

HON. A. A. MACDONALD,

Charlottetown, P. E. I.

THE HON. SENATOR ANDREW ARCHIBALD MACDONALD is a native and life-long resident of P. E. I., where his father and grandfather before him were, as he himself has been, prominent among the leaders in commercial and public life. Andrew Macdonald, the grandfather of the subject of this sketch, was a resident of Inverness-shire, Scotland, and was led to emigrate to Prince Edward Island by reports of the favourable prospects enjoyed by kinsmen who had already taken up their abode there. He purchased an estate of ten thousand acres, and, gathering together a band of some fifty of his industrious and enterprising countrymen, he sailed with them for the new land of which they had heard so much. With the keen foresight of his race, Mr. Macdonald recognized the fact that for a long time the unbroken forest must confine settlement to the sea and river shore, making the open water in summer and the ice in winter, the highway of the country. He therefore purchased the island of Panmure, consisting of about seven hundred acres of fertile land, and so located as to make it a desirable and central place for trade. Here he established business under the name of Andrew Macdonald & Sons, supplying the wants of the little colony in articles of home production and import, besides engaging extensively in the timber export trade. The place became the centre of the settlement, and here the pioneers built a little church on land generously given them for that purpose by Mr. Macdonald. The settlers were Roman Catholics, devout as Scotch people usually are, but in those early days it was only occasionally that their little house of worship was occupied by some itinerant missionary priest, who had consecrated his life to the service of these pioneers scattered along the extensive coast line of the island. Soon after the establishment of the business of Andrew Macdonald & Sons, a branch house was opened at Miramichi, New Brunswick, which greatly facilitated the extensive dealings with the business houses of the main land. The difficulties under which business was carried on at that early time can hardly be appreciated in these days, when to facilitate and encourage commerce is the great object of inventor, engineer and statesman. A hundred years ago the natural obstacles in the way of communication were unbroken by the steamship and the railway, and as if this were not enough, those in authority pursued the methods of war even in times of peace, while war itself too often added its dangers, vexations and delays to those which the trader had to encounter. On one occasion Andrew

Macdonald and one of his younger sons, while on their way to Britain in a timber-laden ship, were captured with their vessel by an American privateer and taken to Philadelphia. Here they were imprisoned for almost a year, unable for the greater part of that time, to communicate with their friends. When at length Mr. Macdonald was able to inform those at home of his position, the provincial government at once took the matter up and secured his release. Other difficulties, however, arose. The house at Panmure was destroyed by fire. But instead of weakly bewailing his misfortunes, the stout-hearted old Scot made his loss the occasion for improvement. He imported the necessary material from Britain and built the first brick house and stables ever constructed in that part of the province. The closing years of his life were embittered by losses and annoyances. A suit in chancery had arisen out of the original purchase of the estate, and the suit dragged on to the ruin of all but the lawyers, as chancery suits were wont to do in those days. After the old gentleman's death, in 1833, his son Hugh continued the suit, but the costs, in the end, swallowed up all the property. Mr. Hugh Macdonald was a man of ability and prominence, and held a number of important public offices. He was a member of the house of assembly for a number of years, as representative of Georgetown, was high sheriff of the province, and a commissioner of the small debt court and justice of the peace for Kings county, and he held for many years the important office, under the Imperial Government, of controller of customs and navigation laws. From 1832 until his death, in 1857, he was collector of customs at Three Rivers. His son Andrew Archibald Macdonald, the subject of this sketch, is now in the midst of an active and useful life, the wearer of honours which he has won by dint of energy, capacity and public spirit. Born at Three Rivers, on the 14th February, 1829, Andrew Archibald Macdonald received a sound education, partly in the public schools of the county and partly under private teachers. At the age of fifteen he became clerk in a general store kept by a relative at Georgetown. His natural ability early manifested itself, and, while still a youth, he became a member of the firm. The partnership was dissolved by the death of the head of the firm in 1851, and Mr. Macdonald, then only twenty-two years of age, bought the estate and continued the business. He took his two brothers into partnership, and the young firm, with the enterprise of youth, guided by judgment which would have done credit to men of maturer years, rapidly extended the trade. They became known as large exporters and ship builders, and had extensive interests in the fisheries as well.