

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

RT.-HON.CHARLES MARCIL

1860-1937

Federal Member of Bonaventure County
for 37 consecutive years from 1900 to
1937 and Speaker of the Canadian House
of Commons.

KEN ANNETT

RIGHT HON.CHARLES MARCIL1860 - 1937

Those interested in the place-names of a region (toponymy) find a wealth of history in the personal and family names given to townships and localities in Gaspesia. Along Bay Chaleur and into Gaspé Bay one finds such names as :

CARLETON	HAMILTON
CHANDLER	HOPE
COX	MARIA
DANIEL	MANN
DOUGLAS	RICHMOND
HALDIMAND	SYDENHAM
FAUVEL	WAKEHAM

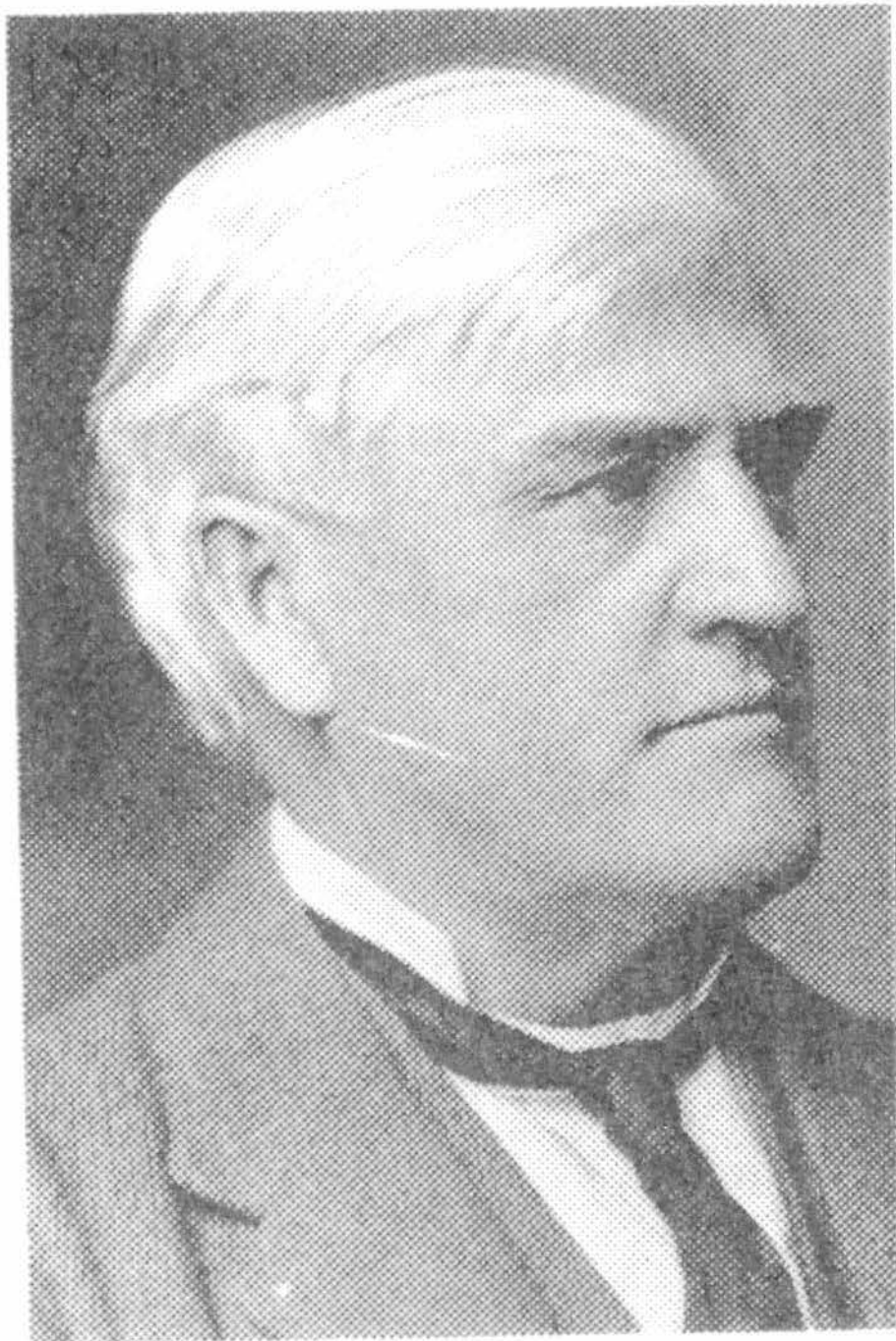
Articles of the "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" series has referred to these and other localities bearing family names from time to time. To any such list should be added the name, MARCIL, commemorating as it does the name of the Right Honorable Charles Marcil, Federal Member for Bonaventure County for thirty-seven consecutive years from 1900 until his death in 1937.

