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Premier Proclaims 2004 as the Year of Learning and Innovation in P.E.I.

CHARLOTTETOWN, PE, July 23, 2003 --- The year 2004 was officially proclaimed by Premier Pat Binns today as the ***Year of Learning and Innovation*** in Prince Edward Island. The celebration will commemorate 200 years of learning and innovation, dating back to 1804 when Lieutenant Governor Edmund Fanning set aside ten town lots for the first college in the province.

Premier Binns advised that Prince Edward Island's strong commitment to higher learning over the past two centuries provides great reason to celebrate. "Today, UPEI has become known as one of Canada's greatest small universities, Holland College has become a leader in the delivery of specialized training opportunities, and the Atlantic Veterinary College has gained an international reputation in animal and health research," said the premier. "Academic excellence, combined with our growing spirit of community collaboration, has positioned us to perform better than ever before in the new economy which is based on knowledge, research and innovation."

At the launch of the event at the Atlantic Technology Centre in Charlottetown, Premier Binns and UPEI president Wade MacLauchlan outlined many of the learning and innovation achievements of Islanders over the past 200 years.



Premier Binns signs the proclamation of 2004 as the Year of Learning and Innovation in Prince Edward Island. With him are Lt. Governor Jeanette MacAulay, Holland College; Wade MacLauchlan, UPEI; 1804 Lt. Governor Edmund Fanning (in character); Minister Currie, Minister Gillan.

Following the dedication of land for a college in 1804, Kent College was established in 1820. The Central Academy, founded in 1834, later became Prince of Wales College, and then Holland College in 1969. The University of Prince Edward Island was established in 1969, followed by the Atlantic Veterinary College in 1986, and Société Éducative de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard in 1992. In recent years, the private training school sector has become well established.

Over the years, Islanders contributed to many significant innovations in agriculture, shipbuilding, and the fishing industries. Today, Island businesses and institutions continue to innovate in such areas as renewable energy, aerospace, and bio-active research and development.

Development and Technology Minister Mike Currie advised that the **Year of Learning and Innovation** provides private and public sector organizations with strategic opportunities to celebrate and showcase their achievements and plans. "We will celebrate 200 years of innovation on PEI by continuing to encourage and support innovative research and development. We will encourage all Islanders to use their talents for finding a better way to do things - and turning that talent into job and wealth creation for us all," he said.

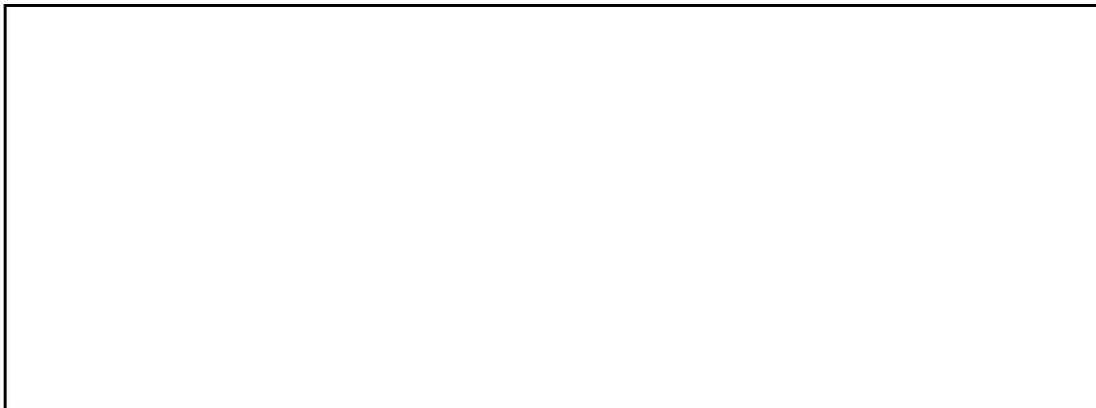
Education Minister Chester Gillan said planning is well underway to celebrate the year within the school system. "The year provides us with an excellent opportunity to celebrate the rich history of education in P.E.I., to increase awareness of changing learning and labour market needs, and to further engage our partners in building a culture of learning in our province," he said.

