

# Setting the record

## straight

# on Sir MacKenzie Bowell

By Henry Bury *Bowell p. 9*

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**B**etsy Dewar Boyce is a history buff who's spent the past decade researching, writing and trying to clear the reputation of one of the Quinte-area's most distinguished individuals.

She's finished a 300-page manuscript on Sir Mackenzie Bowell and is now hoping to have it published.

"If it is, I hope that will set the record straight on Sir Mackenzie Bowell...he wasn't a great prime minister but he wasn't a bad one either and he certainly didn't deserve the rap he got," maintains the 87-year-old Dufferin Avenue resident.

Bowell was Canada's prime minister from 1894-96. He was editor and owner of The Intelligencer, chairman of the Belleville Public School Board, an MP for Hastings North for 25 years, cabinet minister and senator.

Boyce, a resident of Belleville since 1978, acknowledged she's made

Bowell a pet historical project of hers "because he's a local man and we should restore his reputation.

"He's had very bad press, not so much when he was alive but only after he was dead. It wasn't deserved."

She's been researching everything about the former prime minister, a task made more difficult because he never wrote his memoirs.

"I think I probably know more about him than anyone else because I think no one else is interested in him like I am."

And why?

"Because he's local and because people should know about him."

Boyce said she's saddened by what has been written about Bowell, adding he was misunderstood and maligned.

"People have made fun of him for years but the truth is quite different. He was honest, a man of principle and was prepared to put the good of the country and the views of the courts before his own interests."

Bowell isn't the only local historical subject she's writ-