

Confederation 75 Category. Non-fiction

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Tabloid time: The day the news changed

The Herald, which debuted on May 12, 1946, was a stunning departure for Newfoundland newspapers. The country's version of the Grey Old Lady, the Telegram, fashioned itself after the Times of London and New York, and was churning out serviceable journalism since the 1870s. The Daily News followed the lead of the Telegram, as did other papers of the time.

Stirling's involvement with Ches Crosbie, Don Jamieson (later to become a federal Liberal Member of Parliament and cabinet member) and other members of the St. John's elite fighting against Confederation with Canada was reflected in the pages of the Herald, sometimes with the typical Stirling audacity and humour.

While propagandizing for the Responsible Government vote, the Herald would also run the headline "Anti-Smallwood Rat Amazes Housewife," a story about an errant rodent that fried itself in the back of a tube radio while Joey Smallwood was delivering a speech to the National Convention.

While there was fun in the pages of the Herald, it meant business, too. At one point, Stirling polled all United States Senators on the possibility of economic union. Remarkably, 70 responded, many favourably and the paper made much of the fact. "U.S. Senate Says Yes To Economic Union," blared the Herald headline.

"Supportive telegrams came from such Senate heavyweights as Robert Taft and Leverett Saltonstall, men whose names and reputations meant something even in Newfoundland," wrote Jamieson in his memoir.