Jeanette MacAulay, Vice-President of Development and External Relations at Holland College said "in the newly proclaimed Year of Learning and Innovation on Prince Edward Island, Holland College will focus on three areas of celebration: its namesake, Samuel Holland, its graduates and the College's Island community."

UPEI President MacLauchlan underscored the importance of the bicentennial as "a celebration of the complete history of our achievements in learning and innovation, and a recognition of the many talented people who have contributed to Prince Edward Island and the world."

A special logo was designed for the celebration by Danielle Wilkins, a recent graduate of the Holland College Graphic Design program. "The logo represents Island education and change. An open book on a desk depicts education and the Island. The turning pages of the book resemble the caps of the ocean rolling onto the sand and each wave or turn of the page is something new, a change or innovation representing the past 200 years." Danielle said.

For more information on the ***Year of Learning and Innovation***, contact Heather Orford, Department of Education, 902 368 5984.





Backgrounder

200 Years of Learning in Prince Edward Island

At the turn of the 19th century, Charlotte Town would barely total 400 citizens, and education for the most part remained in private hands. The well-to-do generally sent their children abroad to be educated. Other parents passed on the fundamentals of reading and writing and arithmetic if they had the skills.

The notion of a public education system received its first practical encouragement in 1790 when Lieutenant Governor Edmund Fanning, at the opening of the House, conveyed His Majesty's wishes on the subject:

"Sensible as we all must be of the rapid improvement of the Agriculture, the Success of our Fisheries, the Extension of Commerce, and the Increase of our Inhabitants in this Island it now becomes my Indispensable duty in Obedience to His Majesty's Royal Instruction [to recommend to you the Expediency of entering upon some Methods for the Erecting and Maintaining of Schools in order to the training up of Youth to Reading and to a necessary knowledge of the principles of Religion and Virtue.]...."

On the 12th September 1804, Lieutenant Governor Fanning, Colonels Desbrisay, Townshend, Gray, and Robinson met in Council. Fanning brought to their attention that he had some years ago obtained His Majesty's most Gracious permission "to apply the growing rents reserved for His Majesty - his heirs and successors out of the Fort Lot..... for the support of a free school..." Fanning was scheduled to return to England and felt it was his duty before he retired from administration to execute this instruction. In support, Council set aside ten town lots; cited the offices and personnel required; constituted a Board for the transacting of business and to receive grants and donations; to be called " by the August name of Kent College" in honour of His Royal Highness, Prince Edward, Duke of Kent. This site presently houses part of the Holland College Charlottetown Centre.

In 1820, the first public school in Charlottetown was built. It was officially called Kent College School but it was more commonly known as the "National School" or Breeding's School, named after the first Master, James Breeding. Although this was the first government-constructed school, the colony still lacked a public school system.

In 1825, the first of a series of education acts was passed by the local assembly. In a letter to the editor published in the Prince Edward Island Register, March 21, 1826, stated " ...of all the measures adopted by our Island Legislature, there is probably not one more important than that which, by a Provincial grant, encourages Education in our common Schools; as it leads the Parent and the Teacher to cooperate in the great work of enlightening the minds of the rising generation."

In 1831, St. Andrew's College, the predecessor of St. Dunstan's University, was founded

under the leadership of Bishop Angus MacEachern in Lot 38. In 1855, the same year the City of Charlottetown was incorporated, Bishop Bernard MacDonald founded St. Dunstan's College on a property on the Malpeque Road (presently University Avenue). Today, Main Building, on the University of Prince Edward Island campus, is the earliest surviving building of our educational "built heritage".

In 1834, the Central Academy, a predecessor to Prince of Wales College, was founded by Royal Charter of King William IV. Classes commenced in 1836. In 1860 the College was renamed Prince of Wales College, in honour of the visit of the future King Edward VII, and operated until 1969.

