. In 1947 he accepted a position in Montreal as Managing Editor of the national news weekly newspaper *The Ensign*, but the following year he left to become Editor-in-Charge at the CBC's International Service in Montreal.<sup>8</sup> Finally, in 1951, Fraser accepted a personal invitation from Premier Jones to return home to Prince Edward Island and serve as head of the provincial government's new Tourist and Information Branch.<sup>9</sup> Fraser would hold his post until 1971, except for a short break between 1957 and 1959.<sup>10</sup>

Notices in the local press announced that Fraser was the province's first-ever "Public Relations Officer."<sup>11</sup> He was certainly well-suited for the position. Fraser's

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<sup>6</sup> "Takes Ensign Post", Undated Island Newspaper Clipping, courtesy George Fraser Jr.

<sup>7</sup> "Waiting For the Next Blast Uncertain When Or Where City On Edge of Hysteria", News article by George V. Fraser for British United Press, Unidentified Paper, No date, courtesy of George Fraser Jr.

<sup>8</sup> Biography. Two page summary, courtesy of George Fraser Jr.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with George Fraser Jr., Feb 4, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Fraser's Assistant director A.A. Nicholson took charge for these two years, and then resumed his original position when Fraser returned. Letter from George V. Fraser, Director, P.E.I. Travel Bureau to Allan Field, Director, Canadian Government Travel Bureau, October 26<sup>th</sup> 1959, RG20, Vol. 1565, File 3200-121-14<sup>th</sup> Federal Provincial Tourist Conference – 1959, NAC.

<sup>11</sup> Scrapbook Newspaper Clippings "Congratulations are extended to Mr. George Fraser..." and "Appointed Public Relations Officer for this province", N.D., courtesy of George Fraser Jr.

extensive experience as a journalist had taught him the importance of advertising in the affluent post-war world and left him with knowledge of newly-developed marketing and advertising techniques.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Fraser's Island upbringing ensured that he was already familiar with the product he was going to peddle to tourists: the Island's garden myth.

### **Selling Treasure Island**

In 1950 Fraser had co written an article with Melwyn Breen in *Saturday Night* entitled "Prince Edward Island: It's a Treasure Island Too." The article might well have prompted Premier Jones to lure Fraser back to his homeland. The soon-to-be Travel Bureau director was already marketing the province as an anti-modern paradise:

The [Island's] charm includes red clay, white birches and green pasturelands—and for the summer and fall visitors, the finest beaches in North America.... Living in such a peaceful setting, the people are quiet, home loving, in a homogenous group—perhaps a little smug—and strong adherents to tradition. Like Maritimers in general, Islanders live, work and play at a slow pace.... In business and social life, no matter how hard you try, you just can't hustle or bustle in PEI. In these days, that provincial prohibition on fast tempo becomes a national asset. It is an asset whether you experience it first hand by a trip to PEI, or if you wistfully contemplate it now and then in the maddening crowds of places such as Montreal or Toronto or Edmonton.<sup>13</sup>

Much like the promoters who had come before him, Fraser sold Prince Edward Island as *the* antidote to modern North America. However, Fraser better understood how to promote the Island's image, and *who* to promote it to than had his predecessors. His exposure to post-war cosmopolitan tastes, and particularly the tastes of urban Ontario and Quebec, gave him insight into the mind of many potential tourists.

The new Travel Bureau director cleverly gained the endorsement of celebrities and public figures that would appeal to North America's urban elite. One such example

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<sup>12</sup> Fraser was not the only example of a journalist turning his skills to tourist promotion; The Canadian Government Travel Bureau's first chief, Leo Dolan, as well as his 1957 successor Alan Field were both journalists prior to their careers as tourism boosters. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 1956-1957*.

<sup>13</sup> George V. Fraser and Melwyn Breen, "PEI: A Treasure Island Too." In *Saturday Night*, (December 5, 1950), 11 and 38, Tourism Vertical File C, PEI Collection, UPEI.

was the famous photographer Yousuf Karsh, who was contracted in 1952 to visit PEI and take photographs for an article in *McLean's* magazine.<sup>14</sup> George Jr. recalls his father's consternation when Yousuf Karsh set up a photograph with a horse and plow at right angles to the furrows in a farmer's field. The senior Fraser tried to explain that a horse plows with the furrows, not across them. Karsh replied that his picture's minor inconsistency would make it a *Karsh* photograph.<sup>15</sup> Across the furrows or not, Karsh's endorsement could only help implant the image of Prince Edward Island, the "Garden of the Gulf" into the minds of *McLean's* readers across the country.

Each and every Island tourism advertisement in North American newspapers and magazines featured a heavy dose of the province's garden myth. One typical example, penned by Fraser himself, read as follows:

Going to Prince Edward Island offers a complete, restful, memorable change – almost like going to a different world. But you don't need a "space-ship to get there... you can reach Prince Edward Island quickly and inexpensively by bus, train boat, car or plane.... This is Canada at its best – the "Garden Province," the Eden spot, the unspoiled, idyllic Island, with the finest, uncrowded beaches on the north Atlantic coast, and refreshing water temperature, averaging 70 [degrees Fahrenheit] all summer! Wherever you go, get to Prince Edward Island this year.<sup>16</sup>

Sometimes advertising was not necessary however, as many publications promoted the garden myth free of cost to the Travel Bureau. A November 1956 article in Fraser's old national news magazine, *The Ensign*, was completely taken by the province's bucolic charm:

Hardly a visitor to the Island fails to come away entranced by the serenity, the gaiety, and quite often the wisdom of the Islanders. Some nervous progress of today's society has bypassed Prince Edward Island, just as it has much of the Maritimes. But the

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<sup>14</sup> Letter, Solange Karsh to George Fraser, October 2, 1952, courtesy of George Fraser Jr.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with George Fraser Jr., Feb 4, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> "Picture Yourself in P.E.I." in Report of the Tourist and Information Bureau of the Province of Prince Edward Island for the period January 1, 1956 – December 31, 1956, (Charlottetown: Department of the Provincial Secretary, 1952) PAPEI, 7.

difference between the Island and the other Atlantic provinces is that PEI doesn't seem particularly worried.<sup>17</sup>

A 1957 article in the *Monetary Times*, ostensibly an objective assessment of the Island's economy, sounded much the same tone:

A red and green pastoral island, its tidy fields outlined with cedar and fir, poplar and silvery birch, sea-encircled P.E.I. is a very jewel among Canadian provinces.... One of the delightful things about the Island is the absence of commercialization. Nothing could be further removed from the crowded, Coney Island type of beach than the long, open stretches of sand along its 1,100 mile shoreline.<sup>18</sup>

Under Fraser, the Travel Bureau began the practice of inviting journalists from Central Canada and the United States to visit the province, often for free, in the hopes that they return home and promote the garden myth in their writing.

The Island's reputation as land of happy homogenous farmers was even used to encourage outside investment. An advertisement that appeared alongside the above article in the *Monetary Times* encouraging readers to invest on Prince Edward Island revealed some of the uglier aspects of the garden myth: "Select Prince Edward Island for that new branch plant. Remember – there are no management-labour problems here."<sup>19</sup> The Island was not only a land out of time – it was a land without the social economic divisions that Marx had suggested were at the core of modern industrial society.

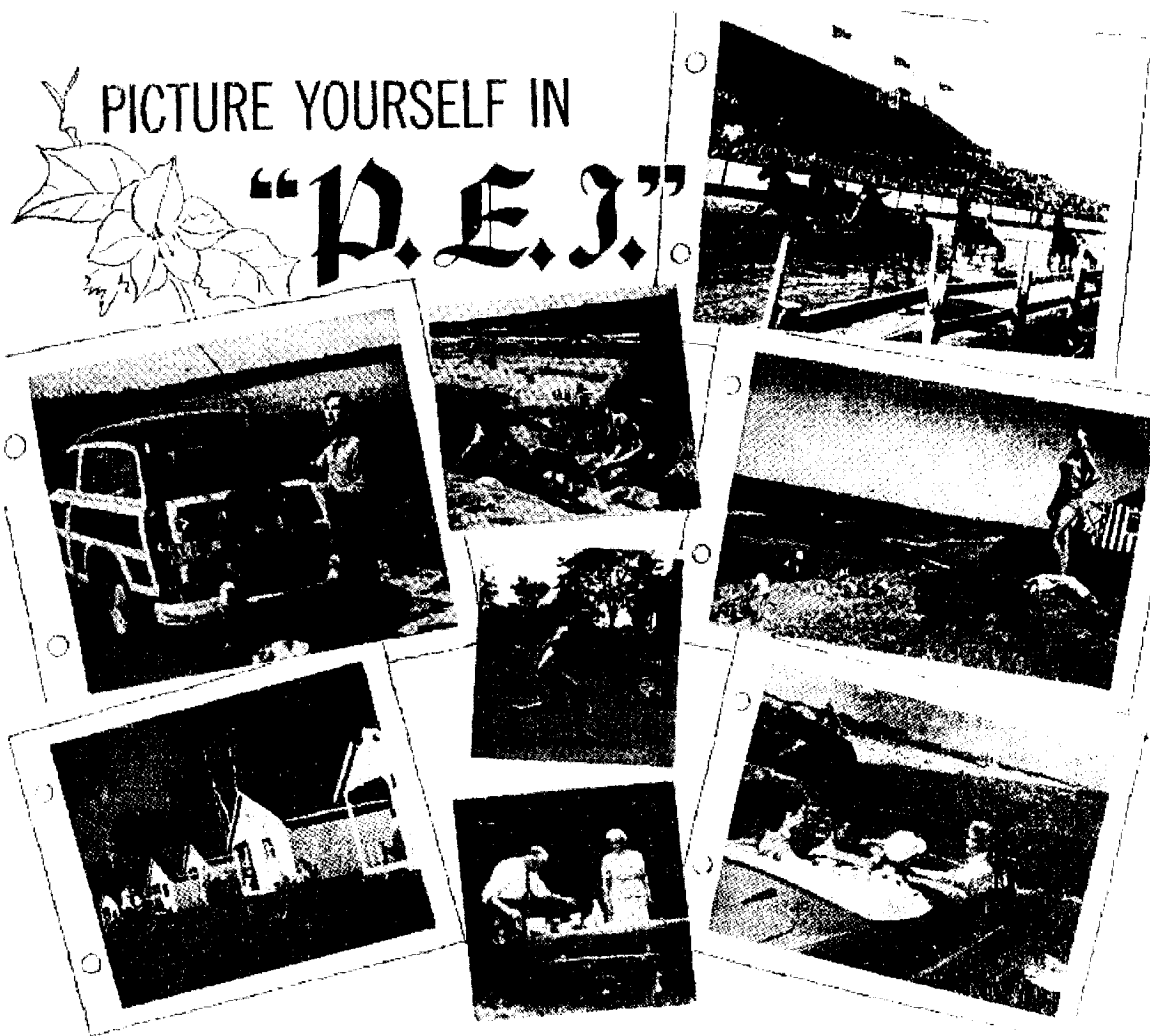
In 1951, the Travel Bureau was advertising in eighteen major newspapers in the North Eastern United States as well as Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. By 1958 the

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<sup>17</sup> Douglas Roche, "Prince Edward Island: The Garden Island of Canada," in *The Ensign*, November 1, 1956, RG25/34, Alex W. Matheson Fonds, Tourists Bureau File, PAPEI, 24.

<sup>18</sup> "Wealth Drawn from Sea and Soil P.E.I. Attracts Tourists: A Monetary Times 1957 Economic Report", in *Monetary Times*, 1957, RG25/34, Alex W. Matheson Fonds, Travel Bureau File, PAPEI, 68.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 69. Milne notes that the garden myth includes the idea that the Island is "quiet garden community," free of the social tensions that plague more modern, heterogeneous societies. This has led to a tendency to gloss over the differences and social conflicts that have existed. This is particularly true, as it shall be seen, in the case of tourism promotion. David Milne, "Politics in a Beleaguered Garden," in Verner Smitheram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta, ed., *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980*. (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982), 52.



Place these never-to-be forgotten places in your memory album after your trip to Prince Edward Island this spring or summer - "I caught a 16-inch trout right there." "This is us on the finest beach north of Florida." "I picked the winner in four races." "We had the cutest cottage and the sweetest neighbors!" "I never did play such tennis!" "I felt like Balboa, discovering a wonderful new ocean." "Such wonderful native foods we had." "Such beautiful, uncrowded places to go to!"

Going to Prince Edward Island offers a complete, restful, memorable change - almost like going to a different world. But you don't need a "space-ship" to get there... You can reach Prince Edward Island quickly and inexpensively by bus, train, boat, car or plane.

And once there, you'll never want to leave. It's so pleasant, interesting, friendly, comfortable and beautiful.

This is Canada at its best - the "Garden Province," the Eden spot, the unspoiled, idyllic Island with the finest, uncrowded beaches on the north Atlantic coast and refreshing water temperatures, averaging 60° and summer! Wherever else you go, get to Prince Edward Island this year!

Write for free descriptive literature and full information:

George V. Frawley, Director  
Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau  
Box RT, Charlottetown, P. E. I., Canada.

# Prince Edward Island

Canada's Garden Province invites you

Figure 6. A typical Travel Bureau Advertisement, circa 1956. (Report of the Joint Royal Intergovernmental Bureau, 1956): 7.



Figure 7. A collection of provincial Travel Bureau brochures from the 1930s, some with photos taken and developed by Fraser himself. (Report of the Tourist and Information Bureau, 1936)



campaign had expanded to include eleven magazines.<sup>20</sup> Many of the magazines were the type read by the affluent tourists the Island wished to attract: *National Geographic*, *Esquire*, *Redbook*, *MacLean's* and *New York Motorist*, to name a few.

All advertisements included an address that interested readers could contact for more information. Fraser would respond to inquiries with personal letters and various pamphlets and booklets written and published by the provincial Travel Bureau. The literature included maps, accommodation booklets, tour booklets and fact sheets. Most of these pamphlets featured images of pristine beaches and happy, frolicking tourists. 1951 saw the production of some 240,260 maps and booklets and by 1960 over 500,000 pieces of literature were being produced. The pamphlets were not just sent out in response to inquiries- numerous copies were also sent to the national, provincial and state travel bureaus, to Parks Canada, to transportation companies, to conventions and also to Island tourist establishments.<sup>21</sup>

Fraser's promotional efforts were not limited to literature. A feature film about Prince Edward Island had already been produced in Hollywood in the summer of 1950, shortly before Fraser's return to the Island. 75 prints were released to the Travel Bureau the following year. The film, entitled "This World of Ours: Prince Edward Island," was an eleven-minute feature filled with "[s]cenes of our superb beaches, trout fishing and other tourist attractions". It was aired as a short feature in theatres across Canada and the United States, and on U.S. television. The film was also viewed the Island Legislature, a

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<sup>20</sup> Report of the Tourist and Information Bureau of the Province of Prince Edward Island for the period January 1, 1958 – December 31, 1958, PAPEI, 4. This does not include advertising provided by the Maritime Co-operative Advertising Campaign and the federally funded Atlantic Provinces Campaign.

<sup>21</sup> Report of the Prince Edward Island Tourist and Information Branch, Department of the Provincial Secretary, December 31, 1950 – December 31, 1951, (Charlottetown: Department of the Provincial Secretary, 1952), PAPEI, 7 and Report of the Tourist and Information Bureau of the Province of Prince Edward Island for the period January 1, 1960 – December 31, 1960, (Charlottetown: Department of the Provincial Secretary, 1952), PAPEI, 5.

various tourist resorts and on board the Prince Edward Island car ferries, where it was shown a total of 99 times.<sup>22</sup>

Fraser too soon caught the film bug. In 1953 another film, 16 minutes long and entitled “Abegweit” (a variation of the original aboriginal name for Prince Edward Island) was produced by the Bureau and distributed in similar manner to the 1950 feature. Both films were professionally done in colour and continued to circulate into the 1960s. Fraser fully recognized the importance of the relatively new medium, noting in his 1953 Annual Report: “Most provinces are placing more emphasis on travel films in the promotion of tourism.”<sup>23</sup>

Fraser’s understanding of modern advertising techniques allowed him to expand and improve the provincial travel bureaus promotional campaigns, but that was not all he did. The Travel Bureau director also worked hard to standardize and rationalize the tourism industry on Prince Edward Island and made the first real attempts to acquire reliable statistics in regards to tourism. In short, Fraser was the first significant individual to approach Island tourism in a professional and dynamic manner.

### **Facts and Figures**

During the 1930s the success of the Prince Edward Island National Park and the 1939 festival had demonstrated that moderate capital investment could produce returns in the form of increased tourist numbers. However, many of the local political and commercial elite still thought of tourism as something that just happened and was best left alone, or even discouraged. This was the view espoused by Premier Jones when he

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<sup>22</sup> Report of the Prince Edward Island Tourist and Information Branch, December 31, 1950 – December 31, 1951, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Report of the Prince Edward Island Tourist and Information Bureau for the period of January 1, 1953 to December 31, 1953, PAPEI, 3.

commented in 1944 that the province already had "...as many or more tourists than we can possibly accommodate."<sup>24</sup>

George Fraser represented a new way of thinking about tourism on Prince Edward Island. He understood that tourism could be *made* to happen, through a combination of government investment and private initiative. Tourism was an economic entity that could be quantified, managed and predicted in its performance. Quantifying the entity of tourism could be a particularly slippery process however, as sociologists Leonard J. Lickorish and Carson L. Jenkins explain:

The problem in describing tourism as an 'industry' is that it does not have the usual formal production function, nor does it have an output which can physically be measured, unlike agriculture (tonnes of wheat) or beverages (litres of whisky).<sup>25</sup>

Tourism was a fragmented industry, incorporating disparate sectors of the economy such as accommodation, transportation and entertainment. As a result, it was very difficult to nail down an actual dollar value to tourism.<sup>26</sup> This is not to say Island tourism boosters had ever tried to do so; until 1951, provincial Travel Bureau annual reports had simply listed the total number of passengers at the Borden and Wood Islands ferry crossings and then duly noted any increase.

Unlike his predecessors, George Fraser realized that the best way to change the political elite's parochial attitude towards tourism was to convince them of the industry's financial worth. Thus, the Travel Bureau's 1951 report contained the first attempt to calculate tourism's actual dollar value to Prince Edward Island. Fraser estimated that tourists had spent some \$4,200,000 in the province in 1951. Fraser's methodology for

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<sup>24</sup> Letter, J. Walter Jones to D. Leo Dolan, Esq., Executive-Director, National Tourist Advisory Committee, August 24, 1944, Jones Fonds, National Tourist Advisory Committee file, RG 25, PAPEI.

<sup>25</sup> Leonard J Lickorish and Carson L Jenkins, An Introduction to Tourism. (East Killbride, Scotland: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1997), 1.

<sup>26</sup> This was particularly true prior to the 1950s, when hotels, restaurants, tour operators and travel agents all tended to work independently of each other. Ibid., 2.

attaining this figure was based on a series of hunches, but the fact that he was attempting to estimate tourist spending at all was a revolutionary move in and of itself:

It [tourist spending] is worked out on this basis. Figures from the transportation companies show a total of 109,233 persons came into the province during June to September inclusive. We know that a percentage would be residents of this province coming back from trips elsewhere. Therefore we reduce the visitors to an estimated 75,000 which appears to be a fair figure. These visitors stayed on the Island an average of seven days each (as far as could be determined by a spot check) and we estimate they each spent at least \$ 8.00 a day for accommodation, meals, tobacco, liquor, entertainment, souvenirs, gasoline, etc.<sup>27</sup>

Fraser's quasi-scientific approach, no matter how questionable, looked organized, self assured and professional in comparison to what had come before. Calculating tourist spending was not Fraser's only innovation. The Bureau's newspaper advertising had been "keyed" so that it could be determined which publications were receiving the best results. As Fraser explained: "The keying system provides very interesting information on the comparative drawing power of publications, the areas from which the inquiries were received and the very large number of inquiries stimulated by the advertising."<sup>28</sup>

Fraser's quantification of tourism did not stop with tourist spending and keying. The following summer, the provincial Travel Bureau conducted the first full-scale survey of the Island's tourist industry. 7,600 visitors responded to the survey questionnaires, providing the Bureau and unprecedented amount of statistical information. Statistics such as the average daily expenditure and average length of stay were dutifully recorded, but perhaps more importantly, the survey included numerous comments written by the tourist themselves. Such profiling allowed Island tourism promoters to better know their customers and to custom fit their product to user needs. There was still much fitting that was to be done.

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<sup>27</sup> G.V. Fraser, Report of the Prince Edward Island Tourist and Information Branch: December 31, 1950-December 21, 1951, PAPEI 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 4.

## The Tourism Ethos

The tourist comments gave a face to the areas of the tourism industry that needed work. As always, the key issues were transportation and accommodation. Many tourists complained about waiting for the ferry, dusty or badly-paved roads, a lack of directional signs and a need for more quality tourist accommodation.<sup>29</sup> There was also a growing awareness of the importance of the Island's garden image. The *Survey* concluded that if the Island was to attract tourist growth, it must offer something beyond its charming "natural attractions":

Nature has blessed this province with natural beauty, beaches, climate and scenery which we must strive to preserve and develop in such a way that the Island can attain, so to speak, a unique personality, something distinct from what the tourist resort offers.<sup>30</sup>

The need to improve the tourist infrastructure while constructing a unique image to market was aptly summed up in the comments of one tourist from New York State: "Pave the roads but maintain the atmosphere of simple life and plain wholesome people."<sup>31</sup> On Prince Edward Island, there was no separation between tourist and host, as in a Disneyland-style theme park.<sup>32</sup> Tourism boosters were selling the Island itself, inhabitants included. The 1952 *Survey* acknowledged this fact more openly than the *Interim Report* of seven years previous. The lack of division between guest and host caused a tension between the needs of the local population and the expectations of the tourist. To allow local and tourist to coexist without spoiling the expectations of each, Island society needed to be infused with a managed tourism ethos:

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<sup>29</sup> *Official Survey... 1952*, 13.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Official Survey... 1952*, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Writer Larry Krotz notes that in a Disney-style theme park, "the relationship between host community and visitors is defined by a wall of distance and commerce. The roles are defined, the relationships defined." *Tourists: How our fastest growing industry is changing the world*. (Boston: Faber and Faber Inc., 1996), 14. Prince Edward Island's tourism industry has never had this degree of separation – the line between tourist and host is blurred, as it is the "Island way of life" itself that tourists chiefly come to experience.

Every person [in the province] should make an effort to have P.E.I. as pleasant a place as possible for the visiting tourist. It is the many little things that add up to an enjoyable vacation. Courtesy, friendliness, helpfulness, good advice, and respect shown by everybody would go a long way in making our province a better vacation land. This is our business; we should do whatever we can to improve it.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, the report noted that this tourism ethos should be “authentic” rather than “over-commercialized”; i.e. courtesy and hospitality had to come free of charge.

The tourists do not like to see everything set up on a purely business basis in such a way that there is a cash charge for nearly every facility which they wish to use. Any attempts to capitalize on the natural beauty and natural endowments is frowned upon by the tourists as a whole.<sup>34</sup>

Island residents were supposed to participate in the tourist industry, but not necessarily profit from it. The report claimed that Islanders in non-tourist occupations would still benefit from tourism as a result of the “millions of dollars” tourists injected into the provincial economy.<sup>35</sup>

Before Fraser and the Travel Bureau could convince the average Islander of tourism’s importance, they needed to convert the provincial government to the gospel of tourism. To some extent the government was already convinced; George Fraser’s starting salary was \$3,300 annually, more than twice the amount that had been paid to the previous Bureau director. Such an increase suggested that Premier Jones’ government placed great confidence in the new director’s ability to promote and manage the tourism industry.

The Tourist and Information Branch’s budget also increased during the 1950s, and its influence increased accordingly. Alexander Matheson, who succeeded Jones as Premier in 1953 and won the 1955 provincial election, proved sympathetic to the Tourist

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

and Information Branch's needs.<sup>36</sup> In 1951 the Fraser had worked with a budget of \$57,939.59 and the government gave out \$13,338.94 in tourist accommodation loans.<sup>37</sup> This allowance increased gradually and by the end of the decade, the Branch's Budget was \$117,835.66 and the annual amount given out in tourist loans topped \$150,000.<sup>38</sup> Most of the new money went towards enlarging the Bureau's advertising campaign, but a small amount went towards other activities. An aggressive ragweed elimination program was begun by the branch and carried out for several summers in the early 1950s, until the task was taken over by the Department of Agriculture. There was even a Travel Bureau pamphlet that asked potential tourists "Are You a Hay fever sufferer? Or... do you have a friend who is?"<sup>39</sup>

The Bureau also operated branch offices known as "Information Bureaux" for tourists in Charlottetown, Wood Islands, and at Aulac, New Brunswick, on the way to the ferry. In 1958 another information bureau was opened at Albany, Prince Edward Island, along the main route from Borden to Charlottetown. The new Bureaux included an "authentic" lighthouse and sometimes had bagpipers playing outside, showcasing the Island's quaint, anti-modern image to tourists.<sup>40</sup>

Budget increases indicated the provincial government's attitude towards tourism was improving, but there was still much convincing to be done. Fraser felt it was necessary to continually reassure his superiors that their economic pump-priming activities, such as tourist accommodation loans, were having a positive effect:

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<sup>36</sup> Blair Weeks, Ed., *Minding the House: A Biographical Guide to Prince Edward Island MLAs, 1873-1993*. (Charlottetown: The Acorn Press & The Association of Former Members of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 2002), 135.

<sup>37</sup> *Prince Edward Island Public Accounts, 1951-52*, (Charlottetown: Dillon Printing Company, UPEI Library, PEI Collection), 15.

<sup>38</sup> *Prince Edward Island Public Accounts, 1959-60*, 21, 107.

