

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., Sept. 15, 1961

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Interest Dies In Convention

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THE PROVINCIAL Liberal leadership convention issue was pulsating with life two weeks ago. It was still alive this time last week but today, it's an extinct volcano.

The convention was called "to clear the air" in the words of those who backed Alex Matheson, the present leader, or who were not concerned about the man who led so much as they were about the spirit and morale of the party.

In the words of Mr. Matheson's detractors, the convention afforded a chance "to get rid of him". I think it's as simple as that.

That's the reaction I got at the time from people close to the party, and I talked to a lot of them across the Island.

NOW THE convention won't do either of those things. It will not clear the air, and it definitely will not upset Mr. Matheson. That's the reaction I get now..

The air would have been cleared, I think, if someone had given Mr. Matheson a good fight in a convention, even though he might not have upset the man who has led the party since 1953. It would have been cleared too, I suggest, had someone actually beaten him. There's no chance of either happening now, if I can assess the present situation.

I couldn't even get the suggestion of a probable opponent from leading Liberals yesterday. I don't want to spoil anyone's chances, but I just can't see anyone drumming up enough support in the few days before September 26 to even make it look like a contest.

THE CONSERVATIVES were luckier than they realized, I think, when Walter Shaw defeated Dr. George Dewar by only two votes at their party convention in 1957. The close fight indicated the party was active, that people were working to back their candidates, that the machine was alive and ready to go to work when the occasion demanded. Contrast that with the present situation and you can draw your own conclusions.

The issue was alive so long as George MacKay was a possible candidate. Enough people were rallying behind him to make the fight interesting. Indeed many of them told me he would win it. Mr. MacKay's announcement wiped out the possibility.

Mackay's Stand Is Consistent

WE CAN'T blame Mr. MacKay, for he never sought the leadership. He said all along that he had no reason to oppose his leader though, apparently, he gave it serious consideration as he was pressed by a number of delegations, and by other individuals

to contest the convention. In finally refusing it, he is consistent with the stand he took from the first.

Next to Mr. MacKay, Dr. Lorne Bonnell was the man I heard mentioned as the most likely candidate. But yesterday the Murray River physician turned in his answer.

ONE OTHER point has arisen. Mr. Matheson has not yet resigned as leader. It's a technical point, but it's important. The party can't have a leadership convention if the present leader is still active.

I've been told party machinery will take steps to oust him, if he doesn't resign. But what's the sense of ousting a leader if it's obvious that he is going to be reinstated immediately? Yet what's the sense of having a leadership convention if the post is not vacant?

Mr. Matheson can remove the difficulty by turning in his resignation with the explanation he's available is the party still wants them. I don't think you could get a bet now against him. There are still those who oppose him, anyone who thinks differently is just kidding himself. But I can't see anyone at this late date mustering enough support to upset him. In fact I hadn't the name of a man, who would even oppose him, when I wrote this last night.

Mutch Seen Top Cattleman

THE PROVINCE lost one of its top cattleman when Edison Mutch, North River died a few days ago. A rival breeder this week rated him as among the top ten men in Canada as a breeder and showman.

I recall that he took the Jersey grand championship ribbon at Toronto in 1952 with Rivernorth Jester's Standard Dreamer, a bull he raised himself out of Dreamer's Maid, one of his best cows. The sire was Brampton Jester's Standard 2nd that the Jersey Club brought here from Ontario. A year later he went to the grand championship circle at the Royal again with Edgelea Beacon Jester's Standard, a bull he bought from Alfred Bagg's Edgelea Farm, near Toronto.

IT WAS the first time, they told me at the time, that a breeder had ever won a grand championship ribbon in the Royal Jersey ring with two different animals in as many years. It was also the first time that a small breeder had two Royal Grand champions in his herd at the same time.

Dreamer later went to the United States where he won many top ribbons. The Edgelea bull went to one of the MacKay herds at Rothesay, N.B. and is now in the artificial insemination bull battery at Woodstock, Ontario, I'm told.

I could talk about Edison and his feats for a long time. Let me give you one more item. He had the highest priced animal in the Sale of Stars at the Royal Winter Fair, Rivernorth Pansy's Bright. The 2 year-old heifer had been grand champion at the Maritime Winter Fair that year. She won the 2 year old class at the Royal and sold for \$4,500 to Campbell MacKay for his Kinghurst farm at Rothesay, N.B.

Picked Champion As Young Calf

HE SELECTED the Edgelea bull as a young calf in a shed at the Bagg farm. He didn't show much class at the time - the Jersey Breeders Club here turned him down - but Edison saw something in the youngster he had selected, and his confidence was richly justified when he took the Royal's biggest ribbon with him several years later.

Incidentally the Edgelea bull was the sire of his sale-topping Pansy's Bright. Another of the Edgelea bull's calves topped the junior bull calf class at the Royal that year. He was owned by Francis Morrison, St. Peter's Bay.

EDISON WAS always good copy at the shows where I watched him perform. He took the major share of prizes consistently for years when he was in his prime. Many a grand story his winnings gave me when I covered the Maritime Winter Fair at Amherst. I can still see his herd sign practically red with first place ribbons when the show was over.

He did a lot for the Jersey breed in this province. We shall not see his equal for some years.