Premier George Coles, influenced by the American examples, sponsored the first free education act, the Education Act of 1852, in the British Dominions. The principal feature of this Act was the willingness of the government to pay the salaries of teachers and give direction to the school districts. Prince Edward Island was now far ahead of Great Britain in the facilities offered for public and free education. By 1901, 40 percent of the government's annual budget was assigned to education.

At the turn of the twentieth century, public debate focussed on the need for educational reform. There was a growing consensus that there was a need for more agricultural education and rural schools should be consolidated. An Island expatriate, Sir William C. Macdonald, one of Canada's leading philanthropists, came to the rescue. As a result of his financial resources and his interest in the concept of "manual training", there emerged the Macdonald Consolidated Schools. The first Macdonald Consolidated School opened in 1903 in Middleton, Nova Scotia, followed by two more in 1904, one in Kingston, New Brunswick and the other at Guelph, Ontario. The Prince Edward Island government choose Mt. Herbert as the site of the new school. This represented the consolidation of six school districts. The school opened in August 1905 and was a great success academically. It eventually failed when Macdonald withdrew his financial support after 1912. There would not be another serious attempt at school consolidation for 50 years.

In 1919, as a postwar rehabilitation measure, the Dominion Government voted \$10,000,000. for the support of technical education. The Prince Edward Island Agricultural and Technical School was founded in 1920 and Fanningbank (Government House), which had been surrendered in 1917 for a veterans hospital, was once again converted to become the new technical school. It closed in 1925 and in 1932 Government House was reclaimed as a residence for the Lieutenant Governor. Post World War II, most of our highly skilled workers were imported from Western Europe. When the Federal Government recognized in the early 1960's the serious skill shortages Canada was facing, massive financial support was made available and the Canadian Community College was born. In Prince Edward Island in the 1960's vocational and technical training was delivered through the Provincial Vocational Institute, the Prince County Vocational High School, the Marine and Fisheries Training Centre and the Handcraft Training Centre. Graduates of Island high schools had few educational choices other than to pursue studies at university or to place themselves directly in the labour market. New alternatives were deemed desirable. Here was an opportunity to provide a type of training and retraining which universities were not designed to offer, a community college designed to satisfy the development needs of the Island economy and which would deliver education and training in a new way. For these reasons, Holland College, Prince Edward Island's community college was

created. Taking its name from Samuel Jan Holland, a one-time resident of the Island and Canada's first Surveyor General known for his use of new and innovative technology to conduct his surveys, the College was officially founded on April 16, 1969 by an Act of the PEI Legislature.

The University of Prince Edward Island was incorporated by an Act of the Provincial Legislature in 1969. The new University was the result of the amalgamation orchestrated by the Provincial Government of the day and was received with very mixed reviews by the public. Alumni and supporters of both Prince of Wales and St. Dunstan's were content to remain separate and distinct. Time has overcome the fears of having one provincial university. The longstanding tradition of academic excellence of its predecessor institutions has served UPEI well.

In 1986 the Atlantic Veterinary College opened the doors to its first class. The creation of a new federal/provincial funding partnerships made this new addition to the UPEI campus possible. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine has not only produced doctors of veterinary medicine but has also facilitated post graduate degrees at the Masters and Doctoral levels in related sciences.

In 1992, the establishment of the Societe Educative de l'Île-du-Prince-Edouard, provided the first opportunity for Francophone Islanders to obtain post-secondary education in French within the province. Since 1994, as a result of innovations in technology and linkages to the College de l' Acadie in Nova Scotia, Island Francophones have been able to take advantage of distance education programs. A Masters in Education program is offered to French teachers through the Universite de Moncton, as well as programming from the l'Universite Ste-Anne.

These highlights of Prince Edward Island's learning journey only capture some of the themes that thread their way through 200 years. What is significant about our journey is the pragmatic and practical approach Islanders have adopted towards learning and being innovative. From the challenge of surviving in colonial times to the major influences of today's international competition, PEI continues to demonstrate an openness to innovation and a determination to seek new ways to ensure our people are prepared educationally to meet the challenges of an ever changing world.