<sup>39</sup> *Report of the Tourist and Information Bureau, 1958*, 10.

<sup>40</sup> Nicholson, *Report of the Tourist... 1958*, 7.

The Government's tourist promotion loan has been a big factor in enabling the tourist industry in Prince Edward Island to grow to a point where it can be considered one of our basic industries. Without this money, resort operators would have been unable to build or expand to the point where we are now handling a sizeable tourist trade which develops and multiplies annually as satisfied customers go away to return another year bringing their friends with them.<sup>41</sup>

In other cases, the government was less obliging. Every year, Fraser would make numerous recommendations for improving the industry in his year-end reports. The fact that many of these recommendations were repeated year after year suggests that the provincial government wasn't always listening. The repeated recommendations included more and better highway signs, more roadside tables (some of which, we have already seen, Fraser placed himself) and picnic areas, the beautification of the countryside and place name signs at the entrances to all villages. Fraser also requested sanitary inspections of tourist accommodations and more seafood in Island restaurants.

It would often take years before the provincial government would act on Fraser's suggestions. One case in point was Fraser's call for the creation of a provincial parks system.<sup>42</sup> An increasing number of tourists were camping rather than staying in motels or tourist homes, and Fraser thought the Island should set up a park system to take advantage of this trend. The first such recommendation, made in the 1953 *Annual Report*, read as follows:

In the opinion of your Director the provision of one or more provincial parks in the province would benefit, not only the tourist industry, but our own people as well by providing an extra place for play and recreation during the summer months.<sup>43</sup>

Eventually, in 1958, the government acquiesced and opened Strathgartney Provincial Park. It would be the first of many such numerous small parks scattered

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<sup>41</sup> Fraser, *Report of... 1950-51*, 3-4.

<sup>42</sup> G.V. Fraser, *Report of the Prince Edward Island Tourist and Information Branch: January 1, 1953 to December 31, 1953*, (Charlottetown: Department of the Provincial Secretary, 1955), PAPEI, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Fraser, *Annual Report*, 1953, 4.



across the Island. The Branch's 1958 report noted that the park was "... a stop-off point for hundreds of tourists, who travel with tents and trailers".<sup>44</sup>

### **Partners: The Prince Edward Island Innkeepers' Association**

Promoting tourism development on Prince Edward Island could be a lonely struggle, but Fraser's Tourist and Information Branch was not without allies. First and foremost among the Travel Bureau's provincial allies was the Prince Edward Island Innkeepers Association. Formed in 1946, and incorporated by an act of the Legislature in 1947, the Innkeepers filled the void that had been created by the dissolution of the Publicity Association during the early 1940s.<sup>45</sup> By the end of the 1950s, the Innkeepers had become the undisputed voice of Prince Edward Island's tourism operators and a key player in the development of the provincial tourism industry.

The paper trail of the Innkeepers Association begins in the 1952-1953 fiscal year. Membership for that year sat at 53 paid members and included the owners of hotels, cottages, cabins, tourist homes and restaurants. The following year, the membership had increased by 19 to 72.<sup>46</sup> By 1959-1960, membership had reached 159, and included not only tourist establishments and restaurants, but also non-tourist businesses such as F.W. Woolworth and Co. and the *Guardian-Patriot* newspaper publishers. Municipal organizations such as the Charlottetown and Summerside boards of trade were also included, along with the cities themselves, represented by the mayors.<sup>47</sup> The Island's political and commercial elite were recognizing the "spin-off" effects of tourism on other service sectors of the economy.

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<sup>44</sup> A.A. Nicholson, Report of the Tourist and Information Bureau for the Period January 1, 1958- December 31, 1958, (Charlottetown: Department of the Provincial Secretary, 1959), PAPEI, 8.

<sup>45</sup> PEI Legislative Assembly Journal, 1947, 187.

<sup>46</sup> 1952-53; Paid up Memberships, (N.D. , RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>47</sup> 1959-60 Members, (N.D. , RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

Membership in the Association also included an unusually large contingent of women. As early as the 1920s, women had taken prominent roles in the industry, but in the Association women were more common than ever.<sup>48</sup> Some women represented their husbands, but a good number held membership as independent tourism operators. Even among Association directors, female participation was more frequent than would be expected. Out of 10 Officers and Directors elected by the Innkeepers for the year 1954, three were women- Mary Stewart of Lakeview Lodge in Cavendish, Mrs. P.J. Proud of Proud's Parkhill Tourist Resort in Stanhope and Association Vice-President Elsie Inman.<sup>49</sup> Starting in 1956, Inman actually served three consecutive terms as Association President. Even after stepping down in 1959, she was given the permanent title of honorary president.

Owner of the Poole Motel in Montague, Inman had been involved with the Innkeepers since the early 1950s. Inman had her fingers in many other pies as well. She was president of the PEI Liberal Women's Association and also involved in the Canadian Red Cross and the I.O.D.E., and served as the provincial president of the Women's Auxiliary of the Canadian Legion for two terms during the Second World War.<sup>50</sup> As a result of her heavy involvement in public life and the Liberal party, in 1954 Inman became a candidate for a vacant seat in the Senate. The Association supported her candidacy, noting "...the tremendous value which would undoubtedly accrue by having in the Senate as a Representative of this Province one of our own Tourist operators so

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<sup>48</sup> The original director of Publicity Association's Travel Bureau in the 1920s and 30s was a Mrs. MacFadyen. In the 1940s A.E. Arsenault remarked that MacFadyen had never received the recognition she deserved for her efforts to develop the Island tourism industry. "Credit To Whom Credit Is Due," Transcript of Speech by A.E. Arsenault, Ex President and chairman of the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau, c.1941-1942, Acc. No. 4135, Vol. 21, File 21, PAPEI, 2

<sup>49</sup> Prince Edward Island Innkeepers Association: Your President Reports, (N.D., RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>50</sup> "Inman, Hon. Florence Elsie, DCB, 1957-58.



Senator Inman

Figure 8. Senator and Innkeepers Association president Elsie Inman (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

familiar with the Industry and its problems.”<sup>51</sup> As a woman Senator in the male-dominated 1950s, Inman was the exception to the rule. However, as a woman member of the Innkeeper’s Association, Inman was very much the norm.

It is possible that women were able to play a prominent role in the Island’s postwar tourism industry because tourism was perceived as a *hospitality* industry. Female tourism operators could portray themselves as hostesses, an idea that did not conflict with women’s perceived role as a homemaker. Tourism and hospitality inhabited the ambiguous, uncharted waters between women’s private sphere and men’s public sphere. Furthermore the low capital cost of tourism and the seasonal nature of the work likely appealed to women, who often did not have the same time or financial resources to commit to a business investment as men did.

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<sup>51</sup> Minutes of Semi-Annual Meeting Held May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1954. (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

The role of women in Prince Edward Island's postwar tourism industry is a topic deserving of its own study. For now all that can be stated with certainty was that women were a significant part of the province's tourism landscape. This does not mean the Innkeepers were concerned with women's rights. The Association very much had its own agenda, which, not surprisingly, did not overtly include feminism.

According to section one of the Association's Act of Incorporation, the objectives of the Innkeeper's association were as follows:

- (a) To promote and advance the Tourist industry in Prince Edward Island;
- (b) To strive for the continued development of tourist facilities offered to the public by members of this Association;
- (c) To create a wider interest in the tourist industry among the general public of Prince Edward Island;<sup>52</sup>

These three objectives formed the basis for all of the Association's activities during the 1950s. While George Fraser's Travel Bureau focused on marketing the garden myth to affluent tourists, the Association concerned itself with *creating* a garden for those visitors play in, what association President Wallace Rodd termed "a tourist paradise."<sup>53</sup> To make this paradise a reality, the Association worked to establish industry standards and create a provincial infrastructure that could take advantage of the exponential tourism growth taking place in North America.

### **The Innkeepers as Lobbyists**

To achieve the first two objectives listed in the Act of Incorporation, the Innkeepers became tourism's lobby group, continually pestering the provincial government to pay more attention to the industry. President Rodd expressed the Association's general philosophy towards lobbying at a 1955 general meeting:

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<sup>52</sup> Minutes of Special General Meeting Held Dec. 15/56. (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>53</sup> President's Report -1955, (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

There are [is] still much to be desired before this place is a tourist paradise it will be up to us as an Association to do the very best we can with what we have and keep hammering away for the things we want.<sup>54</sup>

Sometimes the Association's lobbying proved very successful. The Innkeepers convinced the government to move the date of the provincial exhibition into the third week of August, helping to extend the tourist season. The Innkeepers also had a hand in persuading the government to adopt daylight savings time, so that the Island would be in synch with mainland tourist timepieces.<sup>55</sup> On many other issues however, lobbying was not as effective. Much like Fraser's Travel Bureau, the Association often found itself repeating its requests to the provincial government over and over again: to eliminate the mosquito and black fly problems on the North Shore, to prevent the over leasing fishing streams and ponds,<sup>56</sup> and to eradicate ragweed infestations.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps most disheartening was how the provincial government repeatedly shrugged off Association requests that the Travel Bureau be expanded into a full-fledged Department of Tourism.<sup>58</sup>

On the issue of transportation, the provincial government was easier to budge. It was widely recognized that roads plus automobiles equaled tourists. Local and national governments across the continent had been engaged in a frenzy of road construction since the end of the Second World War. Prince Edward Island was no exception to this rule, as historian Edward MacDonald Explains:

Road construction was one of the visible success stories of the 1950s. In 1943, less than 6% of Island roads, 206 miles, had pavement. By the end of the decade, 656 miles had been blacktopped with no end in sight. That figure still represented only a fifth of the mileage in the province, though when gravelled roads were thrown in, the percentage of improved roads reached the much more satisfying total of 72%. A decade later,

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<sup>54</sup> President's report –1955.

<sup>55</sup> Minutes of Annual Meeting Held October 20, 1954, (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>56</sup> President's Report, (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI, 1953).

<sup>57</sup> President's Report –1955.

<sup>58</sup> Minutes of Director's Meeting and General Meetings, 1953-54. (N.D., RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

Prince Edward Island could boast that it had more paved roads per capita than any province in Canada.<sup>59</sup>

Unfortunately, many of these “paved” roads were of very poor quality and often lacked directional signs. Tourists frequently complained of getting lost on bumpy, dusty roads.<sup>60</sup> Armed with the Canadian Government Travel Bureau’s declaration that by 1953 approximately 96 percent of Canada’s tourist traffic came on wheels,<sup>61</sup> the Association lobbied the government to repair old highways and establish better directional signs.<sup>62</sup> The National Parks Branch was also contacted and pressured to improve its highway network at the Prince Edward Island National Park. Much to the association’s delight, the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources began construction of a four-million dollar “ocean view” highway through the park in 1956.<sup>63</sup>

Even more troubling for tourism operators was the Island’s ferry service, or lack thereof. The current ferries were inadequate to deal with summer traffic and motorists trying to get to the Island often experienced delays. Delays frequently resulted in unsatisfied tourists and lost tourism revenue. One frustrated tourist who had been forced to wait overnight to make the Borden-Tormentine trip in 1951 commented: “Next time I shall bring my own ferry.”<sup>64</sup> In 1954 and 1955, Association committees badgered the Premier about improving the ferry terminal at Wood Islands, as well as acquiring a new ferry for the Borden-Tormentine run, to help solve the problems of traffic bottlenecks.<sup>65</sup> In 1957, a new ferry, the *Earl of Selkirk* (The name was chosen by Fraser and used with

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<sup>59</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 241.

<sup>60</sup> *Official Survey, 1952*, 14.

<sup>61</sup> “Dolan Lauds Value of Vacation Dollar In P.E.I.” Newspaper Clipping, c. 1954, RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

<sup>62</sup> *President’s Report – 1955*, 1.

<sup>63</sup> “Ocean View Highway in National Park to Cost Four Million Dollars,” Newspaper clipping, N.D., RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

<sup>64</sup> *Report of the Prince Edward Island Tourist and Information Branch, 1951*, 9.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

permission from the actual Earl of Selkirk) began making regular runs across the Northumberland Strait.

Another key issue that required extensive lobbying by the Association was sanitation standards. The Association was not alone in the struggle for sanitation; the Travel Bureau had been calling for standardization even before Fraser had arrived in 1951, and the Canadian Government Travel Bureau considered standardization vital to the success of the tourism industry. CGTB Chief Leo Dolan, speaking at a 1954 Association dinner, argued that tourism operators should be seeking to attract “the better class of tourists”, i.e. the affluent, big-spending jet-set from the urban centres of North Eastern North America. Dolan also maintained that to attract the “better class,” sanitation and health standards were of paramount importance:

The popular mode of family travel is by motor and the popular place to stay is the motel. Good food, clean beds and the essentials of hygiene are absolutely necessary to attract and retain this business.<sup>66</sup>

Entrepreneurs such as Kemmons Wilson (founder of the Holiday Inn chain) and Howard Johnson became rich meeting the expectations of tourists. They established identical restaurants and motels across North America and tourists flocked to them. As Jakle comments: “Motorists knew what to expect, and although there were sometimes disappointments, there were few surprises.”<sup>67</sup> On Prince Edward Island, shrewd tourism operators knew that although affluent tourists were visiting the province to experience its 19<sup>th</sup> century rural charm, they still wanted the toilets to flush. By 1955 the Association was drafting plans for sanitary inspections in consultation with the provincial department

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<sup>66</sup> “Dolan Lauds Value,” PAPEL.

<sup>67</sup> John Jakle, The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 197.

of Health and Welfare. Secretary-Treasurer A.W. Gaudet stressed that a gradual process of sanitary inspection would allow operators time to adjust without going bankrupt:

We suggest that a license to operate be required by all Motels, Hotels, Tourist Cabins and Tourist homes; that this license be given to all Resorts and Homes who pass your basic or minimum sanitation requirements; that any Resorts which cannot qualify on first inspection be told exactly what they have to do in order to pass. There should be a reasonable time limit to make the necessary [sic] improvements.<sup>68</sup>

Gaudet and the Association advocated a system of rewards for meeting standards and consequences for missing them. The Innkeepers' collaboration with the Travel Bureau and Department of Health and Welfare proved very successful. George Fraser, along with provincial sanitary engineers Robert Donnelly and Giles Cantwell, became familiar faces at Association meetings. At a 1956 general meeting, Donnelly announced the province's new sanitation regulations. The rules included many of the suggestions Gaudet had made in his 1955 letter, including the licensing of accommodations, a time limit for making improvements and a reward and punishment system. Further progress was made in 1958, when the Department of Health passed an amendment to the Innkeepers Regulations Act, at the request of the Association, making it mandatory "that all milk and cream used either for drinking or cooking purposes be pasteurized."<sup>69</sup>

The struggle for standardization was an uphill battle. At a director's meeting of the Association held September 17, 1958, provincial sanitary inspector Giles Cantwell presented a picture of an industry still very much in the process of establishing standards:

Mr. Cantwell reported that of 82 Tourist Resorts now inspected in 1958; 40 had passed inspection and 42 had been turned down.... Of these 82 establishments, 77 had had approved water and 5 not approved --- with 19 of them having approved sewage disposal systems, 3 with partially approved systems only, 41 with satisfactory systems as of date of inspection, and 19 with unsatisfactory systems.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Letter from A.W. Gaudet, Secretary-Treasurer for the P.E.I. Innkeepers Association to Hon. B. Earle MacDonald, Minister of Health and Welfare, February 22, 1955, (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI), 1.

<sup>69</sup> Minutes of Annual Meeting Held Nov 17<sup>th</sup>, 1958. (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>70</sup> Minutes of Director's Meeting Held September 17, 1958. (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).



Despite such disheartening statistics, Cantwell reported that he hoped to inspect the nearly 200 tourist homes included in the “Where to stay on P.E.I.” booklet in the time for the new booklet’s publication in 1959.

The Association often had to struggle with its own members to secure their cooperation on issues such as sanitation. Member apathy was enough of a problem that President Inman actually addressed it in her 1957 presidential address:

Your directors have viewed with concern the small attendance at some of our annual and semi-annual meetings compared to our membership. No solution is readily available perhaps but it would seem that membership in this Association, as in other clubs and associations, should entail the responsibility of Members to support and attend, when possible, meetings which are called. Good attendance promotes greater interest and also gives the Association the benefit of varied viewpoints and ideas.<sup>71</sup>

Inman’s address led to a round table discussion on how to get members more involved in the Association. The tone of the debate seemed to indicate little tangible progress had been made:

Main item for discussion was re membership in the Association and how to build up the same and create greater interest on the part of our members in our Association. It was agreed that there wasn’t much sense going after new members unless and until we could point to action by the Association of value and interest to our prospective members and on which we could persuade them to join. In other words we first have to have something TO SELL.<sup>72</sup>

### **The Curse of Geography**

One of the difficulties experienced by the Association was the geographical distribution of its members. The Island’s tourism industry was naturally developing around the National Park on the north shore, the prime destination of many tourists, and provincial capital of Charlottetown, one of the few urban centres large enough to provide all the services desired by visiting tourists. Almost all of the tourist industry was clumping itself in Queen’s County, on central Prince Edward Island. Moreover, tourist

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<sup>71</sup> Innkeepers Association – November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1957: President’s Address.

<sup>72</sup> Minutes of Directors’ Meeting Held Dec. 4-57, (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

establishments outside of Queen's County tended to be focused in the province's few other urban centres, most notably Summerside in the West and Montague in the East. It was easy for members from underdeveloped areas to believe they were being left out, and that the Association wasn't worth their while.

The membership lists for the Association give the addresses of members providing an interesting picture of the tourism industry geography. In 1958-59, the last year tourist establishments (hotels, cottages, cabins, tourist homes and restaurants) were listed separately from non-tourist organizations, 52 of 77 tourist establishment members were located in Queen's County. Twenty-six of those were located in and around Charlottetown and another nineteen on the North Shore. Fifteen members were in Prince County, nine of which called the Summerside area their home, and only ten members were to be found in the whole of King's County.<sup>73</sup>

Even after the addition of non-tourist establishments to the membership list in 1959-60, the balance was not redressed. Of 159 members, 109 hailed from Queen's county- 88 from the Charlottetown area and 20 from the North Shore. Prince County membership increased to 35, 22 of which were located in Summerside, and eight others in Kensington, another notable urban centre. King's county increased to 13 members, eight of which were located in Montague.<sup>74</sup>

The provincial Travel Bureau had expressed some concern about the unequal distribution of tourist establishments, but there was little it could do to change the prevailing trend towards centralization.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the Association did not fight the clumping trend. Instead, the Innkeepers committed themselves to the *perception* that the

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<sup>73</sup> 1958-59 Members, (N.D., RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>74</sup> 1959-60 Members.

<sup>75</sup> Report of the Prince Edward Island Tourist and Information Branch, 1954.

Prince Edward Island's different regions were equal participants in the tourist trade and stressed industry unity. In 1958 the Innkeepers changed their name to the Prince Edward Island Tourist Association, all for the sake of inclusiveness: "...the membership should be enlarged to embrace all connected with the industry as well as the actual Innkeepers themselves."<sup>76</sup> Speakers such as Dolan stressed that tourism operators were selling the *whole Island*, not just a particular region. For the Association, inclusiveness became a policy:

The Speaker warned against jealousy within our ranks and said this was bad. Sell P.E.I. as a Province he urged and not any particular areas. And don't expect the Tourist Bureaux to do it all he stressed – actually everyone in the Province has a job to do and a part to play in the promotion of our tourist industry.<sup>77</sup>

### **Preaching to the Masses**

This brought the Association to their final goal: "To create a wider interest in the tourist industry among the general public of Prince Edward Island."<sup>78</sup> The Association wanted to put a positive Island-wide face on tourism and create the tourism ethos that was essential to the industry's success. This was no easy task. Preaching the importance of tourism to the hospitality industry was one thing; convincing the *rest* of the province was a more difficult proposition. In fact, there was even some opposition to tourism or at least some suspicion as to tourism actual benefits.

A 1952 article in the *Guardian* was one of the first contemporary sources to note the contradiction between tourism development and industrial development:

Islanders practically purr when visitors such as Montreal artist Campbell Tinning tell us that the Island is the most paintable part of Canada. On the other hand, we would not seriously object to a few eyesores in the form of smoking factory chimneys.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of Untitled Directors Meeting, 1956, Innkeepers files, RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

<sup>77</sup> Minutes of Special Meeting, March 16<sup>th</sup> 1954.

<sup>78</sup> Minutes of Special General Meeting Held Dec. 15/56. (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>79</sup> Boyde Beck and Edward MacDonald Everyday and Extraordinary: Almanac of the History of Prince Edward Island. (Charlottetown: PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation: 1999), 116.

A more general complaint emerging out of the increasing number of cars rolling off the ferries at Borden and Wood Islands was that tourism interfered with the Island's more traditional industries, particularly agriculture. Sometimes the complaints revealed more than a hint of insularity and xenophobia. Dr. L. G. Dewar, a prominent teacher, physician and MLA for the rural district of 2<sup>nd</sup> Prince, glibly suggested in 1956 that tourists were causing illness among the Island's rural inhabitants. "I think I can speak from a medical angle", Dewar stated in the Legislature, "when I say that many of our country women have suffered by having too many tourists call on them during the summer."<sup>80</sup> The good doctor joked that the industry was not only damaging to pretty young women; Dewar's diagnosis was much more far-reaching than that:

Doctor Dewar speaking facetiously said he could easily put on certain death certificates as "the cause of death"—the tourist industry. He believed that some of the patients he had committed to Falconwood [the provincial sanitarium] had been affected to a greater or less degree from the trade. "I would not trade 100 industrious farmers of Prince Edward Island for all the tourists that come here during the summer," he said.<sup>81</sup>

Dewar did not seriously believe tourism was killing Islanders, but the undercurrent of hostility towards the industry in his words was unmistakable. In the battle for public opinion, such statements by prominent members of the community could be very damaging indeed. Especially hurtful was Dewar's final statement, in which farming was pitted against tourism as if the two industries were mutually exclusive. The Innkeepers, assisted by the provincial and national Travel Bureaux, argued time and time again that the two industries were mutually beneficial. CGTB Leo Dolan led the charge:

Turning to the effect of the Tourist Industry on P.E.I. the Guest Speaker pointed out that although he knew agriculture was our primary industry here, yet there was no secondary industry which can do more for Agriculture than the Tourist Industry. Mr. Dolan illustrated this by giving figures of the various amounts of Agricultural food stuffs consumed by the 28 million visitors to Canada last year.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Newspaper clipping dated March 1956, no title, Innkeepers files, RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Minutes of March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1954.

Dolan's successor Allan Field re-iterated these points at a 1959 Association meeting:

About 7.5 million Americans came into Canada by car to stay for more than two days last year. If each one of those visitors had been induced to stay just another 15 or 20 minutes to by a fried egg sandwich, they would have consumed and extra 625,000 dozen eggs, 750,00[0] loaves of bread and 120,000 pounds of butter. Don't ever let a farmer say that the tourist industry does not mean anything to him.<sup>83</sup>

Researchers were brought in to prove the point. A study was commissioned in 1957, entitled "The Tourist Industry and the Farm Economy," which concluded, not surprisingly, that tourism was of great benefit to Island agriculture and that "...all the agencies concerned, government and private, bend every effort to expand existing facilities and extend promotion of this industry, which makes so great a return over so wide an area of the economy."<sup>84</sup>

The Association relied on more than just words to win over the hearts and minds of Islanders. The Innkeepers strove to involve Islanders and make them feel they had a stake in the industry. The women of the Association, for instance, organized short catering courses for young girls in Charlottetown. The courses were considered a resounding success, helping train many young women for serving jobs at restaurants during the summer tourist boom.<sup>85</sup>

Another one of the organization's favorite strategies was to hold contests. 1954 saw the Association working in conjunction with the Charlottetown camera club to offer prizes totaling \$50.00 "in a competition for photos of interest to tourists."<sup>86</sup> However, the most ambitious Association contest was the tourist slogan contest held in 1956.

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<sup>83</sup> "Tourist Association Director Stresses Value of Industry," Newspaper clipping.

<sup>84</sup> W.J. Dalton, "The Tourist Industry and the Farm Economy, Halifax: August, 1957, UPEI Library, PEI Collection, PEI Tourist Trade – Vertical File "D," 3.

<sup>85</sup> "PEI Innkeepers Hold Brief Training Period," June, 1957, Newspaper clipping, Innkeepers files, (RG32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>86</sup> "Attention Amateur Photographers" August 1954, Advertisement, Innkeepers files, (RG32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

Islanders were encouraged to come up with slogans to sell the Island to tourists and submit them to the Association. First prize was the princely sum of \$50.00, and an invitation to the winner May 26, 1956 dinner meeting of the Association. The winner was 15 year-old Avonna MacAusland of New Glasgow, for her stunningly original slogan “Holiday Island.” At the dinner, George Fraser of the provincial Travel Bureau “...promised every assistance in making use of the same in every way possible.”<sup>87</sup> When compared to earlier provincial Travel Bureau slogans such as the clumsy “Air conditioned by the Gulf of St. Lawrence,” “Holiday Island” must have seemed very catchy indeed.

The Innkeepers themselves were just as, if not more enthusiastic about their new slogan:

Reverting back to the Slogan Contest and so as there'd be no misunderstanding; it was moved by Ralph Balderson, seconded by Gordon Shaw, and agreed to almost unanimously that the Association endorse “Canada’s Holiday Island” as our new Provincial Tourist Slogan and that the Directors constitute a committee of the whole to promote its use including contacting the Provincial Government to request its use on future Island License Plates.<sup>88</sup>

With the help of a fifteen year old girl, the Innkeeper’s Association had created “Holiday Island.” Of course, other contestants had received honourable mentions. First, second and third places had been awarded for each county, in keeping with the Association’s policy of inclusiveness. However, the themes of the slogans varied little from one end of the Island to the other. All but one promoted the Island’s perceived “qualities” of hospitality and natural beauty and as a haven of recreation and relaxation. The runner-ups ranged from near-clones of MacAusland’s slogan, such as “Holiday Haven”, to the more cumbersome attempts, such as “Recreationland” and “Isle of Happiness”.