BACKGROUND

Charles Marcil, son of Charles and Marie Doherty Marcil, was born at Ste-Scholastique, Quebec, on July 1st., 1860. His father was a lawyer by profession. His mother was of Irish descent. The Marcil family had deep roots in Quebec - Charles was of the 9th generation. His early education was under private teachers. In 1886 he began a career in Journalism with the Montreal "HERALD" and over the years from then until 1897 he served as editor at the newspapers, "POST", "PATRIE" and "STAR". In February, 1892 he married Marie Louise Pearson of Montreal. Professionally, he was a member of the QUEBEC PRESS ASSOCIATION and the Secretary of the PRESS GALLERY OF QUÉBEC.

POLITICAL ARENA

Charles Marcil entered the Quebec political arena in 1897 as the Liberal candidate for Gaspé County. Though his opponent was no less than the legendary Edmund Flynn, Premier of Quebec, [Ref. GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY - No.93 "TO CLUTCH THE GOLDEN KEYS"]



RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES MARCIL

Marcil came within 19 votes of winning the election. The campaign established Marcil's reputation as an outstanding platform speaker and brought him to the favourable attention of many Gaspeians.

In 1900 Charles Marcil was a candidate for the Liberal party in the Federal election in the County of Bonaventure. He won the election and through the following 37 years of 10 Federal Governments, 40 Parliamentary sessions and the elections of 1904; 1908; 1911; 1917; 1921; 1925; 1926; 1930; and 1935 he was returned to the House of Commons by the electors of Bonaventure County as their Federal Member. He was a prominent and influential member of the party of Prime Minister, Sir Wilfred Laurier. From 1900 - 1930 he and his fellow Member of Parliament for Gaspé County, Rodolphe Lemieux, were a significant political force and influence in Bonaventure and Gaspé Counties.

