

Even the duties incident to this extensive business, however, were not sufficient to occupy the attention of the energetic head of the firm. He entered political life, and, in 1854, was elected to the assembly as one of the members for Georgetown. He has been engaged in public affairs almost continuously since that time, holding the highest offices that appointment by the executive or election by the people could confer. He was successful at the polls in the next general election in 1859, but, on a scrutiny in the house, he was declared defeated by a narrow majority. In 1863 he was returned by the second district of Kings county, to the legislative council, which, in that year, had been made elective. He was at this time in opposition, but, notwithstanding this fact, he was chosen by the government as one of the representatives at the historic council at Charlottetown, to arrange the terms of a union of the maritime provinces. It was at this conference that the delegates from Canada were heard in support of the project of the confederation of all the British American provinces. This led to the great conference at Quebec, at which the terms of confederation were arranged, and to this conference also Mr. Macdonald was a delegate. As history shows, the terms were not satisfactory to the people of Prince Edward Island, and Mr. Macdonald, though he submitted them to his people, did not strongly urge their adoption. When, after the establishment of the Dominion, more advantageous terms were offered to Prince Edward Island to enter the union, Mr. Macdonald put forth the whole of his powerful influence in their favour, and was largely instrumental in having them adopted. Meantime he had assumed the duties and responsibilities of government, having, in 1867, accepted a portfolio in Mr. Coles' administration. This position he held also under Mr. Hensley, and later under Mr. Haythorne, and went out with his party on their defeat in 1870. In the same year he sold out his share in his business to his partners and removed with his family to Charlottetown, where he has since resided. He accepted office under the late Hon. J. C. Pope, and led in the upper house until April, 1872, when the Government resigned. His party was not long in the minority, however, and before the close of the year Mr. Pope was recalled to the premiership, Mr. Macdonald resuming his former office. This position he held until Prince Edward Island entered confederation, in July, 1873, when he resigned and accepted the position of provincial postmaster-general, which office was then merged with that of postmaster at Charlottetown, so that he had charge of the mail service of the whole province with immediate responsibility for the important office in the capital.

With characteristic energy he entered upon numerous reforms and improvements in the postal service of the island, being greatly assisted by his intimate knowledge of business and his well-trained executive abilities. In 1881 he received the appointment of post-office inspector for the province, which enabled him still further to improve the mail service. He resigned his place only to accept the honourable and distinguished office of lieutenant-governor of his native province. He discharged his duties during his tenure of this high office with tact and dignity which reflected the highest credit upon him. He was called to the Senate of the Dominion on the 11th May, 1891. The above is a long record of public services, but it does not cover the sum of Hon. Mr. Macdonald's useful and active life. In other fields than those of politics he has served the people well and faithfully, and has done much to advance the social and moral well-being of his native province and of the whole Dominion. A most important work was the settlement of the disputes arising out of the great constitutional and economic change by which Prince Edward Island succeeded in the difficult task of abolishing landlordism and establishing that "peasant proprietary," which has been deemed by many high authorities the true solution of the Irish problem. Mr. Macdonald was public trustee under the Land Purchase Act of 1875, by which this question was settled. Several of the proprietors refused to accept the award of the court of commissioners for their titles, and, acting under the authority vested in him by the act, Mr. Macdonald, as trustee, executed conveyances to the Government of about four hundred thousand acres of their land. Mr. Macdonald was one of the earliest advocates of the Prince Edward Island Railway as a provincial work, and was largely instrumental in bringing about the completion of this great improvement in the means of communication. In 1875, on the completion of the Prince Edward Island Railway, differences arose respecting the settlement of accounts between the contractors and the Government, so that a resort had to be had to arbitration, and the gentleman chosen to represent the Government and the people was Hon. Mr. Macdonald. Mr. Macdonald has always taken an active interest in the great questions of education and temperance. He was for years a member of the board of education of the province and of the city school board of Charlottetown, and also one of the governors of the Prince of Wales College. As a temperance man, Mr. Macdonald has advocated the prohibition of the liquor traffic. Moreover, he set an example which has often been quoted by the advocates of temperance, when, as lieutenant-governor, he banished liquor