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<sup>87</sup> Minutes of Semi-Annual Meeting Held May 26, 1956, Innkeepers files, (RG32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.



Figure 9. Aiyonna MacAusland (first place) of New Glasgow and John Hancock of St. John's (second place) accept their prizes in the Innkeepers' slogan contest. (Newspaper Clipping: RG32-1800-1065-1 PAPER)

The sole exception to the themes of hospitality and happiness was the third prize for Prince County, offered by Judith Ann Plate of O'Leary: "Home of Confederation of Canada."<sup>89</sup> The inclusion of the Confederation theme among the other slogans promoting vague and ill-defined "qualities" suggests the 1939 celebration had achieved some lasting effect in the minds of Islanders. Inhabitants had come to believe their province was the cradle of Confederation, and more importantly Islanders inside the tourist industry and

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

out recognized it as a trait marketable to tourists. Thus, the Island had two development themes: a natural paradise and a natural heritage.

The Association knew that if the industry was to reach its full potential, it needed more financing and assistance than the provincial government of Premier Matheson was willing to give. The Association thus sought help from beyond the Island's shores. The Innkeepers held a membership in two national parent organizations: the Canadian Tourist Association (CTA) and the Hotel Association of Canada (HAC), which lobbied the federal government for tourism operators Nationwide. Connections to the Canadian Government Travel Bureau were also close; Bureau Chief Leo Dolan and his successor Allan Field were regular guest speakers at Association dinner meetings throughout the 1950s.

The Association was always looking for new allies. In November of 1957 the Innkeepers paid \$25 for a membership status in the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC), an inter-provincial body dedicated to promoting the economic development of Atlantic Canada.<sup>90</sup> The Association believed that by marketing tourism to APEC as a lever for economic development, they might be able to acquire additional funding. By the time of the March 18, 1958 special general meeting, these intentions were being stated overtly:

Dr. Mac Millan [impressed the Association with] ...the importance of close liaison with APEC and the possibility of having it work on the Industrial Development Bank to have that Bank recognize the Tourist Industry as one eligible for Ind. Dev. Bank loans....

At first glance, tourism did not seem to qualify as *industrial* development. Tourism did not require the building of factories, a fact *The Guardian* had already lamented by 1958. However, tourism did require the creation of an effective transportation and

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<sup>90</sup> Minutes of Annual Meeting Held Nov. 20/57. (RG32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).



communication infrastructure. It also needed modern amenities to satisfy the affluent visitor, who may visit the Island for its rural, old-world charm, but did not wish to live with rural, old-world discomfort. Such developments *could* lift the province's standard of living and provide inhabitants with amenities that would not otherwise be built.

### **Outside Forces**

A shift in the provincial and federal government's attitude towards tourism was slowly taking place, but it was influenced largely by forces beyond the control of Fraser, the Association, or even the provincial or federal governments themselves. One of the more important factors was the decline of Prince Edward Island's farm population. The postwar era saw less and less farms dotting the Island landscape while the farms that stayed tended to get bigger and bigger. The small-time Island farmer was going the way of the Dodo.

Of the 12,230 Island farms enumerated in 1941, almost one-half had been classified as subsistence. The 1961 census found only 7,335 farms.... Marginal operations went first. In 1941, more than seven hundred farms had been under ten acres in size, twenty years later, 80% of those were gone... the trend toward farm consolidation was another characteristic of the new countryside. By the end of the 1950s, experts were arguing that only larger acreages could achieve the economies of scale that might keep Island farmers competitive. For those still left in the industry at decade's end, farming was becoming very much a business. It was too expensive to be anything else.<sup>91</sup>

As the same time as the farm population declined, the province's overall population had begun to rise, from 95,047 in 1941 to 104,629 in 1961. Furthermore, by the opening of the 1960s, one third of this population lived in urban areas. In rural areas, there were an ever-increasing number of individuals classified as "rural non-farm dwellers."<sup>92</sup> As always, tourism took on more importance as the more traditional Island industries crumbled. Prince Edward Island's farm decline was part of a Canada-wide

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<sup>91</sup>Edward MacDonald. *If You're Stronghearted: Prince Edward Island in the Twentieth Century.* (Summerside: Williams and Crue Ltd., 2000), 259.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, 259-260.

trend. Between 1951 and 1961, the nation's farm population decreased from 2,911,996 to 2,128,400.<sup>93</sup> The decline of Canada's farms meant less people working in agriculture and more people looking for work in another sector of the economy.

Perhaps the most important factor was simply that the number of tourists in North America continued to grow exponentially throughout the 1950s. Accommodations across the continent increased accordingly. In 1948 there were over 26,000 motels in the United States alone; by 1961 this number had increased to approximately 62,000.<sup>94</sup> By 1960, American tourists were spending some \$370 million in Canada.<sup>95</sup> Prince Edward Island was no exception to the rule. The number of automobiles and visitors rolling onto the Island continued to increase:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Number of Passengers, Borden-Tormentine Ferry</b>	<b>Total Number of Vehicles, Borden-Tormentine Ferry</b>
1951	244,895	77,603
1952	271,494	88,019
1953	299,894	102,680
1954	299,416	104,735
1955	344,636	123,145
1956	350,595	128,082
1957	375,306	139,548
1958	379,103	142,139
1959	388,419	161,051
1960	415,141	171,540 <sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> M.C. Urquhart, Ed., *Historical Statistics of Canada*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1965), M1-11.

<sup>94</sup> Jakle, *The Tourist*, 195.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 188.

The story was the same at the Wood Islands terminal, where the passenger list increased from 78,744 people and 26,010 vehicles in 1951 to 152,259 people and 46,194 vehicles in 1960. Maritime Central Airways also experienced a modest increase in passenger traffic, from 25,675 in 1950 to 35,174 by 1962.<sup>97</sup> The increase in passenger traffic could not simply put down to more Islanders make the trip. By 1960, Fraser estimated that tourists were spending \$7,800,530 on Prince Edward Island.<sup>98</sup>

In 1956, Premier Matheson had been hesitant to give tourism its own department, despite the lobbying of the Innkeepers Association:

With regard to the resolution of the Annual Meeting urgin [sic] Tourism as a separate Department of the Provincial Government, the secretary read a reply from Premier Matheson indicating that he could see no reasons generally for such a move but that if we had any special arguments supporting such he would be happy to receive and consider them.<sup>99</sup>

Matheson's resistance was typical of the province's parochial attitude, but in the face of mounting statistical evidence of tourism's importance, the government could not hesitate forever. In 1959 Matheson's government passed an amendment to the Tourist Accommodations loan act increasing the maximum loan available from \$300,000 to \$450,000, but still no commitment was made to creating a separate Department of tourism.<sup>100</sup> Then Matheson's Liberals were defeated by Walter Shaw's Conservatives in the September 1959 provincial election. Shaw did not win on a pro-tourism platform, but he did want to make the provincial government more organized and professional than it

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<sup>96</sup> B.Graham Rogers, 1963 Prince Edward Island Traffic Figures with Comparisons, Borden – P.E.I., - Cape Tormentine, N.B., RG25/34, Matheson Papers, Transportation Files, PAPEI, 1, and "Borden – Tormentine Route, Total Passenger Traffic for Years 1928 – 1944 Inclusive," RG25/33, J. Walter Jones Papers, Vol. 3, Carferry File, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>98</sup> Report of the Department of Tourist Development of the Province of Prince Edward Island for the Period January 1, 1960 – December 31, 1960, 2

<sup>99</sup> Minutes of Directors' Meeting Held December 8, 1956. (RG32, Box 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI).

<sup>100</sup> "An Act to Amend the Tourist Accommodation Loans Act," in Acts of the General Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 1959, (Charlottetown: Queen's Printer, 1959), 134.

had been in the past. Shaw created a Department of Tourist Development in 1960, albeit with a shared minister. Fraser remained the real brains behind the department as Deputy Minister of Tourism.<sup>101</sup>

### **Atlantic Canada's "Special Problems"**

Changes were also occurring in the federal government. Ottawa was taking an increasingly active role in combating regional disparity, and was impressed by tourism's successes. On October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1956, the cabinet of Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent created a Privy Council Order to give funding to a special advertising program designed to encourage American tourists to visit Atlantic Canada:

The Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources felt it was of considerable importance to the Atlantic Provinces, at present and in the immediate future, to build up the tourist industry. The possibilities for expansion were substantial because the region was naturally attractive and was close to the steadily growing population of the eastern United States seaboard. Publicity by the Canadian Government Travel Bureau in the United States had, thus far, been about Canada in general, but the *special problems* of the Atlantic Provinces and the *special importance* of the tourist industry to them appeared to justify an exception in their case (Italics added).<sup>102</sup>

This statement was indicative of a major shift that was occurring in federal policy over the course of the 1950s. The Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources was acknowledging the existence of regional disparity and the responsibility of his government to intervene in order to correct this disparity. The minister was also acknowledging tourism as an economic lever that could be manipulated by the federal government to even the playing field in Atlantic Canada.

The federal government had long since recognized the importance of tourism to the Atlantic Canadian economy and to the Prince Edward Island economy in particular. Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent certainly wasted no time extolling his government's

<sup>101</sup> Report of the Department of Tourist Development, 1960, 1.

<sup>102</sup> Privy Council Minutes, Canadian Government Travel Bureau Special Programme in the United States to Encourage Travel in the Atlantic Provinces. NAC, 1956, RG2, Series A-5-a, Volume 5775, 2.

involvement in promoting the Island's tourist industry. In a 1949 election-campaign speech in Summerside, St-Laurent used tourism as one his main arguments for re-election:

It's no wonder His Excellency the Governor General chose Prince Edward Island for the one long holiday he has taken while in Canada and it is no wonder more and more tourists are coming to Prince Edward Island every year from other parts of Canada and the United States - and I hope you won't forget - on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June - that it was a Liberal government which established your national park and a Liberal government who had the fine new ferry built to bring the tourists here.<sup>103</sup>

St-Laurent talked big, but once the shell of self-promotion and electioneering was removed, the government's involvement in the Island's tourism industry, from a financial point of view, appeared modest. The Prince Edward Island National Park and a \$20,000 dollar grant were not huge financial contributions on the grand scale of government expenditure, and the new ferry had been wanted just as much to bring Island produce to market as to bring tourists to the province. The Canadian Government Travel Bureau had been active in tourist promotion, but focused on advertising all of Canada as a tourist destination for affluent Americans, rather than selling specific parts of the country.<sup>104</sup>

The October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1956 cabinet meeting saw these old laissez-faire attitudes begin to change. The cabinet agreed on an unprecedented sum of \$300,000 to be spent on advertising solely for Atlantic Canada. Cabinet agreed that the advertising was to be aimed at the well-off inhabitants of the United States' Northeastern seaboard, noting that "...the amount to be divided between national magazines in the U.S., newspapers in the area east of Chicago, and television and radio advertising in the eastern states".<sup>105</sup>

Ottawa still felt queasy about publicly declaring this money as earmarked to

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<sup>103</sup> Notes for Prime Minister, Summerside, P.E.I. May 17, 1949, (NAC, MG26, Series L, Volume 260, File PM-1949-30)

<sup>104</sup> Privy Council Minutes, 3.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 3.

combat Atlantic Canada's "special problems." Cabinet decided to hide the expenditure, at least for a while, to avoid incurring the envy or anger of Canada's other regions.<sup>106</sup> The aversion to directly addressing the issue of regional disparity was a deep-seated one. The government of St-Laurent's predecessor William Lyon Mackenzie King had tabled numerous commissions to study Atlantic Canada's "special problems," but had always avoided any suggestions that the federal government should step in --at least deeper than tinkering-- to address the problem directly. Now attitudes were changing.

Wartime prosperity had temporarily silenced cries of regional disparity, but in the post-war era Atlantic Canada once again entered the economic doldrums. While the rest of the country generally experience continued prosperity from 1945 to 1957, the Maritimes and Newfoundland continued to fall behind in terms of all relevant economic indicators. Careless notes that "since 1940, personal income *per capita* in the Maritimes has been about 70 percent of the all-Canada figure."<sup>107</sup> Other statistics fared no better:

The Atlantic region has demonstrated a persistent under-utilization of manpower resources by virtue of both a high seasonal unemployment rate (amplitude of Maritime variations, 1955-59, 13.4 percent, Canada 7.4 percent) and a low labour force participation rate (45 percent Maritimes, 55 percent rest of Canada). Low levels of business investment in the Atlantic provinces during the 1950s (only 57 percent of total new investment *per capita* in Canada) prevented a new source of continuing employment in the region.<sup>108</sup>

The problem was compounded by the growth of provincial government responsibilities in the postwar era. On Prince Edward Island, new provincial government departments came into existence while old departments found their roles expanding to include new services. The Department of Health and Welfare came into existence in 1946, Industry and Natural Resources in 1949, Fisheries in 1956 and finally a department

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Anthony G.S. Careless, Initiative and Response: The Adaptation of Canadian Federalism to Regional Economic Development. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977), 46.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

of Tourism in 1960. The provincial civil service grew from 336 in 1950 to 500 by the beginning of the 1960s.<sup>109</sup> It was a modest expansion, but it still put a greater financial strain on the Island government than ever before.

Louis St-Laurent's Liberals began to realize the issue of regional disparity would have to be faced directly. By 1957, St-Laurent was open enough about regional disparity to use it in his election speeches- at least those speeches delivered on Prince Edward Island:

It is rather ironical that the Maritime Provinces who were so largely responsible for Confederation have not been sharing as much as some other parts of Canada in our recent growth and prosperity... After studying the Gordon Report, the Federal Government has taken some steps to assist you to catch up.... We have raised the Federal Government's assistance under the Maritime Freight Rates Act by 50%. We have also begun a complete investigation of transportation in the Atlantic Provinces to see what we can do to make your economy more efficient.... One important recent transportation project for Prince Edward Island is the new ferry, the "Lord Selkirk", which runs from Wood Islands to Caribou, Nova Scotia.<sup>110</sup>

Talk was all well good, but *action* was needed if regional disparity was to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Two events that occurred in 1957 convinced Ottawa to finally take action on regional disparity issues. The first was the release of the Gordon Report on Canada's Economic Prospects. The Report concluded that in the case of the Atlantic Provinces, "there is a need... for considerable expenditures of capital on basic public facilities designed to encourage development of the resources of the region."<sup>111</sup> It was noted that "The cost involved in providing these needed services, however, seem to be beyond the financial competence of the provincial governments concerned." The report recommended the federal government should fill the void left by

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<sup>109</sup> MacDonald, 230.

<sup>110</sup> Charlottetown- Election Speech Segments. (NAC, MG26, Series L, Volume 275, File May 1957 – Charlottetown), 6-7.

<sup>111</sup> Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects: Final Report. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1958), 410.



# Take the "TRIPLE\* TRIP" to the **MARITIMES**

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Figure 10. An example of the federal government's \$300,000 Atlantic provinces advertising campaign.  
(Report of the Tourist and Information Branch, 1958, P.111)



the provincial governments and contribute a substantial amount of finances towards such capital projects. It even recommended the creation of a “Capital Projects Commission for the Atlantic Provinces”, although it cautioned such an agency should only be temporary, meant to solve regional disparity issues rather than subsidize them.<sup>112</sup>

In the words of Anthony Careless, the Gordon Report held the view that “problems and economies were not necessarily self-correcting.”<sup>113</sup> Only the public sector had the capacity to correct such problems and help economies achieve their potential. Keynesianism, with its conviction that it was the government’s duty to correct economic decline, was now the dominant economic philosophy:

What once had been treated as disparities in government revenues or levels of services had thus by the 1960s been recognized as merely symptoms of the basic differences in income, productivity, and economic development among Canadian regions. The solution required greater attention to the quality of their resources, labour, and capital supply, all problems far beyond existing transfers of welfare funds.<sup>114</sup>

It was now believed that for the have-not provinces to succeed economically, they needed relative financial stability in order to provide basic services to the province. This is where the second and perhaps most important event of the year came into play: the 1957 Tax Sharing Agreement between Ottawa and the provinces. The agreement took an entirely new approach to funding provincial governments. Careless explains the basic logic behind the change: “If provinces were to be left on their own to stimulate economic growth... they would require either greater access to tax revenues (for the rich) or a greater leveling in the disparity between provincial tax yields (for the poor).”<sup>115</sup> This was exactly what the new agreement aimed to do.

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 410-411.

<sup>113</sup> Careless, *Initiative and Response*, 37.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

For the richer provinces the agreement provided greater tax room; they would get to keep more of their own income instead of sending it on to Ottawa. However, the agreement also held all provinces must have the ability to provide a basic level of services to their inhabitants:

All provinces whose tax collections under the federal abatement failed to reach the *per capita* yield of a similar abatement in the two richest provinces would receive a new equalization payment to meet that level. Thus poor provinces were guaranteed a revenue yield not only equivalent to that of the wealthiest provinces but also one growing at a similar rate.<sup>116</sup>

In essence, what the Agreement did was distribute equalization payments based on *fiscal need* rather than a per capita share of income. This provided a new level of financial stability to have-not provincial governments, as noted by Savoie:

These payments constitute regular commitments on the part of Ottawa to equalizing the fiscal capacities of all provincial governments... The payments also offer financial stability to provincial governments so that a competent public service can be retrained and some degree of forward looking and long-range planning can be undertaken.<sup>117</sup>

St-Laurent's Liberals went down to defeat in the election of 1957. However, the new Conservative government under John Diefenbaker did not attempt to end the Tax Sharing Agreement. In fact, Diefenbaker considered himself a champion for the regions, and entered office with the promise that he would address regional disparity more thoroughly than the Liberals ever had. It was Diefenbaker's Conservative government that passed the Agricultural and Rural Development Act (ARDA), creating the first organization dedicated to correcting regional disparity. As for the tax-sharing agreement, in 1958 the Conservatives actually amended it to *increase* the amount of equalization payment going out to the provinces. Of course, the Island government still did not feel it

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>117</sup> Savoie, *Regional Economic Development*, 26.

was getting “what we deserve,” but it was a sight better than the deal that had existed before 1957.<sup>118</sup>

The recession that struck in 1957 severely hampered the efforts of the Diefenbaker government to get down to tackling regional disparity. Furthermore, the Prime Minister’s distrust of the policy experts who had become so prominent under the Liberal regime and his reactionary policies made it very difficult for the government to formulate long-term regional development plans.<sup>119</sup> Despite such setbacks at the turn of the decade, Ottawa had now committed itself to finding solutions to regional disparity. The Tax Sharing Agreement of 1957, in addition to the encouragement offered by the Gordon Commission, had laid the foundations for further work in the field.

Careless explains that “In a sense, federal tax paternalism, which was reduced by the 1957 Agreement, was replaced during the 1960s with paternalism regarding expenditures.”<sup>120</sup> With the question of tax revenues finally settled (more or less), Ottawa could begin to focus on joint-federal provincial programs to develop the economy and erase regional disparities.

The tourism infrastructure that had been created on Prince Edward Island following the Second World War would present the federal government with a more or less ready, but certainly willing, recipient of financial aid. The growth of tourism on Prince Edward Island had largely been influenced by outside factors. However, the work of Island tourism promoters and managers throughout the 1950s had not been in vain.

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<sup>118</sup> Budget Speech Delivered by Hon. Walter E. Darby- Provincial Treasurer, in the Legislative Assembly of PEI: Monday, March 26, 1951 (Charlottetown: King’s Printer, 1951), 35.

<sup>119</sup> Careless, Initiative and Response, 38.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. , 36.

Under George Fraser, the Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau had skillfully promoted the Island's anti-modern image to affluent North Americans. At the same time, Fraser had skillfully promoted the tourist industry to the provincial government by attempting to assess the financial value of the industry to Prince Edward Island, prompting the government to increase pump-priming capital investments such as the tourist accommodation loans. 'Keyed' advertisements and extensive surveys allowed Fraser and the Bureau to better know what tourists wanted, and what sectors of the industry needed improvements.

Fraser's efforts to convince the provincial government to implement change were much aided by the Innkeepers Association. The Association lobbied tenaciously for tourist development throughout the 1950s, particularly in regard to an improved transportation infrastructure and standardized, government-inspected accommodation. The Association also tried to sell tourism to the Island public, organizing contests and catering courses to involve people in the industry. It also fought bad press, particularly suggestions that tourism was hurtful to the farm economy of Prince Edward Island.

The efforts of George Fraser and the Tourist and Information Branch, along with the Tourism Association tourism boosters, had begun the process of establishing a tourism ethos in the province and helped create an industry capable enough to sell itself to federal and provincial policy makers as an effective economic lever to combat regional disparity in the coming decade.

## Chapter Four:

### A Shrine in the Garden: The 1964 Centennial

Tourist attractions, however, are the sacred places of a nation or people, not a sect. Their religious meaning was broad enough to appeal to people of any persuasion. In a pluralistic society they provided points of mythic and national unity.

-- John F. Sears in *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*.<sup>1</sup>

The 1959 provincial election marked the end of an era on Prince Edward Island. After nearly 25 years of Liberal rule, Walter Shaw's Conservatives won 22 of the 30 seats in the provincial Legislature.<sup>2</sup> Premier Shaw was a bureaucrat and a farmer who had come to power by presenting himself as a champion of the garden myth and a defender of "Island values." Underneath the garden rhetoric however, the province's latest "farmer premier" proved to be deeply committed to political and economic reform:

Although his speech and personal style never forewarned Islanders of the managerial revolution that he was to introduce – leading most to mistake him as spokesman for an older order – Shaw in fact brought to government the confidence of the rational planner and civil servant.... During his tenure the numbers of civil servants rose by almost 20 percent, posts were classified and rationalized, and the beginning of a professional bureaucracy were put into place. Deliberate planning of the Island economy was undertaken in a new, comprehensive way.<sup>3</sup>

Shaw's managerial revolution did not exclude the tourism industry. A Department of Tourist Development was created in 1960, with Provincial Secretary John David Stewart as Minister and George Fraser as Deputy Minister. Stewart had served as mayor of Charlottetown from 1951 to 1958, had overseen the city's centennial celebration in 1955 and was a strong supporter of the tourism industry.<sup>4</sup> At a June 6,

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<sup>1</sup> John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Blair Weeks, Ed., *Minding the House: A Biographical Guide to Prince Edward Island MLAs, 1873-1993*. (Charlottetown: The Acorn Press & The Association of Former Members of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 2002), 209.

<sup>3</sup> David Milne, "Politics in a Beleaguered Garden," in Verner Smitheram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta, ed., *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980*. (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982), 45.

<sup>4</sup> Blair Weeks, Ed. *Minding the House*, 188-89.

1960 meeting of the Tourist Association Stewart announced that the government was determined to enforce sanitation standards:

The Minister, present at the meeting, told the Association he plans to press for approval of all operators in the field as to Sanitation minimum requirements, else they'll get no license to operate and shall have to pack up Tourist operations here. By the end of 1960 the Minister hopes we shall have arrived at this position and in 1961 the Government Booklet "Where to Stay on P.E.I." shall most likely only publish approved places.<sup>5</sup>

The Shaw government also continued to build upon the tourism policies of the old regime; in the 1960-61 fiscal year, the province provided \$249,350.00 in Tourist Accommodation Loans and spent \$4,837,019.68 on highway construction and repair.<sup>6</sup>

Tourism boosters were ecstatic; they felt that their industry was finally getting the attention it deserved. With their basic demands for transportation and standardized accommodation met, tourism boosters could focus more on the grooming and imaging of their garden "product." The new focus was evident at a December 1961 Tourist Association meeting:

Considerable discussion followed, with general consensus of opinion being that in Accommodations [sic] and Restaurant fields we are fairly well up to par, but weak in Entertainment and Recreational facilities.<sup>7</sup>

Calls for improved entertainment and recreation facilities had been made long before 1961. Tourists had been complaining that Prince Edward Island was just a bit *too* peaceful since the 1952 *Official Survey*, when respondents had suggested that the province needed more taverns, nightclubs and cocktail lounges.<sup>8</sup> By the 1960s however, the tourism industry was taking tourist ennui very seriously. The Island's "natural attractions," so long touted by tourism boosters, were no longer enough- the province

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of Semi-Annual Meeting Held June 6/60, RG32, No. 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Prince Edward Island Public Accounts, 1960-61, (Charlottetown: Dillon Printing Company), 19.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of Director's Meeting held Dec.4/61, RG32, No. 98-004, Box 3.

<sup>8</sup> Official Survey of the Prince Edward Island Tourist Industry, 1952. PAPEI, 13.

needed “unnatural attractions” as well, to entice tourists to stay longer and spend more.

The problem was where tourism operators could get capital to finance these attractions:

With more tourists these days in the younger age brackets the problem is what for them to do on rainy days and after the sun goes down. One main reason for our lack of comparable progress in these latter aspects of the industry, it was agreed, was because Prov. Gov't Tourist Loans are not available for this type of development.<sup>9</sup>

Luckily for Prince Edward Island's tourism operators, by the 1960s Keynesianism had become the dominant economic philosophy of both the provincial and federal governments. Walter Shaw's Conservatives, dedicated to narrowing the social and economic gap between Islanders and other Canadians, invested heavily not just in tourism, but in all sectors of the Island's economy, particularly the food processing and shipbuilding industries. Shaw's initiatives met with mixed success. Some projects, such as the 1961 creation of Seabrook Frozen Foods in New Annan, proved profitable. Others, such as Georgetown's Gulf Garden fish plant and the Bathurst Marine shipbuilding facility, both in built in Georgetown in the early 1960s, would be bankrupt by 1967.<sup>10</sup> These failures did not change the fact that Walter Shaw had shifted the provincial government toward an increasingly interventionist economic policy.