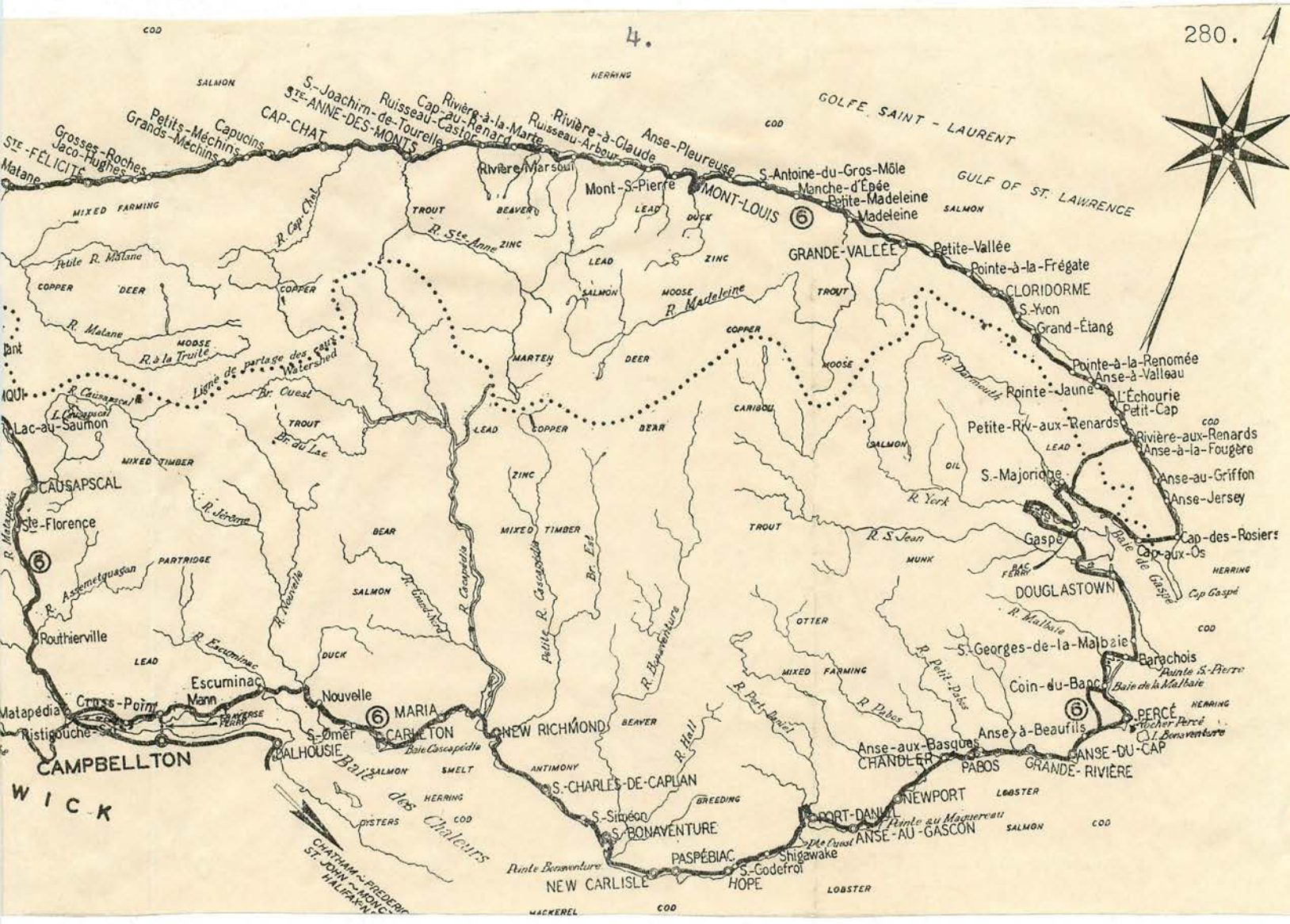
As Member, Charles Marcil was active and effective in obtaining government grants for roads, bridges, wharves, colonization projects, subsidies for steamship lines serving Gaspeia and the railway. He worked long and hard to have Paspébiac recognized and developed as a transoceanic seaport. His fellow Member for Gaspé did the same for Gaspé Harbour. And though their respective seaport projects were not realized their efforts contributed to the integration of the Gaspeian railway into the Canadian National Railway system. The Laurier era was one of relative prosperity and confidence. As the personal friend and trusted colleague of Laurier, Charles Marcil was well placed to promote his County of Bonaventure.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

In 1905 Charles Marcil was named as Assistant-Speaker of the House of Commons. He became Speaker in 1909 and a Member of the Privy Council. Upon his appointment as Speaker a great celebration in his honour was held in Bonaventure. The event drew thousands of his friends and political supporters who praised him as:

"...a high-minded, brilliant and reputable statesman..."

In 1908 the University of Ottawa honoured him with the award of the LL.D. degree. France bestowed upon him the Legion of Honour in 1911.



FEDERAL MEMBERS

BONAVENTURE COUNTY

1900 - 1937 HON. CHARLES MARCIL
 MEMBER FOR 37 CONSECUTIVE YEARS
 SPEAKER OF HOUSE OF COMMONS

GASPE COUNTY

1896-1911 HON. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX
 1917-1930 HON. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX.
 MEMBER FOR 28 YEARS.
 SPEAKER OF HOUSE OF COMMONS
 SENATOR

Charles Marcil was at the forefront of events of national importance. With reference to the Quebec Tercentenary it was said that - "...Charles Marcil was perhaps the most eloquent of all the speakers that the celebration brought forth in Ottawa..." The English Press referred to him "...as the silver-tongued man..." In 1934, when the 400th anniversary of Jacques Cartier in Gaspé was in planning it was the Rt.Hon.Charles Marcil who was appointed as Vice-President of the Federal Committee to mark this event of international significance.

[Ref. GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY NO.292 "400th ANNIVERSARY OF JACQUES
CARTIER IN GASPE.]

The summer home of Charles Marcil was at Bonaventure.

His death in 1937, while in office, was widely mourned throughout Bonaventure County and far beyond.