

Political History of Kent...

Some Interesting Facts From the Archives of Memory. Old County Divisions.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY of Kent is both varied and interesting. In 1841 the province was divided into Upper and Lower Canada, and the country divided into electoral districts. The western district comprising what is now known as Kent, Lambton and Essex, was represented by a Conservative member, Joseph Wood, who opposed the Hon. S. B. Harrison, provincial secretary in the Draper administration. At this time open voting was in vogue and a whole week set aside for it. There was but one poll in each division. It is interesting to note that the Hon. Arch. McKellar, who afterwards played such a conspicuous role in the political history of our county, was at this time a Conservative and supported Mr. Wood, but was so taken with the principles of reform laid down by Mr. Harrison, he stepped over to the Liberal ranks.

In 1847 was the second election in which Mr. Malcolm Cameron, Liberal, defeated Mr. John Hilliard, Conservative. A year or so after this the riding was divided, part going to Bothwell and part to Elgin. In 1851 the Hon. George Brown, who opposed to some of the principles of the Liberal party, Mr. Malcolm Cameron, though a Liberal, ran against Mr. Cameron in the election and defeated him.

In 1854 an interesting election took place, two Conservatives, Mr. Larwell and Mr. R. S. Wood, opposing two Liberals, Hon. Arch. McKellar and John Mr. Waddell. Larwell was elected. In 1857 Mr. Larwell was defeated by Arch. McKellar, who held the constituency until confederation, in 1867 and during his ten years administration he won the country's history. Dominion Day 1867 celebrated the confederation and the next month a general election took place, Sept. 1867.

Kent was now divided into East Kent and West Kent and it has remained so up to the present time. The week's voting of former time was abolished and two days were allotted for that purpose. Mr. McKellar was at this election defeated by Mr. Rufus Stephenson, but Mr. McKellar was immediately elected to the local house by the constituency of Bothwell. The next year, 1868, the Sir John McDonald administration. Mr. Stephenson enjoyed to a great degree the friendship and confidence of Sir John, who it is said, consulted the whip as often as he did his cabinet colleagues.

In 1883 Henry Smyth defeated Dr. Samson. In 1887 Mr. Arch. Campbell redeemed the riding to a Liberal constituency after twenty years of Conservative administration and it has since remained staunchly Liberal through four successive campaigns. Mr. Campbell's opponents were, in his three elections, Mr. Henry Smyth, Mr. Killackey and Mr. Wm. Ball. In 1900, so recent that we all remember, Kent again returned a Liberal to Parliament, giving Mr. Geo. Stephens a majority of 216 over Mr. T. A. Munth.

We may notice here the development of our modern voting system. We now have a polling division to every two hundred voters, and voting is by ballot and secret.

The proceedings in Parliament during the past week have been of more than usual interest, owing to the fact that the investigation into what is known as the Cook charges were being conducted by a committee of the Senate, and also owing to the close of the Budget debate.

Every session, after the Finance Minister delivers his Budget speech, in which he reviews the financial condition of the country, giving total imports and exports, the total revenues and expenditures during the past year, the amount of our national debt, and in which he estimates as nearly as possible what will be our revenues and expenditures during the next financial year. There always follows a long debate, in which the members of both sides of the House take part. The Opposition criticizes the speech and financial statement as much as they can, and generally end by making an amendment to the motion to go into committee of supply. This being the first session of a new parliament, and so many new members present, and the Opposition having chosen a new leader, considerable interest was taken in the debate, and much curiosity was manifested as to the course the Liberal party would pursue, more especially as the speech and financial statement was one of the most gratifying that ever had been presented to Parliament.

The Finance Minister was able to show that under the policy pursued during the last four years the trade of the country had gone up by leaps and bounds, and exceeded the trade of Canada in 1896 by one hundred and forty-two millions of dollars, that the surplus at the end of the year was over eight millions of dollars and that the debt of the country had been reduced by nearly a million dollars.

The Opposition while admitting the great prosperity Canada enjoyed, and the great progress we had made still contended that it was due to the fact that they, while in power had inaugurated the National Policy. They moved an amendment declaring strongly in favor of high protection duties and opposed to the preferential tariff given to Great Britain unless they would give us a preference in their markets over other countries.

The debate on the motion of Mr. Pelling and the amendment of Mr. Borden has been going on for many days until at 4.30 Friday morning the last speaker had finished and the weary members were called in to record their votes. With the result that the amendment moved by Mr. Borden, the Conservative leader, was defeated by 96 yeas to 118 nays, thus showing that the majority of the Government in the New Parliament is no less than 52 much larger than it was in the last House.

It will be remembered that just on the eve of the last Dominion election in November last the country was startled by a manifesto issued by H. H. Cook, of Toronto, in which he stated that he had been offered an appointment as senator if he would pay the sum of \$10,000. The senate concluded that it was a reflection on that honorable house and appointed a committee to investigate the whole matter. It was quite evident from the evidence produced that there was not a word of truth in Mr. Cook's statement as far as the government was concerned.

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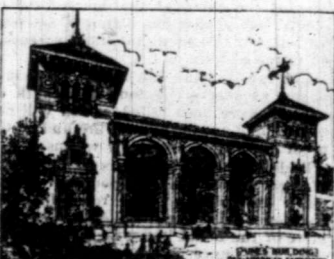
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GEORGE STEPHENS, M.P.

Pan-American Views.



THE GROUTY BACHELOR.

Down in every woman's heart is a longing to be loved like they love on the stage.

When a woman wishes she had some one to love, it means that she wants some one to worry over.

When a child scratches its head, other mothers decide that they will not let their children play with it in future.

When a woman has been away a few weeks, she says when she returns home that hers is the dirtiest house that ever disgraced a civilized country.

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PERSONALITIES.

Mrs. Modjeska is no longer under a decree of banishment and may return to her Poland if she will.

In his boyhood lassness was the prevailing sin of Kitchener. His father sent him to a school for girls as a heroic remedy.

Senator Warren of Wyoming is the only man of his business in the senate. He is an undertaker in Cheyenne, although proprietor of a general store.

Baron Armand Rothschild of Paris, the nephew of the late Baron Rothschild, will take over the direction of the Rothschild banking house in Frankfurt.

Former Speaker Thomas B. Reed says that he is eschewing politics not only in his actions, but in his conversations. He is a lawyer now, and a lawyer only.

Two of the very greatest men of the nineteenth century were born on one and the same day—Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln, who both first saw light on Feb. 12, 1809.

Captain Nehemiah Mayo Dyer, who commanded the cruiser Baltimore during the battle of Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, has been placed on the retired list by reason of the age limit.

The Duke of Abruzzi, in honor of his own expedition, was the other day declared by the local government a citizen of Rome upon the occasion of his lecture on the polar regions.

Charles S. Francis, the new United States minister to Greece, is a splendid oarsman and in 1876, during his senior year at Cornell, won the single scull championship in the intercollegiate regatta.

Reformer Rile thinks that if Mrs. Nation were to use her hatchet in smashing the frying pans of Kansas she would accomplish more lasting good than can come from demolishing saloon glassware.

General Joe Wheeler in the course of a recent interview remarked that it was harder work being a soldier now than of old, because there were not so many autograph collectors in the days of the civil war.

Dr. James Warren Sunderland, founder of what is believed to be the world's first college for the higher education of women, recently celebrated his eighty-eighth birthday at his home in Collegeville, Pa.

E. E. Dodson and R. L. Elliott, of Wallaceburg, are spending the day in the city.

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