Shaw's proactive approach to the Island economy was part of a larger trend in the Atlantic region, what Anthony Careless calls the “reawakening of the Atlantic provinces.” The creation of Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC) in 1954 had signalled the beginning of a more cooperative and proactive attitude on the part of the region's political elite. Even more importantly, Ottawa had begun to sit up and take notice of the shift:

The strategies of interprovincial co-operation in Atlantic Canada developed during the 1950s had begun to pay dividends in the context of federal-provincial relations. The

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Blair Weeks, Ed., *Minding the House*, 184.

region's call for special development assistance met a sympathetic response from the federal Conservative administration of John Diefenbaker- a response facilitated by Ontario's ending its traditional opposition to federal fiscal transfers.<sup>11</sup>

The Diefenbaker regime presented itself as a champion of regionalism and promised to address the issue of regional economic disparity.<sup>12</sup> This promise was given some teeth by the creation of Agricultural and Rural Development Act (ARDA) and the Atlantic Development Board (ADB) in 1962.

The ADB was designed to examine, and later to fund "...means by which the production of the region might be advanced."<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, under the direction of Newfoundland M.P. J.W. Pickersgill, the ADB suffered from partisan politics and despite high hopes, it was not able to do much more than serve as a mechanism for channeling federal funds to the Atlantic region.<sup>14</sup> ARDA, which would ultimately prove a more successful regional development tool, initially dealt solely with the problem of rural poverty in Canada. There were provisions in the Act for alternate employment, but during the early 1960s "Most projects concentrated upon dealing with land and resources in order to improve the farmer's well-being."<sup>15</sup>

So far, no federal or provincial program had been designed specifically to develop Prince Edward Island's tourism industry. All that would change in 1964, as a result of the Centennial Celebration of the Charlottetown Conference. As in 1939, the province's status as the "Birthplace of Confederation" would provide the perfect excuse for Island

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<sup>11</sup> Della Stanley, "The 1960s: The Illusions and Realities of Progress", in The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation, 422.

<sup>12</sup> Careless notes of the Conservative Prime Minister: "Diefenbaker's interests (and hence often Cabinet policies) were not primarily national, but were really oriented towards his favourite clientele, the disadvantaged, in this case the Prairies and the Maritimes." Anthony G.S. Careless, Initiative and Response: The Adaptation of Canadian Federalism to Regional Economic Development. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977), 39-40.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 72.



tourism boosters to seek federal involvement in their industry. The Centennial proved to be the largest single event the Island had ever experienced, attracting a record number of tourists and drawing an unprecedented amount of federal funding.

The 1964 Centennial convinced provincial and federal planners that the tourism industry responded well to carefully-planned financial initiatives, and could be used as an effective lever to stimulate economic growth in the province. It also proved that the Island's garden myth, when combined with the birthplace myth, served as a powerful magnet for federal funds. The story of the 1964 Centennial is in large part the story of how Prince Edward Island used history, tourism and the Keynesian economic policies of the 1960s to complete the process of transforming the province into a national shrine. As a national shrine, the Island became a *national* responsibility; it was the duty of Canada, through the federal government, to commemorate and preserve the entire province. In effect, the story of the 1964 Centennial is the story of how the Island became a client of the federal government.

### **Reawakening the Spirit of '64**

Although it had faded into the background after the 1939 celebrations, Prince Edward Island's birthplace myth had never completely disappeared from view. The provincial Travel Bureau frequently noted the allure of Confederation for visiting tourists. The 1950 *Annual Report* suggested increased publicity for the birthplace theme:

As in previous years, the year 1950 showed the Confederation Chamber in our Provincial Building to be the outstanding spot for the sight-seer. In our opinion this national shrine can be given much more publicity and draw still more visitors to our Island Province, a job which we will try to do a bit more on this year than in the past.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Report of the travel Bureau of the Province of Prince Edward Island for the Year 1950. PAPEI, 6.

Visitors to the Island never forgot to take note of its birthplace status. CGTB Chief Leo Dolan gave a nod to the “Cradle of Confederation” when he spoke at the Annual Meeting of the CTA in Charlottetown in 1956.<sup>17</sup> Travel writers always included a mention of the Charlottetown Conference in their articles. Journalist Douglas Roche wrote in 1958 that “Prince Edward Island has sold itself so successfully as the ‘Cradle of Confederation’ that no visitor misses seeing the room off the tiny Legislature Chamber where the first plans of Union were drafted in September, 1864.”<sup>18</sup> Even Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent remarked upon the province’s birthplace in a 1957 election speech in Charlottetown:

We have come a long way since the Fathers of Confederation met in your city 93 years ago. Soon you will be observing the 100th Anniversary of that meeting. I am sure that you will make it a celebration worthy of the importance of the Charlottetown Conference in Canadian history. Perhaps I shall have the opportunity of attending. And who knows - if my present good health continues - I may even be able to come as Canada’s Prime Minister.<sup>19</sup>

It was obvious to everyone that there would be a Centennial celebration, but exactly what form the celebration would take was still up for debate. One thing that could be said for sure- this time around, Islanders had their heart set on more than just \$20,000 in federal funds to cover the costs of confetti.

As early as 1950, Island tourism booster Frank MacKinnon was suggesting the construction of a cultural centre in Charlottetown to commemorate the Fathers of Confederation. The son of former Lieutenant-Governor Murdoch MacKinnon, Frank MacKinnon was a man of many hats; as a political scientist and writer, he had won the

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<sup>17</sup> Proceedings of the Twenty Fourth Annual Convention of the Canadian Tourist Association held at Charlottetown, P.E.I., September 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> 1956. RG25/34 Alex W. Matheson Fonds, Travel Bureau File, PAPEI, 38.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas Roche, “Prince Edward Island: The Garden Island of Canada,” in *The Ensign*, November 1, 1956, RG25/34, Alex W. Matheson Fonds, Tourists Bureau File, PAPEI, 25.

<sup>19</sup> Speech by Louis St. Laurent, May 20, 1957, MG26, Series L, Vol. 27, NAC, 2.

Governor General's Literary Award for Non-fiction with his book *Government of Prince Edward Island*. MacKinnon also served as principal of Charlottetown's Prince of Wales College during the 1950s and 60s and involved himself heavily in the Island's political life.<sup>20</sup> MacKinnon had not been the first to suggest the creation of a provincial cultural centre, but he was the one who took up the cause and linked it to the 1964 Centennial by making it a memorial to the Fathers of Confederation. MacKinnon's efforts would ultimately result in the construction a multi-million dollar cultural complex in Charlottetown city centre: The Fathers of Confederation Memorial Building, also known as the Confederation Centre of the Arts. This building would become the most solid and lasting legacy of the 1964 Centennial.

By 1960 MacKinnon had managed to win the support of Premier Shaw's government for the Memorial Building project. However, the province simply did not have the capacity to pull off a multi-million dollar project. The assistance of the federal government would obviously be needed. Rather than make the request directly, MacKinnon enlisted the aid of one Eric. L. Harvie of Calgary. Harvie was a distinguished First World War veteran, a successful lawyer and a self-made Alberta oil tycoon.<sup>21</sup> In 1955 Harvie used his wealth to found the Glenbow Foundation, an organization dedicated to collecting and preserving Canadian, and to a lesser extent, world history and culture.<sup>22</sup> MacKinnon picked his allies well. Harvie's passion for the past made him a convincing champion of the Memorial scheme, while his wealth and

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<sup>20</sup> Edward MacDonald, *If You're Stronghearted: Prince Edward Island in the Twentieth Century*. (Summerside: Williams and Crue Ltd., 2000), 280.

<sup>21</sup> "Harvie, Eric Lafferty", in *The Canadian Who's Who, Vol. IX, 1961-1963*. (Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1964), 481.

<sup>22</sup> The Foundation eventually gave rise the Glenbow Museum and the Glenbow Archives. The Glenbow Archives is among Canada's largest non-governmental archival repositories. <http://www.glenbow.org>

philanthropic work made him hard to ignore. In July of 1960, a letter from Harvie arrived on Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker's desk in Ottawa:

The initial meetings of the Fathers of Confederation were held in Charlottetown, P.E.I. in 1864, and I would suggest that it might be appropriate to give some Dominion recognition by establishing a cultural centre in that city. . . . Over the last couple of years I have discussed the idea with several Prince Edward Islanders, including Dr. Frank MacKinnon, Principal of the Prince of Wales College at Charlottetown, and believe an expenditure in the neighbourhood of \$6,000,000 would establish a centre of which all Canadians would be proud.<sup>23</sup>

Harvie had apparently engaged in *very* detailed discussions with Mr. MacKinnon and company. A plan for the Memorial Building was already in place, and Harvie had even volunteered to lead the private fundraising campaign himself:

I would like to see it financed possibly one half by the Dominion, one third by the Provinces, and the balance by private subscription. I believe there would be little difficulty in raising \$1,000,000 from private individuals for this purpose. I feel there would be little criticism from other Provinces in the choice of this location in view of its historic connection with the founding of the Dominion of Canada.<sup>24</sup>

The reply from Diefenbaker penned on February 13, 1961 was that of a veteran politician, committing to nothing, but ruling nothing out. The PM explained that while the proposed Memorial Building deserved the "fullest consideration," the issue would have to wait: "I do not think it is appropriate to bring up the question before the Dominion-Provincial meeting later this month."<sup>25</sup> MacKinnon and his allies were prepared for such a response; they had already begun to gather support from among the provincial premiers.<sup>26</sup> Minister of Tourism J. David Stewart had written to Nova Scotia Premier Robert S. Stanfield in October of 1960 asking him to back the cultural centre:

I do not think I have to point out to you the importance of such a building to the capital of our province. It will fill a very long-felt need; it will prove of untold cultural value to all

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<sup>23</sup> Letter from Eric L. Harvie to John G. Diefenbaker, 25 July 1960, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File #16, PAPEI.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Letter from John Diefenbaker to Eric L. Harvie, February 13, 1961, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File # 16, PAPEI.

<sup>26</sup> Letter from J. David Stewart to Honourable Angus MacLean, M.P., February 8, 1961, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File # 16, PAPEI, 1.

of our citizens, who, incidentally, are not capable within their own financial limitations to provide it for themselves; and lastly, it would certainly prove a terrific asset to our ever-increasing tourist traffic.<sup>27</sup>

Stewart was careful to add that the Memorial Building would provide benefits for Stanfield's province as well, noting that "...all of our visitors coming to this province have to pass through either or both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick."<sup>28</sup> Stewart hoped that with the help of the premiers, the Islanders would outmaneuver Diefenbaker by presenting the idea to at the upcoming dominion-provincial conference. In an echo of 1939, the Islanders were again creating intrigue in the halls and conference rooms of Ottawa:

In order to start the ball rolling, from the Provincial and Federal level, we have in mind that the proposal might come from Premier Bennett from British Columbia, whereby he will suggest, possibly at the next Dominion Provincial Conference in Ottawa, that other Provinces would make contributions worked out on an equitable basis and that the Federal Government would at that time be asked to make their contribution of a sum that has been suggested to be in the vicinity of three million dollars... I have contacted Premier Robichaud of New Brunswick and he has assured me of his full and complete personal support and that of his government.<sup>29</sup>

Making sure to cover all their bases, the Islanders called in favours from the federal cabinet. Stewart wrote to Angus MacLean, the Minister of Fisheries, asking him to "... consider the possibility of having a personal interview with the Honourable Mr. Diefenbaker for the purpose of soliciting his support in this very important proposition":

Mr. Eric Harvie wrote Mr. Diefenbaker last fall concerning this matter and received a non-committal reply. This is a very ticklish subject and I am not sure in my own mind as to the proper approach to the Prime Minister but I honestly feel you are the person to make this approach. I am giving the suggestion for your consideration and I am hoping that you will consider it kindly.<sup>30</sup>

Ultimately, MacKinnon's adept political maneuvering paid off and Ottawa agreed to fund the Memorial project. The Islanders had shown themselves to be skilled in the art of

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<sup>27</sup> Letter from J. David Stewart, Provincial Secretary, to Hon. Robert L. Stanfield, Premier of Nova Scotia, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1960, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, file # 16, PAPEI, 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Letter from J. David Stewart to Honourable Angus MacLean, February 8, 1961, 1.

subtle persuasion, but they also owed their victory to having the right idea at the right time.

### **Prince Edward Island and the New Nationalism**

Throughout the 1960s Canada was in a generous mood when it came to centennial celebrations. With the Dominion's British ties slowly fading away and the low rumble of separatism growing louder in Quebec, the nation was cast adrift, searching for a new definition of itself. English Canadians began to try to separate themselves from the cultural influence of the United States and carve out a niche for a separate identity. Politicians such as Walter Gordon, who wanted to limit the amount of foreign investment (particularly American investment) in Canadian business, became heroes of the "new nationalism" overnight.<sup>31</sup>

In such an environment, all symbols of Canadian unity and culture gained an enhanced importance, and any anniversary of a Canadian milestone or achievement was a reason to party. The entire country contracted a case of what historian Edward MacDonald has termed "centennialitis":

The contagion eventually infected all parts of the country, even Quebec. Symptoms included a mild euphoria with a marked tendency toward nostalgia. The condition was not terminal, though it lasted nearly a decade, and it came in distinct waves, cresting in 1967.<sup>32</sup>

Canadians had long been susceptible to celebrating their nationality, as the 1908 Tercentenary in Quebec and the 1939 Confederation Week celebration on Prince Edward Island had demonstrated. The centennial bug of the 1960s, however, was a stronger, longer-lasting strain of this nationalistic flu. A February 10, 1960 *Hamilton Spectator* article entitled "Looking forward to a Big Birthday Party" by journalist Charles Lynch

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<sup>31</sup> Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English, Canada since 1945: Power, Politics and Provincialism, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 332-333.

<sup>32</sup> MacDonald, Stronghearted, 276.

captured the anticipation that was already building up to Canada's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1967:

Who knows – we may even get the great Canadian novel and the great Canadian opera out of this thing. And perhaps – just perhaps – we could shuck off the distinction of being the only nation in the world with no distinctive national flag and no distinctive national anthem.<sup>33</sup>

The PM had been infected by the centennial bug as well, and was in a generous mood when it came to celebrating Canada:

Prime Minister Diefenbaker, radiating confidence that he will still be in the saddle seven years hence, has promised to interest himself to the very limit in plans for the birthday party. He showed that he means business this week, when he summoned representatives of the provinces to Ottawa with such haste that some of them had difficulty getting together a change of clothing, let alone some ideas on the form that the celebration should take.<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately, the Islanders were not the only province with centennial aspirations. By 1960 Quebec was already tossing around the idea of a 1967 world's fair in Montreal and demanding federal dollars of its own. Meanwhile, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported Newfoundland had intimated it was less than enthusiastic about celebrating the Centennial because Ottawa was canceling the province's special federal grant after 1962.<sup>35</sup> Worst of all, some provinces and regions were even challenging the Island's status as the birthplace of Confederation, hoping to claim a share of the glory (and funding) for themselves.

Nova Scotia asserted that the 1864 gathering in Halifax (immediately following the Charlottetown Conference) had been more significant in forming the country.<sup>36</sup> The Gaspé region of Quebec also attempted to claim the birthplace title on the grounds that

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> "Requires Long Planning" in the *Ottawa Citizen*, February 8, 1960, 1.

<sup>36</sup> "Looking Forward to Big Birthday Party", *Hamilton Spectator*, Wednesday, February 10, 1960, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File #19, PAPEL.

the explorer Jacques Cartier had landed in Gaspé first, making it the “real” birthplace of Canada. Frank MacKinnon wrote some testy comments refuting Gaspé’s claim and forwarded them to George Fraser. MacKinnon’s refutations were forceful, but belied an underlying insecurity about Prince Edward Island’s status as the “cradle”:

- Can hardly refer to a place of landing as “birthplace”
- Anyway Cartier landed here first
- Lief Erikson landed before Cartier
- Birthplace is the place where the first plans for Canada were made and the idea of union first officially suggested and planned this in Charlottetown.
- Canada as a nation did not exist in 1864 (the name was used for the Province of Canada (Quebec and Ontario) before the nation was first planned in Charlottetown in 1864.<sup>37</sup>

MacKinnon’s points are valid ones, although he fails to note that his last argument also provided a case against naming Charlottetown as the birthplace. Canada did not exist as a nation in 1864, but nor did it exist after the Charlottetown Conference- until the BNA Act was ratified almost three years later in London, England.

The Island’s arguments for being the birthplace were far from airtight, but the fact that Charlottetown had long since installed itself in the popular national imagination- in paintings and school histories- as *the* Cradle of Confederation undoubtedly stood it in good stead in the campaign to secure federal funds for 1964. All the same, the Island’s centennial planners were taking no chances- they wanted 1964 to *permanently* establish Charlottetown’s birthplace status in the popular imagination

### **“But in the Beginning was Charlottetown”**

In his book *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*, historian John F. Sears explains that the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of American tourism “had deeper cultural sources than the need for diversion”:

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<sup>37</sup> Comments by Frank MacKinnon, with notes by George Fraser, N.D., RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File #19, PAPEI.



Tourism played a powerful role in America's invention of itself as a culture.... [In the 1820s and 30s] America was still a new country in search of an identity. Educated Americans desperately wished to meet European standards of culture and, at the same time, to develop a distinct national image. Tourist attractions are a feature of all modern societies. But because of America's relationship to Europe and to its own past, because its cultural identity was not given by tradition but had to be created, tourist attractions have played an especially important role in America.<sup>38</sup>

Sears' description of America in the 1820s and 30s can be applied, largely unchanged, to Canada in the 1960s. Canada was a relatively new nation in search of an identity. It wished to meet European and American standards of science and culture, and yet differentiate itself from them, a trend that was reflected in the English Canadian art and literature of the era.<sup>39</sup> Canadians were trying to determine what made them unique. Prince Edward Island's centennial planners wanted to take full advantage of this emerging sense of nationhood.

Like 1939, the 1964 celebration was to be a *pseudo-event*, as described by American historian Daniel Boorstin; the festival would legitimize the Island's claim to be the birthplace of Confederation, and this claim would in turn legitimize the festival itself. In a February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1960 letter to Provincial Secretary J. D. Stewart brainstorming ideas for celebrating 1964, Dr. MacKinnon identified the centennial as an opportunity "...of associating P.E.I. a bit more with national matters and establishing even more securely the idea of the Island as a national "site", "shrine" or the like to which all Canadians look."<sup>40</sup> A later report stated this goal even more explicitly:

Aim: To register the 1964 P.E.I. centennial as a national cause for celebration. Promotionally, we must keep in mind its significance for all Canadians, that it is a birthday party in which the whole country should be deeply involved. Historically and romantically it should contribute to the events scheduled for 1967 as it did to the events

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<sup>38</sup> John Sears, *Sacred Places*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Bothwell et al, *Canada Since 1945*, 337.

<sup>40</sup> Memo to Hon. J. D. Stewart from Frank MacKinnon, February 3, 1960, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File #16, PAPEI, 1.

in 1867, BUT IN THE BEGINNING WAS CHARLOTTETOWN. Here is the valid Canadian historic shrine.<sup>41</sup>

Key to achieving this aim was having the 1964 celebrations recognized as the official opening of the 1967 centennial, thereby anchoring 1964's national significance to the undisputed 1967 birthday. A report of the Centennial Committee's board of directors announced success in gaining recognition of this "special status" on the national level. MacKinnon wrote: "...both the National Centennial Administration and the National centenary Council have recognized the Island's 1964 events as the first stage of the 1967 celebrations just as the Charlottetown Conference was the first step towards the union of 1867."<sup>42</sup> Prominent Canadian historian Donald Creighton gave the Islanders his support by writing an article about the Charlottetown conference for the 1964 Centennial.<sup>43</sup> With official support for the Island's celebrations assured, Islanders could actually begin planning for the centennial year itself.

### **The Memorial Building**

The Fathers of Confederation Memorial Building was intended to be the crown jewel of the centennial. The structure would contribute Charlottetown's status as a sacred site, but it would also serve as an attraction worthy of the tourist's gaze in and of itself.<sup>44</sup> Sociologist Dean MacCannell notes that "Massive institutional support is often required

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<sup>41</sup> "Progress Report, Promotion and Publicity 1964 Centennial", N.D., RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File # 7, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Frank MacKinnon, Report of the Board of Directors of the Prince Edward Island Centennial Committee, RG34, Series 13 Sub Series 1, PAPEI, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Donald Creighton, "The Confederation Conference," (Charlottetown: Prince Edward Island 1964 Centennial Committee, 1964), RG 34, Series 13, File 26, PAPEI.

<sup>44</sup> British sociologist John Urry, in his book The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies. (London: SAGE Publications, 1990) explains that "The contemporary gaze is increasingly signposted. There are markers which identify the things and places worthy of our gaze", 47. The Memorial building is one of these markers.

for sight sacralization in the modern world.”<sup>45</sup> This was certainly true of Charlottetown’s birthplace status; a whole new institution was being created whose primary purpose was to legitimize the city’s claim to be the “Cradle of Confederation.” Once constructed, the Memorial building would continually remind Canadians of the Island’s privileged position in Canadian Confederation.

The new structure had other important functions. The Island’s political and commercial elite did not want 1964 to be a flash in the pan the same way 1939 had been. They wanted to see tangible, long-term economic benefits emerge from the centennial. Publicist Dennis L. Clarke stated the generally held view in an August 1963 letter to centennial planner William Hayward: “We must not think of this publicity project in relation to promoting a one year centennial, but in terms of its long range effect on every area of Prince Edward Island’s economic future.”<sup>46</sup>

The Memorial Building would have long-term economic effects by serving as a permanent tourist marker, a tangible organizing and directing point for tourist behaviour. The structure was considered vital to the centennial’s success. Once official support had been secured, work on the project went ahead very quickly. By the end of the year Eric L. Harvie was director of the newly-created Fathers of Confederation Memorial Citizens Foundation, a group of influential business and professional men from across the country determined to see the project become a reality.

The subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle diplomacy of MacKinnon and his allies, in conjunction with *centennialitis*, had won over the politicians. With money provided

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<sup>45</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 44.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Dennis L. Clarke to William Hayward, August 21, 1963. RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, file #22, PAPEI, 2.

by a Canada Council Grant, a nationwide competition was held to choose an architectural design for the building. The instructions for the contest pointedly stated “The competitor is wasting his time who thinks of this building as anything but a national shrine to which Canadians will forever pay homage as the Birthplace of their nation.”<sup>47</sup>

The architects who apparently took these words the most to heart were the Montreal firm of Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos and Sise. Their victory was announced at an Ottawa banquet hosted by the Foundation in January of 1962, with the Governor-General and Prime Minister Diefenbaker in attendance. When Lester B. Pearson’s Liberals won the 1963 election, the government’s retained its commitment to the project.

The building was going to be larger than anything the Island had ever seen. Hailed as “Canada’s first memorial to the Fathers of Confederation” the structure was to house a theatre, art gallery, museum, library and a memorial hall. The construction cost of \$5.6 million was not far off from Harvie’s \$6 million estimate, and the funding plan was very similar to what Harvie had suggested as well. Parliament had voted the project 15 cents per head of the population, as did each provincial legislature. All \$5.6 million was then handed over to the citizen’s foundation, which oversaw the construction.<sup>48</sup> Centennial promoters made quite a fuss about these cooperative funding arrangements, with remarks like “...no similar proposal of national participation in building had ever been carried out.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Report of the Board of Directors, 84.

<sup>48</sup> Burton Lewis, Charlottetown: Birthplace of Confederation. Pamphlet, N.D., RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File #19, PAPEI, 13.

<sup>49</sup> Prince Edward Island 1964 Centennial Committee: Report of the Board of Directors, RG34, Series 13, File 26, PAPEI, 83.

The sense of national participation prevailed in the construction as well. The Nova Scotia Premier Robert Stanfield turned the first sod in February 1963 and Quebec Premier Jean Lesage spoke on the occasion. Prime Minister Pearson laid the Cornerstone on August 26 1963. Construction went quickly; the building was completed and opened for business by May 1964, just in time for the tourist season.<sup>50</sup> It was a great coup d'etat for MacKinnon and his team. But one building alone, however spectacular, did not a centennial make.

### **Planning for 1964**

As in 1939, the Islanders knew they needed to plan an event-filled centennial. The 1959 session of the provincial Legislature had already made provisions for a Centennial Planning Committee led by MacKinnon.<sup>51</sup> The committee's board of directors was not officially appointed until much later however, on April 12, 1962, by an Order-in-Council of the Lieutenant Governor. The Chairman of the board of directors was, of course, MacKinnon himself, but many other prominent Islanders had volunteered for the committee. They included Alan Holman of the Summerside-based department store of the same name, former Travel Bureau chief W.W. Reid and representatives from many of the Island's prominent families, such as the Peakes, the Linkletters, the Yeos, and the Duffys.<sup>52</sup>

The organization was divided into a number of smaller committees, each charged with a particular aspect of the year's events: Agriculture, Special Projects, Conventions, Armed Forces & Sports, Drama, Creative and Cultural Arts, Finance and Budget,

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<sup>50</sup> Report of the Board of Directors, 6.

<sup>51</sup> Letter to Mr. Bill Hancox, from J. David Stewart, Provincial Secretary, November 28, 1960, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, file # 16.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. , 28

Decorations and Illumination, Education and Children's Events and Religious Activities.<sup>53</sup> The committees were not forced to create an event schedule from scratch; planning for events had begun long before the 1962 Order-In-Council. MacKinnon's 1960 letter to Stewart had made numerous suggestions for the years' events, ranging from a pageant in the style of 1939 and 1908 to a visit from the Queen.<sup>54</sup> However, before anything could be accomplished, there was the question of money. The committee soon set to work on drawing up a budget.

