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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Island Sea Monster 'Seen' At West Cape

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Add one real honest-to-goodness sea monster to the attractions Prince Edward Island can offer to the tourists. I got this story late last fall but I thought it would be a shame to waste such an obvious tourist attraction yarn on the bleak months of late autumn, so I kept it until summer.

I had intended to run the story last week, on the first of July; but I mislaid my notes temporarily, so here it is in the second week.

Raeford MacLean, O'Leary and John Ellis, West Point are two of the men who told me about the monster. Both men are reliable.

LENGTH OF the monster was estimated to run some 40 to 60 feet by Mr. MacLean, and perhaps a little longer than that, by Mr. Ellis.

Serpentine Head – Large Hump

IT HAS a serpentine head that's about three feet long, Mr. MacLean told me. The animal's top contour slopes back to a large hump some distance behind the head. The body color is dark. The general shape appears to be serpentine, though, of course, much of the body could not be seen as it would lie fairly deep in the water.

The monster was only about 200 yards away when Mr. MacLean first sighted it. Then it went under the water and it was probably 500 yards away when it surfaced again. Of course distances are approximate, they must be when one is trying to estimate them on the water. Mr. MacLean suggested it would run 40 to 60 feet, and again the variation is understandable, for it's difficult to measure distance on the water, particularly when one gets only a fleeting glance at an object. The monster was travelling parallel to the shore when it surfaced twice, Mr. MacLean recalled.

MR. ELLIS'S story is very much the same, though he thought the sea monster was more than 60 feet long. Mr. MacLean and Mr. Ellis were together when they sighted it.

"I had gone to see Mr. Ellis to sell him insurance, said Mr. MacLean, an insurance underwriter. They were just about to enter the house, I believe, when they turned toward the shore which is nearby, and saw the monster.

Mr. Ellis is a boat builder but he fishes lobsters in season. I recall looking out through his living room window and having him point exactly to the spot he saw the huge sea resident that may yet become a prime tourist attraction.

The then quiet water of Egmont Bay is reasonably close to the Ellis residence.

Others Have Also Seen Monster

MRS. ELLIS told me that her brother, William Stewart, had also seen it. Mr. Stewart resides in Halifax now. He was a lobster fisherman when he lived on the Island.

Raeford MacLean told me this week that Fred Livingstone, a young man who lives in Dunblane, about three miles from West Point, has also seen it.

The monster has been seen for many years I was told. Mr. MacLean's father, Leslie MacLean, Dunblane saw it back about 1938. He hurried home to get a rifle he had purchased to shoot seals. But the thing was out of reach when he got back to the shore. It was probably 1956 when Raeford MacLean and Mr. Ellis spotted the unusual visitor.

I want to emphasize that this is not "a ghost story". The facts have been given to me in all seriousness by the men whom I have quoted. They are serious-minded, reliable men who told me the story of what they and others had seen.

There's one indisputable fact about a sea monster story; you can't disprove it. I'm thinking now about the Loch Ness monster that has been getting publicity for that part of Scotland for many years.

Loch Ness Monster Yarn Cited

LOCH NESS is a deep lake – it's 754 feet at the deepest part, a reliable encyclopaedia reports, and it has had "an aquatic monster . . . accounts of which were much publicized in the early 1930's.

The lake is about 23 miles long and about a mile wide. It's enclosed by steep and often-wooded mountains and thus seems an ideal setting for a monster yarn. But it has an outlet in the Ness River, so its monster could vacate the place. The Island's monster could leave Egmont Bay even easier, but it's still a good story. I commend it to the attention of our tourist people. Perhaps they could get some hints from the Scots on how to get the most visitor interest mileage out of the thing.

After all, the Scots don't guarantee a visitor will see the Loch Ness monster. But it still gets them publicity and plenty of tourists, I believe.

Beluga Whale Recalled

I'm reminded of the smaller "monster" the West Prince people talked of for a few days until our Frank Weeks, and a number of companions trapped a 1400-pound Beluga whale in the Kildare River.

Our office encyclopaedia says the Beluga is a native of the Arctic seas, that it sometimes strays as far south on the Atlantic seaboard as the St. Lawrence River.

How the Beluga ever got as far south as the Island is one wonder, how it got into the waters of the Kildare is another.

But here's the part of the story I like best. The Alberton lads sold the whale for \$4,000 to the New York Zoological society for the aquarium at Coney Island.

THEY FITTED up a water tight box on an ordinary truck. They bought the most comfortable and sturdy mattress available and put it on the bottom of the box to absorb the worst of the road shocks. They filled the tank with salt water and they purchased ice where they could get it, to keep the water reasonably cool – it was in the heat of summer. The boys made it to New York.

But I liked the story some of the lads told when they returned. Had the whale died, en route to N. Y., some of them at least had made plans to keep it from smelling long

enough to get back at least the cost of the trip. They planned on stopping at towns on the way back home, and charging 25 cents per head to see the Beluga.

Don Oland Here Next Week

Don Oland, president of the Atlantic Winter Fair, will be here on Monday. He speaks to Rotary at noon, and at nine o'clock at night he meets Island breeders and showmen at Birch Court. Former showmen have been notified by letter, but new showmen are welcome at the meeting.

To make it all the more inviting, the provincial department of agriculture is providing coffee and doughnuts, if I remember correctly what R. C. (Bob) Parent told me. He's the Island director on the AWF board.