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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Anti-Car Views Recalled In '17

By NEIL A. MATHESON

THE ISLAND Patriot of May 4, 1917 reported a meeting in which angry and fearful Islanders met in Charlottetown to criticize a member of the legislature who, they charged, had voted for allowing automobiles to run after signing a pledge to act otherwise.

For younger readers or people who have come to this province since the automobile controversy of those earlier days it is explained that there was great opposition to the horseless carriage.

I recall that I had a column on this same subject recently and Mrs. Keith Rogers, Charlottetown called to tell me her late husband had been involved in an unusual incident at that time.

Keith was driving the car – his father W.K. Rogers owned one of the first cars here. I believe that they were making the trip at night, so as not to disturb people with horse-drawn carriages; there wouldn't be many of them on the road at that time.

But he did see a horse and wagon coming to meet them so he stopped the car and went ahead to lead the horse by the automobile.

'Look After My Wife'

BUT THE MAN driving the horse told him: "Never mind the horse, he'll be alright; you look after my wife."

I have often heard a tale like that, but this is the first time I've heard it from a person I know is telling the truth about the incident.

Getting back to the Patriot story of 52 years ago, the meeting was told that the Liberals had caused their candidates at the last election to sign a pledge they would vote for the repeal of the then motor vehicle act, and the re-enactment of the Statute of 1908 – apparently a ban on cars.

The meeting was told autos had been brought here against wishes of the people as expressed in a plebiscite in the first place.

The meeting was called to chide one John MacMillan, one of the local representatives. It was held in the Orange Hall on Great George Street.

Three Days For Cars

THE COMPLAINING speakers recalled that certain roads on the Island had first been opened to automobiles by people signing permission for them to operate on three days of the week, retaining the right for their horse-drawn vehicles for four days a week.

The resolution from the meeting said the electors "view with alarm the continual encroachment on the rights of free people by the Legislature, and the extra concessions mean a greater number of cars and thus a greater nuisance."

The meeting resolved "to continue the agitation in order that the rights of the people might prevail."

Donald Andrews, New Glasgow said the government was forcing autos on the people.

Wanted Cars To Run

N.J. McNEILL, Long Creek said the pledge signed by Mr. McMillan applied no further than the first session of the legislature. He had fulfilled his obligation when he voted against the autos at the session of 1916.

Mr. McNeill then referred to a petition signed by 90 percent of the people for the opening of a road between Rocky Point and Long Creek.

Angus MacPhee, New Haven said he understood it had been signed to give permission only to a Mr. Betts to run his (?). He collected eggs, likely for the old P.E.I. Egg Circle which would be in operation at the time, though the old Pat had made no reference to the Circle.

Incidentally, the Patriot of the day was censured for being "in favor of" automobiles.

Finally the meeting resolved to warn anyone who intended purchasing cars in the near future that they would do so at their own risk.

The farmers said they were considering ways and means to protect their rights.

Gigantic Redwood Tree

MY FRIEND Mazie Crabbe, Charlottetown has given me a picture of the giant redwood tree that crashed in Yosemite this year.

The gigantic tree was said to have a tunnel through it that was eight feet wide, nine feet high and 28 feet long. The item (?) does not say how big the tree itself was. But it was 234 feet in height and was estimated to have been 1,500 to 2,000 years old.

Millions of tourists have driven through the tree, either in motor coaches or in autos, since 1881, the item said.

Christmas Cactus Again

A SUMMERSIDE LADY writes to ask if a Christmas cactus blooming at Christmas and at Easter is unusual. I am no authority but since I got into this Christmas cactus story I have been told by a number of people that they do bloom at Easter as well as at Christmas, at least some of them do.

My most recent reference was to the Cactus at Peakes which was blooming profusely in June; that I do believe is unusual. Any comment from readers?