A March 16, 1962 letter to Stewart from William Hayward, business manager for the committee confessed that "the matter is largely guesswork," but suggested a budget of \$250,000 as a "reasonable expenditure".<sup>55</sup> The estimate was based on studying the budgets of similar types of celebrations held in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. It proved to be way off. Ultimately, \$420,000 was allotted to the committee by the provincial government, along with a \$100,000 grant from the Centennial Commission in Ottawa. The committee was given complete freedom with regard to how it spent the money, and, to its credit, remained within its original budget.<sup>56</sup>

Publicity was perhaps the most important committee expenditure; events would most certainly fail if no one attended them. Advertising was much too important to be left to a volunteer, so the Committee hired a full time director. Publicist Mary Jolliffe was the only truly professional member of the Committee. She had been the first public relations officer for the Stratford Festival, serving from 1951 to 1958. Jolliffe had also held the same position with the O'Keefe centre in Toronto from 1958 to 1962 and then at

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Memo from Frank MacKinnon to Hon. J. D. Stewart, 2.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from W. Hayward, Manager, to Hon. J. D. Stewart, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1962, RG 7, Series 17, Prov. Sec. Fonds, file 962, PAPEI.

<sup>56</sup> Report of the Board of Directors, 4.

the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis until she accepted the position of Public Relations Officer for the Prince Edward Island Centennial Committee Incorporated.<sup>57</sup>

Jolliffe organized a publicity blitz on and off the Island. Press releases were continually issued, radio and television coverage of events were arranged whenever possible and special articles and stories were prepared for newspapers and magazines across the country. MacKinnon was sent on a lecture tour of nearly every major Canadian city in an effort to drum up interest in the Island's celebration. 1964 Centennial booklets, published by the Centennial Committee, were distributed to the public, and even placed in every Canadian office and embassy worldwide.<sup>58</sup> All this was in addition to the regular publicity campaign carried on by Fraser and his provincial Travel Bureau.

Unlike Fraser's Travel Bureau, the Centennial's promoters could focus their efforts on a single, tangible *event*, to which the Island's anti-modern aesthetic could be attached. Prince Edward Island had always relied on its image as a Garden of Eden untouched by the modern world to set it apart from the rest of North America as a worthwhile tourist destination. Centennial literature attempted to enhance this sense of touristic distinctiveness by stressing its connections to the past. While the older literature emphasized the "quaint" and "pastoral" nature of the Garden Province, Centennial literature portrayed the Island, and Charlottetown in particular, as a place where you could experience the "Spirit of '64" that motivated the Fathers of Confederation. "And these are things that can be relived almost as easily as they can be recalled in Charlottetown", sang MacKinnon of the Father's achievements:

There is no part of Canada where the pre-Confederation past lives so closely with the present – where history from that era stands so ready to breathe down the neck of the

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<sup>57</sup> "Miss Mary Jolliffe" Biographical sheet, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, file #23, PAPEI.

<sup>58</sup> Report of the Board of Directors, 13-14.

observer who is alert to it – as in Prince Edward Island.... In all the rest of Canada there can not be found as many landmarks associated with them directly, as a body, as survive in good condition in Charlottetown and its environs.<sup>59</sup>

The Centennial had allowed Prince Edward Island to combine the two main thrusts of its image making – nature and heritage. The province was presented as the new nationalism’s fountain of youth; a place where the entire nation could rediscover their roots. It had all begun in the garden of the gulf, and the entire country was to be made aware of this fact.

The Centennial’s promotional efforts were not just directed across the Northumberland Strait. Planners also wanted Island residents to be swept up in the spirit of ’64. Centennial planners stressed that the enthusiastic participation of *all* Islanders, whether they were directly involved with the celebrations or not, was vital to the Centennial’s success. Promoters created a new identity for Islanders: They were the guardians of a national treasure- The Confederation spirit. For the Island’s inhabitants getting into the “spirit of ‘64” was not just an option. It was their duty as guardians of the “spirit.” A Centennial newsletter of December 1962 explained the sacred obligation of every Islander:

First of all, every one of us has the responsibility to become absorbed in the “spirit” of confederation. This means, as we have already indicated, being able to replace small dreams with larger ones. In this case, it means being able to plan this Centennial in such a way that once again the whole future of this province will be changed. During 1964 enough worthwhile things should be done in this Province to leave marks for years to come.<sup>60</sup>

Two months later, the February newsletter began to explain, in practical terms, what being “absorbed” by the spirit of Confederation entailed:

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<sup>59</sup> Burton Lewis, Charlottetown: Birthplace of Confederation. Pamphlet, N.D., RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File #19, PAPEI, 3.

<sup>60</sup> Centennial News, December 1962, Public Relations Committee, RG 34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, PAPEI, 1.



People are beginning to realize that 1964 represents the best opportunity this province has ever had to distinguish itself in the eyes of Canada and the rest of the world... It takes a lot of work and effort to get ready for the thousands of people who will be flocking in here. And it will take practically every man, woman and child to do the job right.<sup>61</sup>

It is easy today to dismiss these heavy-handed nature attempts to reconstruct the Island's identity and link it to the birthplace myth. As it has been noted however, the new nationalism of the 1960s held great allure for many Canadians. Many Islanders found the birthplace myth, which linked their little Island to something much larger than itself, powerful and compelling. Leone Ross, chairman of the Children's Events Committee, was one individual who had been convinced by the spirit of Confederation. He described the following experience in his final report to the Centennial Committee:

One inspiring experience I shall always remember. I had taken a busload of children from the Rehabilitation Centre on a tour of the Wild animal park at Rustico, served them a picnic supper at Cavendish, then took them to Green Gables. I was exhausted when we started homeward, yet here were children in braces, crutches, and wheelchairs, singing lustily and happily as the bus rumbled along. Suddenly they burst with fervor into "This Land is Your Land". I could offer them so little when they needed so much, but here was the nucleus of all we had hoped for in the Centennial Year- the conscious realization by our young people that this was their heritage, this their country, this their opportunity and challenge.<sup>62</sup>

Ultimately, it would be the conviction of individuals such as Leone Ross that would become the driving force behind the success of the Centennial year.

### **The Year in Review: 1964**

Unlike 1939's weeklong calendar of events, 1964 was to be a year-long party. Not even the most critical member of the Tourist Association would be able to complain that there was not enough for tourists to do. Just as the Memorial Building was the crown jewel of the centennial, the Dominion Drama Festival held in the Memorial Building was to be the highlight of the events scheduled for 1964.

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<sup>61</sup> Centennial News Letter: February 1963, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, file # 6, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>62</sup> Report of Board of Directors, 54.

The festival's opening season at the Memorial building, which was now also being called the Confederation Centre by the public, was dedicated to promoting the "national" aspect of the celebrations and stressed the notion that the New Centre was truly for all Canadians. The first show to play at the festival, entitled "John A. Beats the Devil" was very much in the spirit of '64. It was followed throughout the summer by performances by an endless parade of Canadian cultural icons: Pierre Berton, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Don Messer, Wayne and Shuster, the Oscar Peterson Trio, and theatrical productions by Neptune Theatre of Halifax, just to name a few.<sup>63</sup> Local theatre groups even collaborated to put on a centennial pageant in the style of 1939 for four nights at the Centre, which was broadcast nationally by the CBC.<sup>64</sup>

If the highbrow arts centre with its heavy doses of Canadian culture were not your cup of tea, there were other options. A Centennial press release noted that events at the Confederation Centre "...are only a portion of the celebrations taking place all over P.E.I."<sup>65</sup> The Island-wide schedule of events was divided into two separate phases, based around the tourist season: "The events for the summer season were normally planned for entertainment and interest to both tourists and local populace, while events throughout the remainder of the year were generally planned for the local populace."<sup>66</sup>

Chief among the tourist season events were the "Centennial days," held in all the major towns and villages across the Island, featuring parades, sports, band concerts, regattas and the like. In addition, regular scheduled events, such as Old Home Week, the Summerside Lobster Carnival and the Souris Regatta were all expanded to feature the

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>65</sup> "Plans Take Shape for P.E.I. Centennial," Press Release: Prince Edward Island Centennial Committee Inc., RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, file 7, PAPEI, 2.

<sup>66</sup> Report of the Board of Directors, 9.

Centennial. The armed forces and the RCMP participated in many of the events, adding a martial flair to the festivities. The committee's final report praised the aplomb of the local festivities: "Rarely has a population of 100,000 enjoyed so many and so varied celebrations."<sup>67</sup>

The press release was careful to note that despite the extensive celebrations, the tourist would still be able to take in the province's more "traditional" attractions:

In addition to all the special centennial events, Prince Edward Island has numerous every -year attractions. They range from the Woodleigh Replicas, intricate scale models of famous castles; to Green Gables, the home made famous by Lucy Maud Montgomery, author of "Anne of green Gables"; to deep-sea fishing on which you can expect to hook 100 or more two-pound mackerel in a day.... P.E.I. is also famous for her combination of sea, sand and sun. Wide sandy bathing beaches along the north shore of the Island are only a thirty-five minute drive from Charlottetown. Along the way you pass fishing villages – and every one of them has its own unique idea for a colorful, P.E.I.-flavored way to mark the centennial.<sup>68</sup>

Tourist activity was reinforced by a parade of official activity that went on throughout the year. On March 24, 1964, the provincial legislature passed the Coat of Arms Act and a Flag Act, officially commissioning a provincial flag.<sup>69</sup> The flag was based on the 1905 coat of arms given to the Island in 1905. Even the Latin motto on the coat of arms reinforced the notion that Prince Edward Island was now Ottawa's charge- *Parva Sub Ingenti* translated roughly as "the small under the protection of the great." The Legislature, realizing perhaps that Prince Edward Island's history did not stop or start in the year 1864, also passed an Act creating an official provincial public archives.<sup>70</sup> These symbols of the Island's history and heritage would help perpetuate the touristic impact of 1964 by further legitimizing the province's anti-modern image.

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>68</sup> "Plans Take Shape," 3.

<sup>69</sup> "An Act Respecting the Armorial bearings of the Province of Prince Edward Island" and "An Act Respecting a Provincial Flag," in *The Acts of the General Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 1964*, (Charlottetown: Queen's Printer, 1964), 1 and 63 respectively.

<sup>70</sup> "An Act to Establish the Public Archives of Prince Edward Island," in *The Acts of the General Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 1964*, 287.

The truly grand official events had to wait for the week of September 1<sup>st</sup> the anniversary of the Conference itself. The week was marked by a Dominion-Provincial Conference in Charlottetown. The Conference and the events around it achieved an impressive symmetry with 1864 and placed official sanction on centennial mythmaking. MacCannell notes that one of the final stages in the sacralization of a tourist site is the *mechanical reproduction* of the sacred object: “the creation of prints, photographs, models or effigies of the object which are themselves valued and displayed.”<sup>71</sup> In 1964, it was not an object but an *event* that was being reproduced. Both politicians and actors engaged in reproduction, legitimizing their own actions as well as legitimizing the original event.

The Conference opened in the provincial building’s Confederation Chamber at 10:00 am on the first, attended by the Prime Minister and the provincial Premiers. In the afternoon the delegates received a tour of the Confederation Centre of the Arts. Then the historical re-enactments began:

The Department of Transport’s [ship] “Ernest Lapointe” was camouflaged to look like the “Queen Victoria” in which the Fathers travelled. She left Quebec on August 29 and arrived in Charlottetown on September 1 to be received with an old-fashioned harbour welcome. The “Fathers of Confederation,” Canadian actors in authentic costumes, disembarked, made speeches in a wharfside ceremony, and were paraded in horse-drawn Victorian carriages to the Provincial Building. In the Confederation Chamber the actors staged a re-enactment of the original conference with appropriate speeches, which program was broadcast on TV throughout the nation.<sup>72</sup>

There was still one final display of historical symmetry (and anachronisms) to be had:

After the ceremony the “Fathers” joined company with the Prime Minister and Provincial Premiers, who were attending the Dominion-Provincial Conference, in a parade through Charlottetown, the Premiers in Convertibles and the “Fathers in their carriages.” The parade ended at Government House where the “Fathers” were joined by ladies dressed as the wives of the Fathers of Confederation. All guests were entertained at tea by the Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. MacDonald.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 45.

<sup>72</sup> *Report of the Board of Directors*, 49-50.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

For those who preferred more authentic displays, the year was capped off by a visit from Her majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh in October. This event also saw parades, crowds and speeches, as well as another visit from the Prime Minister, along with the Governor-General and Mrs. Vanier.

Overall, the year was a staggering success. The Department of Tourist Development counted 333,951 visitors during the spring, summer and autumn months of 1964. It was yet another record year for the industry, with an increase of 16 percent over 1963. The Centennial celebrations, with their events in May and June as well as September and October, had the effect of extending the tourist season further than any previous year.<sup>74</sup> 104 conventions and conferences were held on Prince Edward Island during the Centennial year. The previous record had been 49 conferences in the year 1955.<sup>75</sup> Bus Tours also reached a new high, with 109 tours rolling onto the Island.<sup>76</sup> All in all, George Fraser estimated that tourism had been worth an unprecedented \$12 million to the province in 1964.

The future looked almost as bright as the present. The opening of the Confederation Centre had increased the province's capacity for conferences and tours. "Before 1964", the Centennial Committee noted, "one spoke in terms of conventions of around 300 [attendees], Now those of 800 or more can be housed and fed, and space for banquets, meetings and dances in separate areas for 1000 people are quite feasible."<sup>77</sup> This was entirely due to the construction of the Confederation Centre: "The experience of

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<sup>74</sup> Department of Tourist Development: For the Period January 1 – 1964 – December 31 – 1964, UPEI Library, PEI Collection, 1.

<sup>75</sup> No title, Speech on the progress of Centennial Committee, N.D., RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File # 19.

<sup>76</sup> Department of Tourist Development: 1964, 2.

<sup>77</sup> Report of the board of Directors, 16.

1964 indicates that Charlottetown can be one of the nation's best and most popular convention centers."<sup>78</sup> The Confederation Centre's first season had also been a relative, if not smashing success. Even if the first season had not been a success at all, the Centre would still have been considered an asset simply because of its continued (and funded) existence. It was now to become one of the Island's permanent attractions, like Province House and the National Park. It had become a lasting marker for the tourist gaze.

The final report also stressed the many benefits of 1964 which were not as literally concrete as the Confederation Centre. The festival had proven that careful planning and investment *could* have a positive economic effect, and had also laid the groundwork for a birthplace myth-centred tourist ethos among the Island's population:

The profits of the Centennial are far greater than its cost. A portion of these revenues are readily noted in the financial statement, but there are many others in the form of the great publicity which the Island received, the educational value to young people of the Centennial and its events, the stimulus to culture and to community spirit and the needed community improvements of various kinds which a Centennial always encourages. Most important of all, it is evident that business did well on Centennial activities and there were, as a result, many examples of the old principle that "you must spend money to make money."<sup>79</sup>

Last but not least, the province had received an unparalleled amount of national and international publicity as a result of the Centennial:

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the publicity which the Island gained in 1964. This publicity was nationwide, indeed, during the Royal Visit, world-wide, and the effects of this publicity will last for many years and be important to tourism and other industries.<sup>80</sup>

Prince Edward Island tourism was finally an "industry," fixed in both the national and provincial psyche. Unfortunately, this did not mean that parochialism had been banished forever.

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 14

## Difficulties

There was a small section of the Centennial Committee's final report entitled "Difficulties." The section was only one paragraph and the references to actual difficulties were tantalizingly vague. The paragraph ended with the furtive statement: "There were very few unpleasant episodes and none are known publicly. For this we are grateful and thankful."<sup>81</sup> There were *very few* unpleasant episodes? What kind of episodes were they? For whom were they unpleasant? The truth was that the Centennial, although a success, was also a sometimes painful learning experience. The pain could produce gain. The Centennial's "difficulties" exposed weaknesses in the Island's tourism infrastructure better than any survey could have. Tourism boosters found out where to focus their development efforts in the coming years.

One of the major problems was the amateur, volunteer nature of the Island's tourism industry. Despite a decade of standardizing and professionalizing efforts by Fraser's Travel Bureau and the Tourist Association, the Centennial had still had to rely almost entirely on volunteers. Public relations director Mary Jolliffe, an expert brought in from off-Island, was a professional, but her staff was composed of inexperienced locals. The committee admitted as much in the final report: "The difficulty was the fact that Prince Edward Island had had comparatively little experience in the business of promotion and in 1964 many of the activities and events were new to this province."<sup>82</sup> Of course the drawbacks of volunteerism had to be weighed against the advantages: the volunteer ethic promoted the participation of Island society at large in the tourism

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

industry and saved a tremendous amount of money that would otherwise have to be spent on salaries.

The problem of tourist geography also reared its head again in 1964. Island tourist establishments were primarily located in Queen's country, on the North Shore as well as in and around Charlottetown. The Centennial's thematic focus on the provincial capital only further exaggerated this trend. Even the North shore establishments were hurt, as the report of the 1964 Tourist Development department relates:

With most of the historical events centering in Charlottetown... it was only natural that the largest number of visitors were concentrated in that area. Some other areas of the province, particularly the North Shore resort areas found the season a bit spotty. In some cases resort operators reported their business down slightly over previous years.<sup>83</sup>

At the same time, operators in and around Charlottetown reported an increase of business of from 20 to 25 percent in the 1964 season.<sup>84</sup>

The Centennial Commission had declared it wanted to decentralize the year's celebrations- it would hardly be able call on all Islanders to help make the Centennial a success if they did not all get to share in the success. A January 11, 1963 committee report stressed the efforts being made to benefit the whole province:

May we emphasize at this time, that this Committee has done its utmost and will continue to do so to decentralize the activities taking place in 1964. Although Charlottetown, as the Capital City, will remain the focus of many of the events, we are, as much as possible, trying to have entertainment, conventions and other activities taking place in both Prince and Kings County centres.<sup>85</sup>

The two most visible expressions of the committee's attempts at decentralization were the previously referred to "Centennial Days" and the special projects. The idea behind the special projects was to establish lasting memorials to the Centennial in the many towns and communities across the province. The communities were encouraged to

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<sup>83</sup> Department of Tourist Development: 1964, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Report to Provincial Secretary from 1964 Centennial Committee, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1963, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 1, File #6, PAPEI, 1.



form their own centennial committees to choose a special project that would be of the most use to them; a park, a skating rink, repairs to the town hall, etc. The Centennial Committee in Charlottetown would approve the project and then provide a grant of 50¢ per head of population. The local committee would also organize their community's "Centennial day," with the help of the Central Committee.

The difficulties experienced in organizing both the special projects and the "Centennial days" demonstrated just how many regions were not yet familiar with the Island's tourist industry. Communities in the tourist green belt in Queen's County and in the larger towns such as Summerside took advantage of the opportunities presented to them by the Central Committee with relative ease. However, the communities outside of the big urban centres and main tourist regions often reacted with confusion- they obviously had very little experience with either tourists or government intervention.

The most glaring example of this inexperience came from the French Acadian village of Wellington, where a cultural divide had to be overcome as well. On June 15, 1963, Cyrus F. Gallant replied to the Centennial Commission's general call for the Island's communities to organize with a letter in halting, handwritten English:

As chairman of our village Commissioners I have been receiving regularly circulars re. Centennial from you. I for sure, ad other commissioners are not too familiar with what we should do for the occasion so unique.<sup>86</sup>

Gallant hoped that the commission would be able to help him pick a Centennial day and organize it. Committee events Manager Ken Birtwistle replied that the Wellington

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<sup>86</sup> Letter from Cyrus F. Gallant to Mr. W. Hayward, June 15/63, RG34, Series 13 Sub Series 2, File #17, PAPEI.

Committee should pick its own day and sent a calendar of events to help Gallant and his colleagues choose.<sup>87</sup>

A date was picked for Wellington Day -- July 22<sup>nd</sup> -- then nothing else was heard from Gallant for two months. On November 18, a concerned Birtwistle wrote to Gallant: “we have no record of having received the names of the members of your Centennial Committee. This is necessary for our records, and we would request that you let us have these names at your very earliest convenience.”<sup>88</sup> Gallant’s handwritten December 2<sup>nd</sup> reply did little to assuage Birtwistle’s concerns, but it did demonstrate just how unfamiliar the village commissioner was with the Island’s tourism industry:

As chairman of our Village I must confess that I have done nothing in respect to our Centennial Program. This project is too large a shoe for my foot, and the commissioners are very, very busy at their daily work... it is true you have furnished us with [word unclear] literature so far but to explain its contents is beyond our ability to do.<sup>89</sup>

The cultural divide between French and English was certainly one reason for Wellington’s troubles.<sup>90</sup> It was not the only reason, however; the spectre of parochialism cast a long shadow over the centennial’s community outreach programs. Many regions were not sure how to handle the centennial, primarily because their communities had never experienced anything like it before. The septuagenarian Mrs. Walter Leard of Bedeque, still used to the Island’s old boss-follower politics, wrote directly to Premier

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<sup>87</sup> Letter from K. Birtwistle, Events Manager, to Mr. Cyrus F. Gallant, Chairman Village Commissioners, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1963, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #17, PAPEI.

<sup>88</sup> Letter from K. Birtwistle, Director of Activities, to Mr. Cyrus F. Gallant, November 18, 1963, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #17, PAPEI.

<sup>89</sup> Letter from Cyrus F. Gallant to Mr. K. Birtwistle, December 2, 1963, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #17, PAPEI.

<sup>90</sup> By 1964, the Acadians much like Prince Edward Island’s other distinctive ethnic minorities, such as the Mik’Maq and the Lebanese, had received very little attention in the province’s tourism promotion and development efforts- Fraser’s travel Bureau tended to focus on the Island’s “British” traditions, particularly those of the Scots.

Shaw for information about the centennial celebrations.<sup>91</sup> Shaw forwarded her letter to Birtwistle, who Mrs. Leard soon invited to come meet with her:

Come to my home, three houses past Bowness's store, Bedeque Village, towards Borden, on left hand side of road, white house porch light on, and streetlight direct opposite, so you won't miss. This is a new undertaking for Bedeque so well hope if entered into to be done right.<sup>92</sup>

In other communities confusion over how to approach the centennial and the committee led to infighting and hostility. Commission members often found themselves trying to smooth over hurt feelings and calm frayed nerves. The town of Victoria actually had two factions fighting for separate special projects. In the words of one of the town's camps: "Evidently we have a hurricane by the tail.... we did inform Mr. Johnstone of our proposed special [repairs to city] hall project, which he endorsed, but there is a faction who are pressuring for re-creational grounds."<sup>93</sup> The Committee ultimately ruled in favour of the city hall project, but there was still more trouble brewing in little Victoria.

A May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1964 letter from Mrs. Kay Wood explained that the members of the local Women's Institute "...disapproved at the way the Centennial funds are being distributed."<sup>94</sup> The Institute felt the nearby town of Crapaud had received more than their fair share from the special projects fund. An exasperated Birtwistle sent off a letter

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<sup>91</sup> Letter from Mrs. Walter Leard to Mr. and Mrs. Shaw, Jan 17<sup>th</sup>, 1964, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #3, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>92</sup> Letter from Hazel M. Leard to Mr. Birtwistle, March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1964, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #3, PAPEI.

<sup>93</sup> Letter from Kay Wood to Cmdr Birtwistle, March 8, 1964, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #16, PAPEI.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from Mrs. K.H. Wood to Birtwistle, May 10, 1964, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #16, PAPEI.

explaining in excruciating detail the rules for receiving the special projects grant and how Crapaud had not violated them.<sup>95</sup>

Sometimes trouble resulted from nothing more than a perceived snub. Take the case of Tyne Valley. In an August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1964 letter to Frank MacKinnon Mr. R.A. Grindlay expressed dismay no representative of the Committee had attended the Tyne Valley celebrations:

Why, oh why, could the entire Centennial Committee overlook the Tyne Valley celebrations last Saturday? .... The celebration from Friday evening until the inter-denominational service in the Centre on Sunday evening was a sell-out affair – and you people were not there to lend moral support and enjoy yourselves! I know that the demands on you personally are inhuman, but surely some other member of the Committee could have been there! Of course, I forgive you, but some of the others who worked hard to make the thing a success are irate.<sup>96</sup>

A confused and worried Dr. MacKinnon responded as best he could. He explained that William Hayward of the committee actually had been at the celebrations, and that Tyne Valley had been advised beforehand that he was coming. MacKinnon still ended on a cautious note, stating “I am disturbed when you report that some people were irate. Please tell them no slight was intended. I understand it was a very successful day and I have already sent congratulations to the local chairman.”<sup>97</sup>

Some communities came up with eccentric requests for the Centennial Committee. One particularly peculiar case was that of the eastern town of Cardigan. For “Cardigan day,” the town had decided to celebrate, at least in part, by roasting an entire Ox. Since Cardigan had no idea how to actually accomplish this, it was left to the Commission in Charlottetown to inquire across the country about methods and

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<sup>95</sup> Letter to Mrs. K.H. Wood, from K. Birtwistle, May 19, 1964, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #17, PAPEI, 1-3.

<sup>96</sup> Letter to Dr. Frank MacKinnon from R.A. Grindlay, 18<sup>th</sup> August, 1964, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #15, PAPEI.

