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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Crapaud Orders Ice Plant For Rink

By NEIL A. MATHESON

CRAPAUD HAD an exhibition of farm products in 1820, a starch factory opened there in 1833. The latter ran five years. I have no data on the time the exhibition lasted, but there are some indications it was the first in the province.

This is as good a way as any to introduce this week's column and talk about the village's skating rink and curling rink sitting side by side; its exhibition that grows larger each year; its provision of a house, an office, a waiting room and dispensary for a doctor, among other things.

Crapaud ordered last week the freezing plant for the artificial ice it will install this winter in the skating rink it built in 1953. It already has artificial ice in its curling rink with members and support that runs from Carleton to Nine Mile Creek, Bob Dawson told me a few days ago.

Bob and I avoided names pretty well as we sat and chatted, about the unusual developments in this village of less than 300 people – the figure I was given.

All of these developments were sparked by the Crapaud-Victoria Board of Trade which was organized back in 1944. It met in the library over Brent Wood's store. Brent, incidentally, was the first board chairman.

More Ambition Than Cash

THE IDEA of a skating rink had been talked about for five years when the decision was made in 1953 to actually build it. The sponsors ordered a carload of aluminum that cost \$6,000, and when it arrived at Breadalbane, the \$138 they had in the bank wouldn't even pay the freight.

The Amherst people who shipped it called the station agent, told him to open the car and the rink construction job was underway.

They built the rink that year. Fred Maynard, Bedeque was hired at \$75 per week to supervise the construction, the group bought lumber locally as much as they could. With various people helping, the rink became a reality.

Money was scarce so the sponsors went out one afternoon in 1953 and sold \$12,000 in stock.

The rink was opened that fall but an unpaid loan of upwards of \$9,000 was causing grief to the local banker. So the sponsors went to Charlottetown and got the loan guaranteed by the government, with Alan Stewart, then minister of agriculture, and MLA for the electoral district, signing his name to head the list of people who so indicated they backed the loan. Others included Joe Trowsdale and Jack Nicholson, both have since died. There were 15 or 16 names in all.

Loan Paid Back In Good Time

THEY GOT the money and paid it off in five or six years. The rink cost about \$35,000 in all, it would cost \$70,000 today, my informant estimated.

The reason the Board of Trade was organized is interesting. The idea was to have an authoritative voice in seeking things for the village. They went to Charlottetown in 1944, for example, to seek a snow plow to clear the roads in the vicinity.

Some of them drove the 24 miles by horse and sleigh; others drove the nine miles to Breadalbane and went by train from there.

Bob told me "Joe Trowsdale and I drove to Charlottetown; we had made arrangements with Wellington to stable our horses."

They reached the City Monday afternoon, but it started to snow that night, snowed all day Tuesday and continued through Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, he recalls. That was in March and it snowed all week. The snow was so deep you couldn't even walk up the street in Charlottetown.

"Joe and I started home Saturday. 'Tof' Beaton was ahead of us as far as Bonshaw. They finally got home that day. But some did not get home until well on in the next week, Mr. Dawson told me.

With the snow so heavy, the Crapaud bunch never went near the Highways Department. "We knew they couldn't send a plow out, with conditions as they were", he told me.

Both Mr. Trowsdale and Mr. Beaton have died since that time.

A board of trade meeting, sometime later, saw the members discuss the idea of an exhibition, so, "we formed an exhibition association right then and there", he recalled. It's still going strong and gaining in size each year, he said.

Curling Club Developed

THE CURLING club was built around 1964, and ladies from the Women's Institute and the Ladies Auxiliary of the curling club helped raise money by serving meals, and catering to various groups, a chore they do so well as I have observed on several occasions. Dances, bingos and various sorts of entertainment helped raise money for the eventual goal which was the curling rink itself.

The curling rink was built in 1967. Natural ice was used the first year but an artificial plant was installed in 1968. The rink is busy through the season, with members from Carleton to Nine Mile Creek, as he mentioned earlier.

Lacking a doctor, after the demise of Dr. Bovyer, the Board of Trade organized Northumberland Medical. A house for the doctor, an office, waiting room and a dispensary were provided.

There have been three doctors since then, Dr. Lund, the latest, has moved to Charlottetown as have Dr. Peter MacDonald and Dr. Stewart. "But we expect to have a doctor next year", Mr. Dawson said hopefully. The building cost around \$23,000. They formed a company and sold stock to finance it.

Crapaud had one of the first minor hockey teams in the province. They used to play their games then in the Victoria rink. With natural ice the problem was that the boys would be just getting into shape when playoffs were on. That will be corrected when the new ice plant is in operation.

The ice plant, and other alterations it makes necessary will cost an estimated \$60,000, considerably more than the rink cost back in 1953.

Good Fire Department

CRAPAUD HAS an efficient fire department under Chief Jack Myers. They hold practices and are equipped now with a new fire truck, plus one that was adapted for fire fighting. The department goes back to the war years, or shortly afterwards, I was told.

A fire hall was built in 1967 and sometimes the village meetings are held there. It has an office for the fire chief.

The exhibition is making \$2,500 available to the rink this year, and possibly may help further next year. The Village Commission is also helping.

The facilities are available for more than seasonal festivities. For example, Mr. Dawson said, if the exhibition should hit a really wet day it could be held inside. The cattle could be shown in the skating rink. Other items could be judged in the curling rink.

Everyone helps at Crapaud, the Woman's Institute practically paid for a community hall that was built back in 1929, I was told.

First Village In P.E.I.

I BELIEVE Mr. Dawson told me Crapaud was the first centre to organize as an incorporated village.

It's true – and Bob told me to emphasize this – that outside co-operation is responsible for much of the development now. But I keep wondering if any of these worthwhile developments would ever have materialized if the people responsible did not order that carload of aluminum back in 1953, because they didn't even have enough money to pay the freight.

IT WAS the George N. Orr that was wrecked off Savage Harbour 52 years ago last Sunday. The name used in last week's column was not correct.