<sup>97</sup> Letter to R.A. Grindlay from Frank MacKinnon, August 26, 1964, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #15, PAPEI.

equipment. Letters were sent out to meat packers such as the Swift Canadian Company in Calgary, Alberta:

Celebrations here are well underway with over 30 communities throughout the Province organized to hold their own centennial celebrations.... One of these ambitious community's Centennial Committees has come up with a request for assistance in obtaining information on barbecuing a whole ox (400 pound). I talked today with Charlie Scranton of the federal Agriculture Department here, and he suggested that you could probably tell us where this information is available.<sup>98</sup>

Replies came in from all over, but the strangest answer came from the South Eastern New Brunswick Tourist Bureau. The letter explained: "At our Monctonian Curling Bonspiel in November we Bar-B-Q a steer on an open spit. Last years was around 300 lbs. This coming fall will be a much larger one (we call it a Donkey Bar-B-Q).<sup>99</sup> Included with the letter was a small card with an image of a cartoon donkey which read: "Come to the Donkey Bar-B-Q. Everybody Gets a Piece of Ass (at the registration and draw).<sup>100</sup>

As would be the case with any large event involving a large number of groups and individuals, a certain amount of mistakes, miscommunication and misunderstandings were inevitable in 1964. But there was no denying the undercurrent of parochialism that still presented itself as an obstacle to tourism's success during the centennial and after. The Centennial Committee had not been blind to this problem- in fact combating parochial attitudes had been one of their expressed goals.

### **Pump Priming**

The Centennial Committee believed its duty was to convince Islanders to take a *proactive* approach to the tourism industry. The province's political and commercial elite

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<sup>98</sup> Letter from D. Ross, Events Co-Ordinator, to Mr. Leo Barchert, Manager, Swift Canadian Company, April 16, 1964, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #7, PAPEI.

<sup>99</sup> Letter from W.A.N. Macdonald, Tourist Co-ordinator to Don Ross, Events Co-Ordinator, April 15, 1964, RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #7, PAPEI.

<sup>100</sup> Donkey Bar-B-Q Card, N.D., RG34, Series 13, Sub Series 2, File #7, PAPEI.

had gradually become more proactive over the course of the post-war era, but it was felt this attitude was still somewhat lacking among the populace at large:

In so many things a reluctance, often understandable, to take on a new or an uncertain commitment forced the Committee to sponsor major events. The “it will never work” school of thought is always encountered at such times and it needs to be convinced.<sup>101</sup>

The committee saw the Centennial as a long term investment, and it wanted Island society to see it that way too. The Centennial and the money infused into the Island economy as a result was a lever the committee, as well as all Islanders, could use to stimulate economic growth on the Island:

Many expenditures were in the nature of “pump priming”, that is, getting certain things started with which the community had little or no experience or for which the large basic cost or effort involved needed special encouragement.... The “pump priming” is also evident in its possibilities for the future. Many Centennial events illustrated for the first time what can be done. Because many of them will no doubt be repeated in the future, the initial costs were well spent as an investment.<sup>102</sup>

The Centennial had shown Islanders just how much the tourism industry, when riding piggyback on a national cause, could achieve. The Island had successfully reconstructed its pastoral, anti-modern identity to present it as the wellspring of Canada’s past, a place where the nation could go for spiritual healing. As a result, the Island had attached itself to the federal government as national treasure that must be preserved and maintained.

Perhaps most importantly, the centennial committee had convinced technocrats in Ottawa and on Prince Edward Island that the province’s tourism industry could produce economic growth *if* it received central management and careful investment. Planners were no longer just thinking in terms of temporary grants-- they were now thinking in longer, more systematic terms about tourism. In the coming years, federal-provincial cooperation would transform tourism into the centrally controlled, carefully planned and

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<sup>101</sup> Report of the Board of Directors, 5.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. , 5.

well-funded industry tourism boosters had always dreamed it should be. Tourism's future on Prince Edward Island was a direct result the lessons that had been learned from the 1964 Centennial.

## Chapter 5:

### Paradise Lost?

It's a pause:  
To look back  
See '73  
Then on  
To the Next Anniversary!

-Centennial '73 jingle

He who controls the past controls the future.

-George Orwell

The year 1968 saw Prince Edward Island's transportation and accommodation infrastructure overwhelmed by tourists. According to the official report, some 452,258 visitors had made their way to "Holiday Island," accounting for an unprecedented 20.7% increase over 1967's tourism figures.<sup>1</sup> The extra arrivals created a serious bottleneck at the Island's ferry terminals:

The five car ferries providing transportation to the Island could not cope with the situation and long waits and lineups for the boats developed in late June and early July. By mid-July waiting periods of seven to eight hours was not uncommon. Cars were lined up along the highways leading to the piers for several miles.<sup>2</sup>

Even if the Island's transportation facilities had been capable of dealing with the vehicle bottleneck, there still would have been the problem of where to put all these tourists; by early July all available accommodation in the province was occupied and visitors were being directed to emergency accommodations in private homes.<sup>3</sup>

George Fraser and his Travel Bureau valiantly attempted to alleviate the crisis with a number of emergency measures:

Temporary facilities were installed where needed and a courtesy van, equipped as a mobile travel information bureau with a two-way radio, literature, loudspeaker and information clerks was despatched [sic] to Cape Tormentine. This vehicle patrolled the line-up until

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<sup>1</sup> Annual Report: Department of Tourist Development, Prince Edward Island, 1968. (Charlottetown: Dillon Printing Company, 1969), UPEI Library, PEI Collection, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



traffic conditions returned to normal. The Charlottetown Travel Bureau was placed on a 24-hour service and the Bureau at Borden remained open from 8 a.m. to 3 a.m. to handle reservations.<sup>4</sup>

Fraser's efforts did help to improve the situation, but the fact remained that Prince Edward Island's tourism facilities were being stretched to the breaking point. That was all about to change, however. The following year, in 1969, tourism became one of the central features of a multi-million dollar comprehensive development plan to modernize Canada's smallest province and eliminate regional disparity. The "Plan," as it was commonly known, would attempt to radically transform Island society and in the process provoke an ideological battle between the champions of progress and modernity and the defenders of Prince Edward Island's traditional garden myth.

On one flank, the late 1960s and early 1970s finally saw tourism become the object of deliberate planning, professional management and a new mood of federal-provincial cooperation. On the other flank, popular resistance to the new branding and management of Island tourism began to emerge, and the industry found itself at the centre of a battle between competing views of the province's past, present and future. When yet another federally-endorsed centennial celebration appeared on the horizon in 1973, Islanders were forced to confront the modernizing and anti-modern paradoxes of tourism, and to debate exactly what Island it was they were going to inhabit- the garden of the gulf, Holiday Island, or something else entirely. The dilemma was a direct result of tourism's attempt to transform the *whole* Island into a site for recreation.

### **Travel Democratization**

As had always been the case, tourism increased in importance primarily due to external forces. The province's estimated tourist numbers had more than doubled

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

between 1960 and 1968, from approximately 208,507 to 452,258 persons.<sup>5</sup> The growth was part of a general trend in North American tourism. Tourism scholars Carlton S. Van Doren and Sam A. Lollar identify the years 1958 to 1974 as the era of “Mass Mobility and Transience:” “...society had truly reached a period of travel democratization, the flowering of mass travel.... This was a nation on the move as a result of new lifestyles, economic prosperity, and very inexpensive transportation costs.”<sup>6</sup>

Van Doren’s and Lollar’s observations refer specifically to the United States, but they are equally applicable to America’s Northern neighbor; Canadians were also traveling in greater numbers than ever before. A 1965 survey of Prince Edward Island’s tourist industry by the Toronto-based firm Acres Research noted that 23 percent of the respondent visitors to the Island came from America’s affluent northeastern seaboard, while nearly 28 percent hailed from the equally well-off provinces of Ontario and Quebec.<sup>7</sup>

Following the 1964 Centennial, Prince Edward Island’s tourism industry was becoming increasingly professional and rationalized. The Department of Tourism and Development’s budget grew from less than \$114,000 in 1960-61 to nearly \$830,000 by 1968-69.<sup>8</sup> From 1965 onwards the Department’s Annual Reports became progressively more comprehensive. They included separate reports for the Travel Bureau, the Provincial Parks Branch and the new Handicrafts Division. Statistics featured more

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Carlton S. Van Doren and Sam A. Lollar. “The Consequences of Forty Years of Tourism Growth.” *Annals of Tourism Research*. (Vol. 12, 1985), 481-82.

<sup>7</sup> “Report on Recreation-Tourism in Prince Edward Island.” Toronto: Acres Research and Planning Ltd., Map, UPEI Library, PEI Collection.

<sup>8</sup> *Prince Edward Island Public Accounts, 1960-61*, (Charlottetown: Dillon Printing Company, UPEI Library, PEI Collection), 17. Also *Annual Report: Department of Tourist Development, 1969*. (Charlottetown: Dillon Printing Company, 1970, UPEI Library, PEI Collection), 32.

prominently than ever in the annual reports- the Department's annual budget was now attached to each report, and the list of publications which the Travel Bureau advertised with included circulation numbers.<sup>9</sup> These new features indicated the Island government wanted to be more systematic and managerial in handling tourism than it had been previously. Tourism was no longer just a haphazard phenomenon- it was an industry that could and would be planned.

### **Alexander Campbell and the Rejection of the Garden Myth**

The 1964 Centennial had helped to convince planners in Walter Shaw's government that tourism could be leveraged, that careful and deliberate inputs (provincial and federal funds) could bring predictable and profitable outputs (tourists and their money). Premier Shaw's government was not interested in just tourism, however. As Milne explains, the provincial government was now taking an interventionist approach to each and every sector of the Island economy:

Deliberate planning of the Island economy was undertaken in a new, comprehensive way. Surveys and studies by outside consultants from Toronto to Colorado Springs were mounted by government either separately or in conjunction with ARDA, the new federal development agency. A total of eight complete surveys and scores of consultants had been funded before the Shaw government in 1965 engaged H.G. Acres of Toronto to pull all the work together and propose a comprehensive plan.<sup>10</sup>

In 1966 Shaw's Conservatives were defeated in a close-run provincial election, but this loss did not endanger the province's planning initiative. The new Liberal government was led by Alexander Bradshaw Campbell, a 32 year-old lawyer from Summerside and the son of former premier Thane Campbell. The new premier believed

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<sup>9</sup> Various Annual Reports, 1965, 1969, 1970.

<sup>10</sup> David Milne, "Politics in a Beleaguered Garden," in Verner Smitheram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta, ed., The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980. (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982), 45.

in the necessity of change and the value of new ideas.<sup>11</sup> Whereas the near-octogenarian Shaw had always paid at least lip service to the Island's garden myth, Campbell rejected it outright, making progress modernity the central themes of his approach to governance:

For Premier Campbell... the appeal of the garden myth was considerably reduced. Not only were they [Campbell and the Liberals] sufficiently immune to its spell to see through its mawkish nostalgia and romanticism, but they were urbane enough to accept rather coolly the logical implications of the transformation overtaking Prince Edward Island. Imbued with reform zeal, they came not to bemoan the decline of the "Island way of life" but to accelerate it. Even if on close examination so many of the liberal policies turned out to be retreats from Shaw's administration and earlier, there is an undeniable shift in attitude, language, and policy focus. Indeed, in terms of Island conventions, the Campbell men can only be described as revolutionaries.<sup>12</sup>

Campbell's government dedicated itself to completing the comprehensive planning that Shaw had begun. Campbell recognized that the Island would need to modernize if it was to survive as a viable economic entity, and that it would need federal support to modernize. Luckily for Campbell, the federal government was also taking an increasingly comprehensive approach to tackling regional disparity.

When Campbell's Liberals came to power in 1966, there were already thirty-one federal or federal-provincial development projects in operation on Prince Edward Island. The total cost of these projects was \$813,975, of which \$499,679 had been provided by Ottawa through organizations such as the Atlantic Development Board (ADB) and ARDA. By the mid-1960s these organizations had already begun to recognize the value of a macro approach to regional development. The ADB's 1964-65 *Annual Report* acknowledged that earlier government programs had tended to be "...uncoordinated and to be focused on short-run considerations rather than being assessed within the broader

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<sup>11</sup> Blair Weeks, Ed., *Minding the House: A Biographical Guide to Prince Edward Island MLAs, 1873-1993*. (Charlottetown: The Acorn Press & The Association of Former Members of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 2002), 26.

<sup>12</sup> Milne, "Politics," 48.

framework.”<sup>13</sup> The Board believed it was necessary have a broad plan for the whole economy. Furthermore, the government needed to invest capital where private industry would not:

The Board incorporates three essential principles in regional economic development: joint and closely co-ordinated development of programs with the governments of the Atlantic provinces; a concern with the overall basic structure of the regional economy and with the causes of the current problems rather than their symptoms; and federal financial assistance for essential development projects for which satisfactory financial arrangements are not otherwise available.<sup>14</sup>

Planners now realized that the reasons for regional disparity lay in the basic structure of the local economy. Any serious attempt to correct regional inequalities would need government funding and extensive federal-provincial cooperation to correct the region’s *whole* economy- in short, a comprehensive plan imbued with Keynesian intent. The ADB’s broad mandate made reference to “an overall co-ordinated plan for the promotion of the economic growth of the Atlantic Region.”<sup>15</sup> The ADB would not be the organization to execute such a plan on Prince Edward Island, however.

The more successful ARDA was to be the conduit through which the federal and provincial governments would focus their efforts to develop the Island’s economy. ARDA had originally focused on combating rural poverty almost solely through “...improving the farmer’s well-being.”<sup>16</sup> By 1965 this was beginning to change. ARDA planners had come to recognize “...the growing evidence that rural poverty embraced more activity than just farming and that labour displaced by farm consolidation lacked the skills and mobility to find alternative employment.”<sup>17</sup> As a result, yet another sub-organization was formed within ARDA: the Fund for Rural Economic Development

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<sup>13</sup> Annual Report of the Atlantic Development Board – 1964-65, RG 25/35 Accession 3688, Series 3, Sub Series 6, File 183, PAPEI, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>16</sup> Careless, Initiative and Response, 72.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

(FRED). The fund was created to assist rural areas so economically depressed that no single ARDA development program could address their needs:

To be eligible, an area had to demonstrate both widespread low income and a reasonable economic potential which would benefit from joint, integrated, and diverse programs to develop infrastructure, occupational training, and labour mobility, to foster housing, education, health facilities and administrative reorganization.<sup>18</sup>

Prince Edward Island passed the FRED acceptance tests with flying colours. The province certainly had widespread low income levels; by the end of the 1960s, Islanders' standard of living still trailed far behind the national average, and seasonal unemployment ranged between 15 and 20%.<sup>19</sup> The Island also had a "reasonable economic potential" in the form of agriculture, fisheries, and the tourist industry. In 1966 the entire province was designated one of five areas in the country chosen for comprehensive, long-term development planning.<sup>20</sup>

### **Obstacles to Development**

Confident they had federal blessing, Campbell's government continued with the planning project Shaw had begun in 1965 and kept Acres Research and Planning as their main consultants. The project cost some \$322,000, with Ottawa paying \$214,666 of the price through the Canada Land Inventory program.<sup>21</sup> Many of the surveys Acres had collected had their doubts about tourism's potential as a development tool. Planners found two key problems in the industry that led to a low return on capital invested: The short tourist season, the low levels of investment and the over concentration of tourist facilities in certain areas of the province. If tourism was to develop further, it was concluded, these age-old obstacles to the industry's growth would have to be overcome.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 296.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Statistical Summary- April 1, 1965-March 31, 1966*. RG33, Box 3, Accession 2639, PEI Tourism 1272 16/04/03, PAPEI, 8.

Researcher George S. Larimer spent five days in June 1966 surveying tourist and recreational facilities in north-central and eastern Prince Edward Island for Acres. Larimer presented a guarded prognosis of tourism's potential. Tourism's age-old concentration in the centre of the province made it difficult to establish profitable tourist ventures elsewhere in the province:

Initially when I first surveyed the eastern part of the Island my recommendation would have been that money be spent to expand the tourist facilities there. However, because of the overwhelming, future drawing card of the Centennial Center as well as the activities in and around Charlottetown development of the eastern part does not seem feasible. Consequently, I would recommend that concentration be made to develop the agriculture of the eastern part of the Island. This should be the agricultural part of the Island. It could be developed quite readily. Leave the tourist industry as it is on the eastern part of the Island.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, a November 10, 1966 preliminary review of strategy for a comprehensive development plan noted that the short tourist season limited the industry's profitability:

Of prime importance is the fact that, because of the short season, the rate of return from this sector is very low. In 1964, for example, the total expenditure of tourists on the Island amounted to about \$7 million, of which only about \$3.5 million remained in P.E.I as a net addition to Island income, - hardly more than \$35 per capita... The conclusion to be drawn is that the pay-off to the economy from heavy investment in this sector will be low and, in planning to accommodate the rapid rate of growth of visitors to P.E.I., extreme caution should be exercised in how funds are spent.<sup>23</sup>

Island economist Jean-Louis Herivault agreed with this conclusion. Herivault produced two papers on tourism and the Island economy. The title of his first paper, *Seasonal Pattern of the Tourist Industry in Prince Edward Island*, spoke for itself:

The main feature of the commercial aspects of tourism in P.E.I. is the heavy concentration of business in Queen's county. Queen's county in all categories, gets more than 80% of the total revenue (sometimes 90%) while it has a much lower proportion of facilities offered. This increases in turn the viability of most of the Queen's county restaurants and

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Preliminary Review of Strategy and Programs for a Comprehensive Rural Development Plan for Prince Edward Island. November 11, 1966, RG33, Accession 2639, Box 3, PEI Tourism, Dev. Plan Strategies, PAPEI, 4.

lodging establishments as the competition is lower due to inadaptation of the supply to the demand.<sup>24</sup>

Herivault also noted that 65 percent of all the tourist businesses he had surveyed for his paper declared they had supplementary source of income. The low return on investment meant that many tourism operators would not commit themselves completely to the industry. Tourism was simply not a reliable enough source of income.<sup>25</sup>

Herivault's second paper dealt with a less obvious reason for tourism's low return on investment: leakage from tourism's multiplier effect. In its simplest form, the multiplier effect held that each dollar spent by a consumer in a closed economy creates ramifications that multiply its value. In the case of Prince Edward Island, each dollar spent by a tourist would then circulate through the Island economy, being spent repeatedly and contributing taxation revenue to the provincial government each time it was spent. Hence, every tourist dollar might actually be worth two or three dollars.<sup>26</sup> The only problem is that in the real world, economic systems are never completely closed. Most systems experienced "leakage" that lowered the multiplier.<sup>27</sup> In the case of Prince Edward Island, this leakage came in the form of imported goods necessary to maintain tourism.

Herivault explained that the province depended on the rest of Canada for much of its food and manufactured products: "Thus, when the tourist dollar is spent on an imported good or service the so-called multiplier is stopped at this stage."<sup>28</sup> The author

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<sup>24</sup> Jean-Louis Herivault, Seasonal pattern of the Tourist Industry In Prince Edward Island, Economics Department, Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, May 1969. UPEI Library, PEI Collection, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>26</sup> Jean-Louis Herivault, The Multiplier Effect in the Tourist Industry in Prince Edward Island, Department of Economics, University of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, December 1969. UPEI Library, PEI Collection, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Pugh and Chris Garratt, Keynes for Beginners. (Cambridge: Icon Books Ltd, 1993), 96.

<sup>28</sup> Herivault, Multiplier, 1.



concluded that the multiplier effect, rather than being 2 or 3 dollars for every tourist dollar spent, was actually closer to 1.25 to 1.44 dollars. Herivault thus believed the value of the tourism industry had been grossly overestimated: “It looks so that as long as Prince Edward Island is depending heavily on imports to provide adequate services to tourists, Tourism cannot be an industry on which the economy can rely entirely to promote expansion.”

### **Acres’ Final Report**

The above findings brought into question tourism’s ability to act as Prince Edward Island’s economic engine. However, it must be noted that no one was suggesting that the Island’s development would or should be focused solely around tourism. Acres planners had noted in 1966 that since tourist visitation was expected to increase in the order of 10% to 15% annually, *something* had to be done to at least prepare the industry for this influx.<sup>29</sup> Tourism was to be part of a comprehensive plan for the whole economy. Acres’ 1967 *Final Report*, while it cautioned against tourism-centred development, also noted the inevitability of tourism growth: “The challenge is not whether to accept or reject this change, but to focus on the nature of change and how best to preserve and enhance the values held by Islanders.”<sup>30</sup>

The *Final Report* suggested that tourism’s central problems- the short season, the geographical concentration of tourist facilities and the low return on investment- could be corrected by careful management. The government needed to attract high-quality tourist resorts in the Eastern and Western parts of the Island. These new resorts could serve as

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<sup>29</sup> Preliminary Review of Strategy, 4.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 103.

“growth poles,” themselves attracting new investment.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, special rates and increased advertising for the shoulder seasons of spring and fall would increase the industry’s profitability. Wildlife management would also become a priority, to attract more hunters and fishermen during the fall.<sup>32</sup>

The Report maintained that the suggested tourist development program would be low-cost:

The cost of carrying out the recreation-tourism development programmes can largely be met by re-allocation of funds from existing programmes into a new organizational framework. In the main, the problems of the Prince Edward Island recreation-tourism industry can be resolved through organization and planning, rather than by additional massive inputs of public funds.<sup>33</sup>

The 1967 *Final Report* would serve as a blueprint for a comprehensive development plan, but it would not be followed to the letter. When the finished plan was unveiled in 1969, tourism would receive the one the largest financial allocations.

### **The Comprehensive Development Plan**

On March 8, 1969, after countless surveys and years of negotiations between Charlottetown and Ottawa, the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) was signed into existence by federal and provincial politicians.<sup>34</sup> The “Plan,” as it came to be popularly known, transformed Campbell’s rhetoric of progress and modernization into reality. It was explained that the Plan’s goal was “...to create conditions in which the people of

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<sup>31</sup> This line of thinking was likely influenced by the growth pole theory of Francois Perroux. Perroux argued that efforts to strengthen economic focal points in slow-growth regions could start a process of self-sustaining economic growth. Donald Savoie, *Regional Economic Development: Canada’s Search For Solutions*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 5-6. At the same time, Edward MacDonald notes that the Plan itself was not based around growth pole theory, which only became fashionable some time after the CDP had been implemented. *Stronghearted*, 346.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 126, 139.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>34</sup> MacDonald *Stronghearted*, 296.

Prince Edward Island can create viable economic enterprises for themselves.”<sup>35</sup> The CDP was to be a means of making the Island economy prosperous and self-sufficient:

In other words, the main strategy of development is *not* to provide infusions of subsidies, either capital or operating, into particular activities, but rather to restore flexibility and capability, both in the economy and in the institutions of the Province. This effect will be to give the Island a facility it does not now have to make rapid adjustments in the face of changing opportunities.<sup>36</sup>

The province’s self-sufficiency was to be measured in terms of an increase in net provincial product and an increase in personal income per capita. In both areas, development planners wanted to see an annual increase of approximately 7 percent above the levels that might have been expected without the plan.<sup>37</sup> In order to achieve these goals, the CDP was willing to put money where its mouth was. The Plan proposed to spend a staggering \$725 million, including federal contributions of \$225 million, over the course of fifteen years. The funding arrangement divided the Plan into three five-year phases. This chapter deals with the first and most important phase of the Plan, which began on April 1, 1969 and was to end no earlier than March 31, 1974. Phase one was budgeted at \$242 million, of which the federal government would provide no more than \$125 million.<sup>38</sup> The money was to go towards the radical redesigning of Prince Edward Island’s economy and society.

Development planners believed that prosperity could not be achieved without fundamental social change. The social-economic structure of Island life was to be given an injection of rational planning based around cost-benefit values. Even the provincial government itself was to be transformed. Planners believed that the Island government

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<sup>35</sup> Canada, Dept. of Regional Economic Expansion. Development plan for Prince Edward Island ; a 15-year federal-provincial program for social and economic advancement, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1969), 24.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 27-28.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 84.

was not yet capable of implementing radical changes. A small army of technocrats from Ottawa arrived on the Island and created a new Department of Development. The Department was designed to oversee the implementation of CDP programs until the provincial civil service had been sufficiently ‘modernized.’<sup>39</sup>

Government restructuring was only the tip of the iceberg. Every sector of the provincial economy was to undergo restructuring and development in conjunction with one another. Almost everything on (and some things that were off) the Island fell under one of the CDP’s broad program areas: Resource Adjustment and Development, Social Development, Resource Supporting and Commercial Services and Implementation.<sup>40</sup>

Agriculture had always been the cornerstone of the provincial economy and the Plan acknowledged this status. It was felt, however, that Island farmers were not on a “commercial footing.” The province’s agriculture industry had fallen behind in the nation’s march towards large-scale agribusiness. Planners wanted to “...bring about full economic exploitation of the Island’s large and potentially profitable resources for agriculture.”<sup>41</sup> The CDP proposed to reduce the number of Island farms to 2,500 larger and more profitable “commercial farm units.” The net value of the remaining farms would be doubled through a process of modern agricultural techniques and land consolidation.<sup>42</sup> Owners of low-income farms were to be bought out by the government. The land would be assessed to determine its best use –whether for agriculture, tourism,

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<sup>39</sup> Donald Nemetz, “Managing Development,” in Verner Smitheram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta, ed., *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980*. (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982), 157-158

<sup>40</sup> Canada. *Development Plan For Prince Edward Island*, Contents.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 33 In 1961, there had been some 7,335 farms. MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 259.

manufacturing or forestry- and the former owner would be relocated and retrained to work an expanding sector of the economy such as tourism or manufacturing.

The fisheries were to be treated in much the same way as agriculture. The fishing facilities were to be consolidated in a smaller number of ports and the number of fishermen was to be reduced so that the income per fisherman could be raised.<sup>43</sup> Again, those leaving the industries would be relocated if necessary and retrained in another sector of the economy.

The Plan's new vision for Island society did not just include the private sector. The Island's 370 disparate school boards were to be consolidated into 5 districts and provided with much-improved facilities and standards.<sup>44</sup> Adult education was to be introduced as well, with the goal of ensuring a "...high degree of labour mobility."<sup>45</sup> The CDP also made allowances for studies to determine how best to reform and consolidate the health and welfare services.<sup>46</sup> No one could accuse the Plan of not being comprehensive. By involving itself in almost every aspect of Island life, economic, social and otherwise, the CDP was forging a brave new world in which economies of scale would reign. Tradition and the old Island way of life were now seen as obstacles to progress and prosperity. Despite this, the province's old garden myth had not completely outlived its usefulness. It still had one role left to play, in Prince Edward Island's tourism industry.

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-48.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

## Tourism in the New Garden

Development Planners did not, however, follow the advice of the Acres 1967 *Final Report* and keep investment in tourism low. The CDP had big dreams for tourism, and big money to match. The industry was to receive more \$12.7 million during the first phase of the Plan. This was less than the almost \$35 million earmarked for agriculture, but it was still one of the larger sums associated with the CDP. Much like every other sector of the economy, tourism was to be radically redesigned. Unlike agriculture and the fisheries, planners wanted to expand tourism operations. Like the Acres *Final Report*, the Plan accepted that future tourism growth was inevitable. Planners intended to help the tourism industry take best advantage of this growth by addressing the issues that Acres had identified as obstacles to further development:

The objective of the program, therefore, is to assist the development that must take place in the face of the pressure of demand and to provide the degree of regulation necessary to optimize the returns to the Island's economy. In particular, through the lengthening of the season, through the development of facilities that will encourage higher per capita spending, and through regulation and control to prevent unsightly development, the objective is to increase total tourist expenditure to \$18 million by the tenth year of the Plan.<sup>47</sup>

The 1970 Annual Report of the Department of Tourist Development stated the CDP's tourism goals even more succinctly:

--lengthening of the tourist season  
 --encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more  
 --more even distribution of the tourist industry over the Island by means of scenic corridor systems  
 --provision of easier Government credit for approved tourist development.<sup>48</sup>

As with every other aspect of Island society, the industry was to be consolidated, so that tourism could be more competitive and better regulated. A new planning unit was added to the department to implement CDP programming and act as a liaison with the

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>48</sup> *Annual Report: Department of Tourist Development, Prince Edward Island, 1970*. (Charlottetown: Dillion Printing Company, 1971), 14.

Department of Development. The unit was yet another example of the new ethos of planning that had been gradually winning over the tourism department. The CDP had now made the ethos official policy.

The CDP's most ambitious tourism consolidation scheme was perhaps the development and control of five "integrated recreational complexes" which were to be located throughout the province: "These will be centres of activity, each having recreational entertainment facilities, spacious recreation areas, attractive accommodation units and planned vacation cottage developments." Planners hoped these complexes would act as growth poles, spreading tourism more evenly across the Island. It is interesting to note that this new interest in "elite" tourism, with its high-end resorts, was in direct conflict with the longtime approach of the department of tourism of attempting to increase general tourist numbers, both high-end and low end. As with agriculture and fishing, planners wanted large-scale, highly-profitable, tourism operations.

Arguments between mass and class notwithstanding, work on the resorts began almost immediately. The first two were to be located in the tourism have-not regions of eastern Kings County and western Prince County. Planners believed the high-end resort would encourage further investment and tourist development in the areas.<sup>49</sup> The Kings county resort began with a golf course in Brudenell in 1969. A golf course and resort at Mill River in Prince County followed close on its heels, as did a rather mountainless ski resort at Brookvale, an attempt to create a winter tourist season. Construction went ahead relentlessly. By June 12, 1970 a 50-unit motel was constructed and opened at Brudenell.<sup>50</sup> This was only a beginning, however; the Plan estimated that at least 6,000

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, which only became fashionable some time after the CDP had been implemented. *Stronghearted*, 346.

<sup>50</sup> *Annual Report*, 1970, 19

new, high-quality accommodation units would have to be built to take proper advantage of tourism growth.

The CDP's tourism dreams did not end with improved and increased accommodation. The Island's transportation network was to be altered to better serve the tourism industry. In 1970 work was begun on the creation of scenic, tourist-oriented highway corridors, designed to draw visitors away from the centre of the province and into the less-traveled eastern and western extremities.<sup>51</sup>

Surprisingly, improvements in the Island's ferry service were put in place without the Plan's help. To correct the ferry terminal bottleneck problem which had given George Fraser so much grief in 1968, two new large car ferries, the French-built Lucy Maud Montgomery and the John Hamilton Grey, named after the Prince Edward Island father of Confederation, were purchased by the federal Department of Transport in 1969. New ferry terminals were built at Borden and Cape Tormentine to accommodate the larger ships.<sup>52</sup> The CDP was not mute on ferry issues. It suggested that in addition to the two new icebreaking ferries, the Department of Transport should purchase two smaller summertime-only ferries to help alleviate tourist lineups.<sup>53</sup> In 1971, the Vacationland and Holiday Island were added to the fleet. This was the first time Island ferries had been designed solely to handle tourist traffic.<sup>54</sup>

The CDP's accommodation and transportation programs were very ambitious, but perhaps the most important component of the Plan's tourism operation was grooming the Island's image. Acres 1967 *Final Report* had concluded that it was necessary "To

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>52</sup> *Annual Report: Department of Tourist Development, Prince Edward Island, 1969.* (Charlottetown: Dillion Printing Company, 1970), 14.

<sup>53</sup> Canada. *Development Plan for Prince Edward Island*, 59.

<sup>54</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 305.



maintain the park-like atmosphere of Prince Edward Island” if the tourism industry was to grow and thrive.<sup>55</sup> A failure to do so would almost certainly lead to disaster, “...since there will be less reason for people to travel long distances to see something little different from any other place.”<sup>56</sup>

### **Grooming the Garden**

Of course, the Island’s tourism boosters had long been promoting the province’s unique brand of anti-modernism, and with great success. The anti-modern aesthetic became all the more poignant in the face of the social upheaval in North American society in the late 1960s. Van Doren and Lollar note that social transformation was part and parcel of the era:

As the society moved into this new era of mass mobility, social reform movements gained momentum. The civil rights movements reached a zenith and minorities began to insist on services and amenities once denied to them. A vocal youth movement in the 1960s sparked a desire to do things their way. The “Me generation” changed traditional mores regarding work, sexual attitudes, marriage and work ethics... Traditional ways were gradually bent and reshaped by all these social movements as the desire for new lifestyles emerged.<sup>57</sup>

In Canada too, the youth culture was vocal and questioned tradition. Historians Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English note that the youth culture “... gave the decade [the 60s] its predominant image, that of a boisterous uprising of the young that threatened and sometimes tumbled over the fundamental institutions of our society.”<sup>58</sup> The confusion and uncertainty that came with these transformations in North American society made any region that was perceived to embody traditional and unchanging values all the more attractive as a place to get away from it all. Tourism operators were well aware of this fact. An article in the June 1968 edition of *Tourist Talk*, the Tourist

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>57</sup> Carlton S. Van Doren and Sam A. Lollar, “The Consequences...” in *Annals of Tourism Research*, 481.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English, *Canada since 1945: Power, Politics and Provincialism*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 334.

Association's recently-created newsletter, featured an article entitled "Violence and Tourism." The article noted that urban social upheaval and racial violence would benefit the Island's tourist industry in the short run:

If we are to look at the immediate results of the violence [in the United States] we will undoubtedly receive short-run gains from these outbreaks. We in the tourist industry can expect more Canadians to travel within Canada rather than risk any confrontation with violence in the U.S. It is difficult to determine just exactly what Americans will do in the face of mounting racial unrest within their borders. Some will decide to venture our way to avoid difficulties they would encounter within their own country.<sup>59</sup>

The article did warn that as violence and unrest began to negatively affect the American economy, it would ultimately affect the Canadian economy, and therefore Prince Edward Island as well. The article argued that the Island could do its part to prevent this by promoting peace, understanding and neighborliness: "So let us welcome our visitors with true Island HOSPITALITY regardless of ethnic, racial or national origin."<sup>60</sup>

Island tourism boosters had continued to perfect and promote the province's image relentlessly throughout the 1960s. In 1965, the second season of the Charlottetown Festival featured a musical version of L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* performed on the main stage of the new Confederation Centre.<sup>61</sup> The theatrical version of the novel has remained in production ever since, perpetuating the Island's anti-modern aesthetic alongside the province's promotional literature and films.

Travel writers continued to buy into the Island's garden myth. In a North America that was quickly maturing into a post-industrial society, many were tempted to see Prince Edward Island increasingly come to be seen as one of the final remnants of

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<sup>59</sup> *Tourist Talk*, Vol. 2, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1968, RG32, Box 98-004, PAPEI, 1.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>61</sup> John Patterson, "Anne of Green Gables Returns to Native PEI," Confederation Centre Press Release, N.D., RG 7, Series 17, File 966 Provincial Secretary Fonds, PAPEI.

another, more innocent era. Richard Atcheson, editor of the American magazine *Holiday*, gave a tongue-in-cheek account of his expectations regarding the Island:

PEI (As the natives call it) was said to have lovely beaches and a dulcet climate, great lobsters and clams, and a peace and serenity not extant elsewhere on the continent since Samuel F. Morse invented the telegraph. All phones were guaranteed to be still on the crank; all villages were sworn to be quaintly rustic; and the population was said to be given over almost wholly to the cheerful tilling of the soil and the fishing of the sea.<sup>62</sup>

Atcheson was well aware the calculated image construction Island tourism boosters were engaging in. However, even this savvy metropolitan journalist could not deny that the province's garden myth was a powerful ideal. Atcheson felt its influence on his visit to Green Gables.

It is a pleasant, homely place, and as I wandered the grounds I was pestered by a nagging feeling that I had been here before. And then it hit me: of course, this was the home of my childhood. This island, cut off from time, is the place where Dick and Jane and Spot and Fluff grew up.... I didn't live at Green Gables either- but somehow, in my tiny mind, I did. And I suppose that in a funny, unconscious way, I have been trying to return to that nonexistent world all my life.<sup>63</sup>

Atcheson was not alone in equating the Island with his long-lost childhood. A *Toronto Star* article by American Michael Kernan made the connection even more blatant, with the title "Enter the meadows of your childhood:"

Prince Edward Island looks like a child's farm set: Any minute you expect a giant hand to reach through the sky and set down another horsey next to the red barn. It is the kind of place where you have to get out of the car every now and then to stroll through the fields because they are not just ordinary fields; they are the meadows of one's childhood -- riotous with color, with the blue of cornflowers, the red of devil's paintbrush, the yellow of buttercup and black-eyed Susan, and in August they are bursting with raspberries as well.<sup>64</sup>

Prince Edward Island's marketing strategy had been a complete success. The Island was not just a place out of time; it was the last bastion of an older, more natural way of life. It

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<sup>62</sup>Atcheson, Richard, "Go: Prince Edward Island- The Quiet Place," in *Holiday*, N.D., RG32, Box 98-004, PAPEI, 12.

<sup>63</sup> Atcheson, "Go: Prince Edward Island," in *Holiday*, 16-17.

<sup>64</sup> Michael Kernan, "Enter the meadows of your childhood," in *The Toronto Star*, N.D. , RG32, Box 98-004, PAPEI.

was a miniature playground where visitors could, however briefly, relive the innocence and wonder of their lost childhood.

### **The Plan and the Myth**

Tourism's use of the garden myth presented a paradox for development planners. On one hand, the signing of the CDP had been a trumpet call sounding the demise of Prince Edward Island's old order. In the words of MacDonald: "The Development Plan assumed that for Islanders to have what other people had, they must live as other people lived. And if they lived as other people lived, they must be as other people were."<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, planners acknowledged that the Island's tourism industry, which was one of the central features of their efforts to modernize the provinces, depended upon the garden myth for its success. Of course, the CDP disguised its use of the garden myth behind a veil of plannerspeak: Allowances were made for "general planning control," which was meant to "...to preserve the natural environment of the countryside." These environmental controls was considered "...to be equally important to the successful implementation of the concept as the capital inputs."<sup>66</sup>

The CDP had not single-handedly destroyed the garden myth. Since the start of the post-war era, modernity had gradually been creeping across the Northumberland Strait and infiltrating Island society. Improvements such as highway construction and rural electrification had brought with them the products of the modern world: dishwashers, televisions and automobiles, to name a few.<sup>67</sup> Other signs of the outside world had slowly been making their way to the Island. By the 1960s, mainland-based chain stores, such as Eaton's and Zellers had arrived on the Island, and were squeezing

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<sup>65</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 339.

<sup>66</sup> Canada. *Development Plan for Prince Edward Island*, 40.

<sup>67</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 253.

Island-based business such as Holman's out of business.<sup>68</sup> In the countryside, the number of farmers had steadily declined throughout the post-war era- the Island's approximate farm population had decreased from 47,900 in 1949 to 25,000 in 1969.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, around the urban centres of Charlottetown and Summerside, the modern phenomenon of suburbs had begun to spring up.<sup>70</sup> The process of modernization had been so subtle that many Islanders had not even been aware of it, at least not until the arrival of the Plan.

The Island's transformation from a traditional rural society to a modern, post-industrial one, a process that has been termed the *Break*, had begun long before the signing of the CDP. What the Plan had done, however, was make modernization an official policy. For some Islanders, the CDP's vision of modernization was a hard pill to swallow. It seemed that the Plan had summarily dismissed the traditions and values Islanders had built their society upon. Tourism, with its key position in the CDP's modernization strategy and its apparent belief that the garden myth was only useful as a marketing tool, became an obvious target for traditionalist opponents of the Plan.

As early as 1969, the methodology and goals of the CDP, particularly with regard to tourism, were already being questioned. Opposition leader Walter Shaw referred to the CDP as the "incomprehensible development plan." Another Conservative MLA, Leo Rossiter, put forward a motion in the provincial legislature to cut tourism spending nearly in half. Tourism was portrayed as a threat to the Island's traditional agrarian way of life:

Speaking in support of Mr. Rossiter's motion, Walter Dingwell (PC-2<sup>nd</sup> Kings) said he thought very few farmers are being provided with the proper services. The agriculture industry, if given the chance, would provide more toward the Island's economy than the

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>69</sup> William Janssen, "Agriculture in Transition," in *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980*. Ed. Verner Smitheram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta. Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982

<sup>70</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 116.

whole tourist industry. Dr. Cyrill Sinnott (PC-5<sup>th</sup> Kings) said that Islanders were in effect paying for tourists' vacations. He said this industry is highly overrated, and that half the money to be spent on tourism would serve more useful purposes if it went toward short term credit in the agricultural and fishing industries.<sup>71</sup>

The motion was defeated, but Campbell's government soon found that opposition was also coming from within his own party. Health Minister Kier Clark became convinced that the influx of CDP bureaucrats from away would destroy the independence of the provincial government and declared that "We have bartered our provincial autonomy for pieces of silver."<sup>72</sup> Clark left the government to sit as an independent, and the resulting loss of the Liberal's slim majority forced Campbell to call an election in 1970. Campbell campaigned on his promise to continue with the Plan and won handily, taking 27 of 32 seats in the provincial Legislature.<sup>73</sup> Islanders, who not surprisingly wanted to have a similar standard of living as the inhabitants of their fellow provinces, had decided to give modernity a chance. Yet already trouble was brewing for the champions of the Plan. As historian Wayne MacKinnon has observed and the development planners were to learn, "There is a fundamental conflict between Islanders' desire to maintain their way of life and improve their standard of living."<sup>74</sup>

### **Reconstructing the Island**

Political scientist David Milne has noted that "...the Development Plan had given an explicit status to tourist industry that simply could not be harmonized with the traditional model of the Island as a garden of independent yeomen."<sup>75</sup> Opposition to the CDP and its tourism policies quickly took on an anti-modernist bent. Sociologist John

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<sup>71</sup> Move Defeated To Halve Tourist Dept. Estimates, Newspaper Clipping, 1969, RG 34, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

<sup>72</sup> MacDonald, Stronghearted, 300.

<sup>73</sup> Weeks, Minding the House, 209.

<sup>74</sup> As quoted in MacDonald Stronghearted, 339.

<sup>75</sup> Milne, "Politics in the Garden," 57.

Urry notes that opposition to tourism and opposition to modernization often go hand in hand:

Moreover, some local objections to tourism are in fact objections to 'modernity' or to modern society itself: to mobility and change, to new kinds of personal relationships, to a reduced role of family and tradition, and to different cultural configurations.<sup>76</sup>

On Prince Edward Island, most of the vocal opposition to tourism was rooted in the very garden myth the province's tourism boosters had so successfully exploited in order to develop the tourism industry.

One case in point was the work of Island photographer Marc Gallant. In 1971, with the help of a \$4000 Canada Council grant, Gallant created a photography exhibit that dealt with the visual pollution created by tourism. One set of photos featured Gallant's ideal Island: tranquil fields and quaint farmhouses, what Gallant called "a tourist paradise without vulgarity or absurdity."<sup>77</sup> A second set of photos displayed the visual scars left by vulgar and absurd tourism; that is, the kitschy attractions that had begun to appear along Island highways. Gallant singled out a replica African village to drive home his main point: "maybe we should have a P.E.I. Place on the main highway of Swaziland. It's be [sic] no more ridiculous than an African mud hut on the Trans-Canada Highway in P.E.I."<sup>78</sup>

Gallant had also commented on a photo of the Island's Car-Life Museum in his display:

"What's a car museum *really* doing in P.E.I.?" asks Gallant. "It's not as if cars have ever been a distinctive feature of the Island's life. We had cars later than any other province - my father remembers the first car to be seen in North Rustico, and he's only 64."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. (London: SAGE Publications, 1990), 59.

<sup>77</sup> "Marc Gallant says a mouthful with his camera," *The Evening Patriot*, Friday, November 12, 1971. RG32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> David Cobb, "Tourist Traps," in *Canadian Magazine*, November, 20, 1971.

To actually have witnessed the first car in the Rustico area, Gallant's father would have to have been about 110 years old. The first car on the Island (and the likely the first car in Canada) had been a steam-powered oddity Father George Belcourt of Rustico had imported from the United States in 1866.<sup>80</sup> Besides, in 1971 Gallant's father would hardly have been alone in remembering the modern introduction of the automobile. There were likely many 64-year olds in small rural communities right across Canada who could recall the first car to arrive in their particular hamlet. Gallant's comment ignored the Island's postwar binge of highway building and the pivotal role the automobile had played in the growth of tourism for the last 40 years before 1971. It could be argued that the province was actually a fitting site for a car museum, since cars had transformed postwar Prince Edward Island.

In the eyes of Gallant, the car was simply another imported piece of modernity infringing on the 'Island way of life.' Much as the "new nationalism" of the 1960s had attempted to redefine Canadian culture in opposition to its American counterpart, Gallant and his photo display were trying to redefine Prince Edward Island to redefine itself in opposition to the outside world, in opposition to modernity. Islanders had never been very concerned about safeguarding their identity because they had never felt it was threatened. When the CDP overtly attempted to alter the province's sense of itself, Islanders were forced to ask themselves who they were, and why they were different.

It is over-simplifying to say that some Islanders were stubbornly clinging to a dead past. Rather, what was happening was a debate about the Island's future.

Sociologist Dean MacCannell refers to efforts such as Gallant's photo display as

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<sup>80</sup> The contraption was crashed on its inaugural drive through Rustico. Boyd Beck and Edward MacDonald. Everyday and Extraordinary: Almanac of the History of Prince Edward Island. (Summerside: Williams & Crue, 1999), 43.



*constructed ethnicity*. They were attempts to build a “correct” image of an ethnicity, in this case Islanders, “...in opposition to forces of assimilation into the Western mainstream, [and] to gain widespread acceptance of that image as a model for actual behavior.”<sup>81</sup> The reality behind the garden myth Gallant was promoting had begun to disappear long before the introduction of the CDP. The garden being constructed by Gallant and his colleagues was no more authentic than the garden image that had been so successfully marketed by the Island’s tourism boosters. While tourism used the myth to transform the Island way of life into a commodity to be sold, traditionalists understood the myth as “...rhetorical weaponry in their dealings with one another.” In the words of MacCannell: “...it is not just ethnicity anymore, but it is understood as rhetoric, as symbolic expression with a purpose or a use value in the larger system.”<sup>82</sup>

This rhetoric was put to good use by the press, both on the Island and off. A November 1971 article in *The Canadian Magazine* by journalist David Cobb carried the following headline: “Tourist Traps, Billboards and a Plaster Kangaroo: How our prettiest province could become a bargain basement Disneyland”:

Prince Edward Island, home of Confederation, 110,000 inhabitants, and the humble spud, is one of the untouched jewels of Canada. Unspoiled, unsoiled, unwrapped by chewing gum wrappers and pop cans, it stands out there in the Gulf of St. Lawrence with a faintly rustic air, a potato leaf clenched gently between its teeth, teeth as white as the miles and miles of its chaste beaches. So goes the Island’s vision of itself, and to a large extent it is the Island seems to the rest of Canada. It is a vision ardently promoted by the Island’s hucksters: “Canada’s Garden Province,” is one of the big selling phrases; “Garden of the Gulf,”.... Canada’s Eden! And as with all Edens, the Serpent is preparing to strike.<sup>83</sup>

Much like Gallant, Cobb was concerned primarily with the micro rather than the macro effects of tourism- how it altered the landscape rather than whether or not it provided

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<sup>81</sup> Dean MacCannell, “Reconstructed Ethnicity: Tourism and Cultural Identity in Third World Communities.” *Annals of Tourism Research*, (Vol. 11, 1984), 376.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 385.

<sup>83</sup> David Cobb, “Tourist Traps, Billboards and a Plaster Kangaroo: How our prettiest province could become a bargain basement Disneyland” in *Star Weekly: the Canadian Magazine*, Nov 20, 1971. UPEI Library, PEI Collection, Tourism Vertical Files.

much-desired economic growth. But how could tourism provide economic growth, Cobb asked, if the province was just another Coney Island? Didn't tourists come to see the *Island* way of life? Cobb's article addressed what MacCannell identifies as the primary contradiction of modern mass tourism:

Modern mass tourism is based on two seemingly contradictory tendencies: the international homogenization of the culture of the tourists and the artificial preservation of local ethnic groups and attractions so that they can be consumed as tourist experiences.<sup>84</sup>

Mark Lorne Bonnell, premier Campbell's minister of tourism and development since 1966, attempted to defend the industry. Bonnell claimed that many of the worst excesses had occurred before his government had taken over in 1966, and noted that besides, it was hardly the government's right or duty to legislate taste.<sup>85</sup> While opponents of the Plan may have noted that while this was true, they could have replied that the provincial government and the CDP had begun to legislate nearly everything else.

The CDP actually *had* made allowances for legislating taste with its "environmental controls" but did surprisingly little to prevent development that would not be in keeping with the Island's innocent, unspoiled image. One case in point was the Kitten Club established in 1971 at the CDP-funded Brudenell Resort. Waitresses at the club wobbled around in high-heels, net stockings, corsets, kitten ears and whiskers, serving drinks to wealthy patrons. Many felt that the government was not just legislating taste- it was legislating *bad* taste, and letting taxpayers foot the bill. The October 1971 front page of the *Canadian Magazine* featured a full-page photo of one of the Kittens, with the headline: "Hi! I'm Kitten Patsy! Can I Get You a Drink?": Another \$1.1 million

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<sup>84</sup> MacCannell, "Reconstructed Ethnicity," 387.

<sup>85</sup> Cobb, "Tourist Traps," 76.

Development Project, Brought to You by Your Tax Dollars.”<sup>86</sup> Not surprisingly, the Club was a public-relations disaster and closed not long after it had been opened.

### **Protesting Tourism**

It is impossible to identify how widespread opposition to modernity, as envisaged by the Plan, was among Islanders. The 1970 election indicated that the province was in favour of progress, but that did not mean they were in favour of progress at any cost, and there was some widespread demonstrations to that effect. Case in point was the government’s attempt to create another park in King’s county to use as another “growth pole” for the region. As soon as this initiative was publicly announced, it was met with vocal opposition from the farmers whose land was located within the confines of the proposed park. Bonnell made reassurances that farmers residing in the land designated for a park would be allowed to continue farming if they wished, but this did not quell discontent.<sup>87</sup> Finally, at a public meeting with residents of Fairfield on June 28, 1973, Premier Campbell tore up the parks agreement, much to the approval of the farmers.<sup>88</sup>

Protests were not restricted to the potential inhabitants of future national parks. Farmers across the Island were unhappy with the Plan. When 1971 proved to be the worst year for agriculture yet, the confrontational National Farmer’s Union (NFU) organized a protest. At the height of the tourist season, farmers used their tractors to clog the Island’s main tourist highways.<sup>89</sup> The fact that the NFU had chosen to protest by interfering with tourism, rather than gathering at the legislature or some other symbol of government authority, indicates that tourism was now perceived as the government’s

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<sup>86</sup> “Hi! I’m Kitten Patsy! Can I Get You a Drink?” in *Star Weekly: The Canadian Magazine*, Oct 30, 1971. UPEI Library, PEI Collection, Tourism Vertical Files.

<sup>87</sup> *Islanders Urged Not to Sit Back*, Newspaper Clipping

<sup>88</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 316.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

primary concern by the angry farmers. The fact that Campbell disparagingly referred to the farmers as a “special interest group” served to demonstrate that agriculture no longer held its privileged position in Island society.<sup>90</sup> The protests also suggested that tourism was closely associated with the CDP’s push for modernity.

Even acolytes of the Plan began to turn against tourism. The Prince Edward Island Rural Development Council (RDC) had originally been a grassroots movement organized to combat rural poverty, but in 1970 it signed an agreement with the province where it would receive funding and act as a liaison between ordinary Islanders and the CDP’s technocrats. By 1971 however, the RDC was already publicly questioning the Plan’s emphasis on tourism:

The Rural Development Council of P.E.I. in its brief to Cabinet Wednesday said general public reaction is that the financial input in the development of the tourist industry in this province is excessive and that it is difficult to justify in the light of other provincial priorities.<sup>91</sup>

Deputy Development Minister Richard Higgins attempted to defend the government’s tourism expenditures, but had to admit that such expenditure “...from an emotional point of view, may not be popular with farmers and fishermen.”<sup>92</sup>

Campbell’s government soon found itself backpedaling on numerous issues and rethinking its views regarding the garden myth. Campbell was soon revising the Plan’s agricultural objectives to make room for the “family farm” and “community values.” Milne notes that “The conversion was so adeptly handled that in an article in the *Canadian Magazine* a cartoon depicted Campbell as the Island’s veritable Jolly Green Giant towering over the lush Green Garden of the Gulf.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Milne, “Politics in the Garden,” 49.

<sup>91</sup> “Government rationalizes expenditures on tourism,” *The Evening Patriot*, November 13, 1971, 3.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Milne, “Politics in the Garden,” 50.

The Department of Tourism received a facelift as well. Late in 1971, minister Bonnell resigned from the provincial government to accept one of the Island's senate seats.<sup>94</sup> Campbell took the chance to overhaul the department, which was restructured and renamed. Even the new name, the Department of the Environment and Tourism, suggested a new, more subtle understanding of what "tourism" was. The Department was divided into three branches: The Environmental Control Commission, charged with managing the Island's fish and wildlife, the Land Use Service Centre, which was to focus on land development and management, and Tourist Services, which contained the old Travel Bureau and Parks Division, as well as the new Resorts Division and the Accommodations Inspection Division.<sup>95</sup> The new Minister was the Hon. Robert C. Schurman, a former radio announcer from Summerside.<sup>96</sup> When Premier Campbell announced the creation of the new department, he declared: "It is of great concern to the Government that the growth of the tourist industry be achieved hand-in-hand with the maintenance of an environment from which citizens and visitors will derive maximum benefit and enjoyment."<sup>97</sup> It was perhaps fitting that at the same time as the government was trying to shift tourism's image and impact among the Island public, the chief architect of the province's postwar tourism industry should retire. In 1971, travel bureau chief and deputy minister George Fraser resigned after nearly twenty years of service to the Island's tourism industry.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> "Dr. Lorne Bonnell Among Four Appointed to Senate," newspaper clipping, RG 32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

<sup>95</sup> Annual Report: Department of Tourist Development, Prince Edward Island, 1971. (Charlottetown: Dillon Printing Company, 1972), UPEI Library, PEI Collection, 5.

<sup>96</sup> Weeks, Minding the House, 181.

<sup>97</sup> "New Gov't Department Announced By Premier: Environment, Tourism Under Mr. Schurman" Saturday, December 4, 1971. Newspaper clipping, RG 32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

<sup>98</sup> "George Fraser Quits Travel Bureau Post," Newspaper clipping, RG 32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

Despite the departmental makeover and the departure of tourism's old guard, Schurman still felt it was necessary to comment upon opposition to tourism on Prince Edward Island:

I have no hesitation on stating that I firmly believe that ten years from now we will smile in retrospect at the expressions of concern from people of your group and others relative to the establishments now in place throughout our provincial parks system, and at Mill River and Brudenell. These supplementary initiatives by government, I believe, are necessary to encourage and affect a more equitable distribution of the tourist traffic and dollars across our beloved and beautiful province.<sup>99</sup>

Schurman also thanked Tourist Association president Chandler for being candid in a recent television interview. Schurman noted that Chandler "did not appear to be opposed to any of the major efforts government has put forth in the interest of tourist development" and added "That type of opinion has to of course impress the politician."<sup>100</sup>

The newer, friendlier tourism department would not end the ongoing debate about the Island's future, however. In fact, debate only intensified and then finally peaked during the province's 1973 centennial celebrations. The celebrations would become an ideological battleground for competing views of the Island's past, present and future.

### **The Last Centennial**

By 1973 Canada's bout with 'centennialitis' was finally coming to a close. The centennial flames had been fanned continuously throughout the 1960s, by 1964 and 1967 as well as numerous anniversary celebrations in other provinces. British Columbia alone had celebrated no less than four centennials between 1958 and 1971.<sup>101</sup> Prince Edward Island's 1973 festival, held to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Island's entry into Confederation in 1873, was to be Canada's last major Centennial celebration.

<sup>99</sup> New Gov't Department Announced..." Newspaper clipping, RG 32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

<sup>100</sup> Speech by Honourable Robert C. Schurman to the PEI Tourist Association, Saturday, November 6, 1971, Newspaper clipping, RG 32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI, 2.

<sup>101</sup> "In B.C., Centennials are a way of life," Newspaper clipping, RG 32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

A 1973 Centennial Commission was created in 1969 to begin planning. Then-Provincial Secretary T. Earle Hickey was appointed chairman on June 25, 1969, but was replaced by Schurman in 1971. However, Schurman unexpectedly passed away in January 1973 and Provincial Secretary Gordon Bennett took over as chairman. Organizers considered the centennial was a perfect chance to reinforce the tourism ethos among the Island inhabitants. Centennials had always inspired enthusiasm among Islanders, and organizers hoped this celebration would resurrect the ‘spirit of 1864’ one more time. A Centennial Celebration Act was officially assented to on July 25, 1970, which announced that “The participation of individual Islanders in CENTENNIAL ’73 is the primary single aim of planning.”<sup>102</sup>

Individual Islanders got involved in the Centennial in record numbers. At the end of the day there were 21 commissioners, an executive staff of 36, some 100 community committees consisting of more than 1,500 Islanders, 22 provincial committees with upwards of 200 members, and as with all centennials, an army of volunteers. The massive scale of involvement produced, among other things, approximately 400 new programs in the province for the year 1973.<sup>103</sup> The large participation also proved that at least when it came to centennials, many Islanders were not averse to tourism. As with the 1964 and 1939 celebrations, the commissioners and executive staff of the Commission served as a veritable who’s who of Charlottetown’s business and political elite. For the elite that had no actual position with the Commission there was always inclusion in the Honorary Board of Directors, which included Senator Elsie Inman as well as three other

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<sup>102</sup> 1973 Centennial Commission Final Report, (Charlottetown: Queen’s Printer, 1973), RG 34/15, PAPEI, 17.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 300.

senators, three former Island premiers, all four Island MPs, two MLAs, a rear-admiral, a Chief Justice and 1964 Centennial architect Frank MacKinnon.<sup>104</sup>

The celebrations would, for the most part, follow the model of 1964, minus any \$5-million centrepiece such as the Confederation Centre. The celebrations and projects themselves saw much more money than 1964 had, however; Ottawa bankrolled 1973 to the tune of about 1.5 million dollars, while the Campbell government in Charlottetown contributed \$900,000.<sup>105</sup> The money went towards 1964-type celebrations; a publicity blitz, community days, community and provincial projects and the now near-compulsory Royal visit.

Arguably, the flagship program of the centennial, at least in the eyes of local residents, was the Capital Projects Program, an expanded version of the 1964 and 1967 community grants. This time, the projects were divided into two levels: 10 larger “provincial” grants and 85 smaller “community” ones. There was one other significant difference.

The 1964 and 1967 projects had tended to be extremely practical endeavours. More than one wit had quipped that in 1967 “the major Centennial activity financed by the federal government on Prince Edward Island... had been the construction of ice hockey rinks.”<sup>106</sup> Not so in 1973; instead the government shifted its focus to heritage and conservation. Of the ten provincial grants, five went to the creation of provincial museums and exhibitions, one went to establishing a headquarters for the newly established PEI Heritage Foundation at Beaconsfield House in Charlottetown, another went to purchasing a woodlot for conservations and environmental studies and a final

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>106</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 321.



grant went towards a fund for acquiring material for the Heritage Foundation. The two remaining projects were bookmobiles and heating for the Summerside skating rink.<sup>107</sup>

Many of the community projects were also Heritage-oriented, with several grants for the publication of local histories.<sup>108</sup>

MacDonald notes that the provincial government's motives for entering the field of heritage conservation were noble enough:

It is tempting to think that the godfather of the Development Plan had a mind to archiving the past because his planners were preparing to dismantle it, like saving valuable fragments of building about to be torn down, but the Premier's thinking on the subject was considerably more prosaic (and enlightened) than that. He had a genuine interest in heritage, and an administrative dilemma with respect to it.<sup>109</sup>

It seems the government could satisfy no one. The heritage focus of the centennial grants immediately drew criticism from several quarters. The Greater Charlottetown Area Centennial Projects Committee (CACPC) had requested \$180,000 for a sports centre in Sherwood, and was sorely disappointed. "A lot of time and effort has been put into this and it seems to have been for nothing," declared CACPC member Ivan Doherty, "I feel we had a pretty good idea of what the people of the area wanted."<sup>110</sup> Under the direction of CACPC leader Dorothy Corrigan, a telegram was drafted and sent to Schurman:

Corrigan said the telegram, drafted at the noon hour meeting on Friday says in part: We as a committee represent approximately 35 percent of the population of Prince Edward Island and we wish to assure you the recommendations presented are not the wishes of this committee or of the majority of people we represent.<sup>111</sup>

This particular opposition was more a reflection of the parochial nature of Island politics than a general resistance to the CDP or the goals of the centennial. The government actually defended its funding decisions with rhetoric borrowed from the

<sup>107</sup> 1973 Centennial Commission, 194-203.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 205.

<sup>109</sup> MacDonald, Stronghearted, 319-320.

<sup>110</sup> "Heritage Emphasis Receives Criticism," in the Guardian, March 24, 1972, 1.

<sup>111</sup> "Charlottetown Groups Resent Project Decision," in the Guardian, March 25, 1972, 1.

garden myth, noting that the Island's cultural heritage was literally being carted away by the truckload by antique dealers, and that it was necessary to act now.<sup>112</sup> However, there were some who saw the new museums as nothing more than an attempt to commodify the province's past and sell it to tourists.

The government tried its best to rally the troops and silence the naysayers. Environment and Tourism Association's minister Schurman made an appeal at the Tourist Associations' annual dinner in 1972, exclaiming that "All systems are go" for the upcoming Centennial:

Referring to the upcoming 1973 P.E.I. Centennial, he [Schurman] said that "there are those who will say that we are having too many centennials, we had one in 1964 and another in 1967 and now this." He added: "These are the wet blankets of society." He added, "they would ignore the over \$1,500,000 that Ottawa is prepared to spend in helping us stage this party." Mr. Schurman noted that the centennials of 1964 and 1967 had resulted in a surge of tourism that had not lost its momentum.<sup>113</sup>

However, the "wet blankets of society" were not going to stay quiet. The most vocal and intelligent attack on the Centennial came from a group of Island historians, artists and concerned citizens calling themselves the Brothers and Sisters of Cornelius Howatt (BS-CH). The BS-CH used the 1973 celebrations as lever to launch an attack on the CDP's vision of Prince Edward Island, and to present their own variation on the garden myth.

### **Spreading the Word**

According to Harry Baglolle, a founding member of the Brother and Sisters and later the editor of the *Island* magazine, the BS-CH was created as a direct result of the extravagant plans the Government had made to celebrate 1973:

The Brothers and Sisters of Cornelius Howatt originally came into existence in reaction to the ostentatious nature of the official celebrations being planned by the government-sponsored centennial commission in order to mark the one-hundredth anniversary of Prince Edward Island's becoming a province of Canada. Some of us felt that there was

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<sup>112</sup> "Commission Defends Decision to Preserve Island Heritage," in the *Guardian*, March 27, 1972, 1.

<sup>113</sup> "All systems Are 'Go' For Centennial Program Here," Newspaper clipping, RG 32, 98-004, Box 3, PAPEI.

too much truth in George Orwell's dictum – "he who controls the past controls the future" - to allow the historical interpretation of the Island's entry into Confederation to remain the unchallenged prerogative of the Centennial Commission.<sup>114</sup>

The BS-CH believed that the Commission was ignoring the fact that the Island had resisted joining Confederation from 1864 until 1873, re-constructing history in order to attract more tourists to the province. The BS-CH also felt there was a historical parallel to be drawn. In 1873, the Island gave up a measure of its self-sufficiency by joining Confederation. In 1973, the BS-CH argued the Island was again giving up a control of its destiny to development planners and tourist dollars. The group had named itself after Cornelius Howatt, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmer and politician, because Howatt had been one of the only two MLAs to oppose joining Confederation in 1873 and instead had advocated self-sufficiency.

The BS-CH was particularly concerned with tourism's attempts at social control and the establishment of a tourism ethos. It was believed that the Island's traditional culture of self-sufficiency was being transformed into a culture of subservience. In essence, the BS-CH believed that by eroding the family farm and encouraging the tourism ethos, the CDP was reconstructing the Island's identity for the worse. The new provincial identity had no scruples, no dignity and no connection to the Island's hallowed past:

We are in the process of being conditioned to think of ourselves, not as an independent agricultural and fishing community, but as a pandering people – a province of flunkies and attendants. Our principal occupation, we are encouraged to believe, is to satisfy the imagined needs and fancies of the glut of tourists who are lured to the Island by glossy promotional literature and the Big Sell – even though this involves an abandonment of our traditional values and life-style.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Harry Baglole and David Weale ed., Cornelius Howatt: Superstar! (Summerside: Williams & Crue Ltd., 1974), 7-8.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 152.

As evidence of this reconstruction, the Brothers and Sisters pointed to some of the tourist industry's more heavy-handed attempts to make Islanders more tourist-friendly. The most notorious example was an ad published in provincial newspapers in the summer of 1973 announcing "Welcome a Visitor Week" instructing Islanders on how to be good hosts:

1. Ask if you can give help when a stranger appears lost or hesitant.
2. Take time to give accurate and specific directions.
3. Speak slowly and distinctly (but don't "shout") when assisting a foreign visitor.
4. Walk with him a block, or even more, to point out the way.
5. If he is a photo fan, offer to take a snapshot of him with his camera. Many tourists appreciate this courtesy.
6. Be enthusiastic and well-informed about your local sightseeing attractions.
7. Post this on you office, union, church or synagogue bulletin board.
8. Be friendly. Be helpful. Be hospitable.<sup>116</sup>

The BS-CH saw such announcements as the work of insensitive development planners "from away" who were only interested in changing Islander's behavior to fit their schemes. In the case of instruction number seven, it was pointed out that there were no synagogues on Prince Edward Island. Why should Islanders accept the authority of someone who did not know the Island? This was only a small part of the BS-CH's opposition.

The BS-CH's attacks on the Plan were all symbolic in nature, drawing on the rhetoric of garden myth for ammunition and using the weapons of humor and satire to get their points across. To promote 1973, the Commission had created a mascot of a smiling father of Confederation with the Centennial logo emblazoned on his hat. The BS-CH retaliated with a logo and mascots of its own. The BS-CH logo became the image of a manure spreader, with the statement "spread the word" emblazoned beneath it.<sup>117</sup> The most famous of the BS-CH's mascots (there were several) became the PIE-Faced Kid.

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

The imaginary exploits of the Kid, who did everything he could to sabotage the tourism industry, were recorded in a series of letters to the editor. In one letter, the Kid even did battle with the Smiling Father, who nearly finished the Kid with his feared “Centennial pin.”<sup>118</sup>

The PIE-faced kid was also used to challenge the strictures of social control. A BS-CH letter to the editor explained that the Kid had acquired his hate of tourism due to the “Welcome a visitor ad.” Young and idealistic, the Kid actually attempted to follow the advice on how to deal with tourists. After being humiliated and called “queer” and “quaint” in several encounters with those from away, “Something snapped within the Kid, who did not think of himself as being either queer or quaint. In that instant, the “sidewalk ambassador” was transformed into the “Scourge of Tourism.”<sup>119</sup>

The BS-CH attacked anything they perceived as detracting from the Island’s sovereignty and dignity. As part of the 1973 celebrations, ownership of Province House, the Island’s historic legislature and site of the Charlottetown Conference meetings, was transferred to the federal government. In exchange, Ottawa promised to “restore, preserve, interpret and administer” the building in a fashion that acknowledged its significance to all Canadians as a national shrine.<sup>120</sup> The BS-CH preferred to acknowledge Province House’s significance as a symbol of the Island’s self-governing

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-132.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.



Figure 11. The Official Mascot of the 1973 Centennial, the Smiling Father. (1973 Centennial Commission, Final Report, Cover)

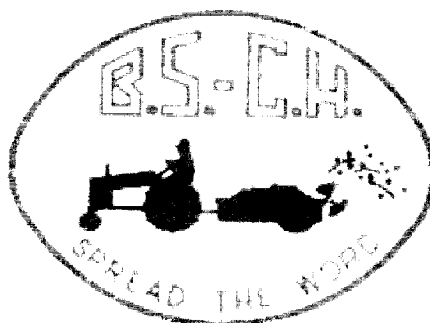


Figure 12. The official symbol of the Brothers and Sisters of Cornelius Howatt, a national sparkler. (Baglole and Weate, Cornelius Howatt, Superstar!, Cover)

status. Three days after the announcement of the transfer, the Brothers and Sisters draped black crepe on the main entrance of the building, mourning the Island's loss of control over their legislature. A BS-CH letter to the editor entitled "Province House: Ward of Ottawa" expressed the organization's sentiments:

Province House, we are told, is to become a ward of the federal government, and though it will not become a barrack or a bank, as a national shrine it will become more and more an object for curious visitors and camera-clutching tourists "merely to look at."<sup>121</sup>

The names of the two new ferries, the Vacationland and the Holiday Island, were seen as a disgrace as well. MacDonald notes the tourist ferries never received from Islanders "...the affectionate regard that they harboured for the Abby [the *Abegweit*]."<sup>122</sup> The BS-CH, for their part, suggested that the two ferries should be renamed the *Coney Island I* and the *Coney Island II*. The Brother's and Sisters twisted the Centennial slogans as well. "The place to be in '73," immortalized on the Island's 1973 license plates, was transformed into "The place to pee in '73."<sup>123</sup>

### **The Price of Modernity**

There was a certain parochial naiveté about the attitude of the Brothers and Sisters, since much of the garden they claimed to be defending had already passed on. The Break had come to Prince Edward Island long before, but it was only as the 1970s began that, to paraphrase Edward MacDonald, the full price of modernity became apparent. At the same time, the BS-CH did recognize that a return to the "old ways" was not possible, nor was it desirable. Even Premier Campbell, himself a target of the BS-CH's satiric attacks, understood this fact:

If the Brothers and Sisters of Cornelius Howatt are simply saying that we should return to the ways of our forefathers one hundred years or more ago, I would have to violently

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>122</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 305.

<sup>123</sup> Baglole and Weale, *Cornelius Howatt*, 158.

disagree with them. But I don't believe this is the message they are giving to us. I have considered and advocated for some time that we in Prince Edward Island must carefully examine change so that we are able to weed out those aspects which would be detrimental to our way of life, and, at the same time, take advantage of those aspects of change which will enhance and improve our quality of life.<sup>124</sup>

The 1973 Centennial, in conjunction with the social and economic change brought by the Plan, had prompted some Islanders to take a long hard look at their garden myth. A debate had begun about the province's past, present and future, and about what the "Island way of life" really was. Tourism, which promoted the past and served as a harbinger of modernity, became central in that debate. The industry had tied itself to the garden myth, to Canadian nationalism and to government-led economic development, three of the main issues in the debate about the Island's future. Thanks to the hard work of the Island's tourism boosters, tourism went from being seen as a secondary industry in the immediate post-war era, to being perceived as having a pivotal role in the province's economic destiny. Tourism became, in effect, one powerful filter through which to view the Island's future. People and groups such as the BS-CH, however, felt compelled to note it was not the *only* view of the province's future.

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 112.



## Conclusion

The cruel irony is that Prince Edward Island's future is unavoidably caught up in a garden myth, which, none the less, must be critically challenged if Island politics are likely to become truly conscious and effective.

--David Milne, in "Politics in a Beleaguered Garden."<sup>1</sup>

Prince Edward Island has yet to look its past directly in the eye. Even today, the province's garden myth continues to inform perceptions of Islanders and visitors alike, and provincial tourism literature remains saturated with anti-modern rhetoric. One of the reasons for the longevity of the garden myth is that there is still some truth in it; despite all the changes wrought by the *Break*, the Island has remained a land of rolling green fields and small towns. The difference is in the details- the agricultural population of the countryside is being replaced by rural non-farm dwellers, and many of the quaint old farmhouses and red dirt roads have been supplanted or even abandoned for highway-side bungalow developments.<sup>2</sup>

Allan MacEachern suggested that tourism played a part in retaining the Island's rural, underdeveloped character: "Since the Island's overarching image has been of a land embedded in the past, any development that might threaten the Island's simplicity has been discouraged."<sup>3</sup> In reality however, it is difficult to say whether or not Prince Edward Island would have experienced a lesser degree of industrial underdevelopment in the absence of the tourism industry. It should also be noted that the province's tourism boosters did not create the garden myth -- the province had entrenched its worldview firmly in the past long before the advent of touring motorists.

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<sup>1</sup> David Milne, "Politics in a Beleaguered Garden," in Verner Smitheram, David Milne, and Satadal Dasgupta, ed., *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980*. (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982), 41.

<sup>2</sup> John McClellan, "Changing Patterns of Land Use," in *The Garden Transformed*, 106-107.

<sup>3</sup> Alan MacEachern, "No Island is an Island, A History of Tourism on Prince Edward Island, 1870-1939," M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1991, ii.

Prince Edward Island tourism promoters were not the heartless snake-oil salesmen that opponents of the industry sometimes make them out to be. Many Islanders sincerely believed that tourism growth was in the best interests of the entire province, and stood by these beliefs when the majority of their fellow Islanders (including the provincial government) maintained a parochial, apathetic view of the industry. Hoping tourist dollars would invigorate their province's stagnant economy, Prince Edward Island tourism boosters attempted to harness a pre-existing garden myth to the social-economic phenomenon of modern mass tourism.

The strategy was very successful. Tourism boosters groomed their province's image, in promotional literature, advertisements, films, and even at the festivals held in 1939 and 1964, which convinced the federal and provincial governments they could work together and use tourism to promote economic development. Both levels of government were adopting an increasingly Keynesian approach to the economy. Tourism, with its exponential growth rates and high return on investment, became an increasingly appealing business venture. There were some drawbacks, however. Tourism's use as a development tool came with a built-in contradiction: The industry had become a harbinger of modernity, and yet relied on an anti-modern aesthetic for its very existence. When the Comprehensive Development Plan declared it was doing away with the garden myth and made tourism synonymous with progress and modernity, some Islanders began to express concern.

The 1973 Centennial became a prism through which Islander displayed competing visions of their province's past, present and future. Individuals in groups such as the Brothers and Sisters of Cornelius Howatt felt that the province's past, with its rural

values of community and self-reliance was being taken away from them. At the same time Islanders were being herded towards a future it had never asked for- a future of servitude to a never-ending invading army of tourists. While the BS-CH's concerns were not unfounded, the dichotomy they presented of the Island's past and future was perhaps a bit simplistic.

Writing nearly thirty years after the Brothers and Sisters, historian Edward MacDonald had a more nuanced view of the confusion and complexity that accompanied Prince Edward Island's uneven march towards modernity in the post-war era:

Modernization was not some life force implanted by extraterrestrials. Nor, despite some later judgements, was it a sort of demon that devoured rural virtue. Though planners fondly believed otherwise, it was not a government program either. It was a process, both material and profoundly cultural. It was partly natural and partly artificial, partly deliberate and partly dysfunctional. Its pace varied within the province and among different sectors of the economy and society. If it could be said to have a governing motive, it was sustained prosperity. If it had a label, it was "progress." If it had a face, it was the blurred countenance of change. It would reach its climax in the tumultuous times of the 1970s, and only then would its full price become apparent.<sup>4</sup>

The growth of tourism on postwar Prince Edward Island was both a cause and effect of modernization and was inextricably intertwined with the process of the *Break*. Much like modernity, no one cause could explain tourism's steady infiltration into the lives of Islanders in the post-war era. The similarities did not end there. Tourism grew as the result of outside influences Islanders could not hope to control. Islanders managed to harness these forces to their advantage, but industry growth was erratic nonetheless. Tourism was often accused of threatening the province's rural traditions and industry growth was frequently justified by labelling it as "progress." Last but not least, tourism development reached its climax in the early 1970s, when it became impossible to debate

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<sup>4</sup> Edward MacDonald, *If You're Stronghearted: Prince Edward Island in the Twentieth Century*, ((Summerside: Williams and Crue Ltd., 2000), 227.

Prince Edward Island's future without addressing the future of province's now second largest industry.

Ultimately, fears that the province would become another Coney Island dissipated. Tourism peaked in 1975, and then leveled out at approximately 500,000 to 700,000 visitors thereafter.<sup>5</sup> Academics writing in the late 1970s and 1980s would remark that the significance of tourism on Prince Edward Island society had been exaggerated.<sup>6</sup> Many believed a permanent plateau had been reached. However, as a new century dawns, tourism is once again on the rise. The number of visitors to the Island increased 60 percent following construction of the Confederation Bridge in 1997 before reaching 1.18 million visitors in 2000.<sup>7</sup> Charlottetown's role as the birthplace of Confederation is being promoted now more than ever, with a new museum/interpretive centre in the city dedicated to that theme called Founder's Hall. Tourism continues to shape the Island's economy and society while simultaneously being shaped by it. Islanders today are going to have to decide exactly what they want that shape to be, by reengaging in the kind of debate between the virtues of embracing modernity and guarding a mythic past which took place during the 1960s and 1970s on Prince Edward Island.

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<sup>5</sup> MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 315.

<sup>6</sup> Judith Alder, "Tourism and Pastoral," 149, and John McClellan, "Changing Patterns of Land Use," 113, in *The Garden Transformed*.

<sup>7</sup> Prince Edward Island 2001 Tourist Brochure.

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