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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Old Hockey Player Encountered At Fair

By NEIL A. MATHESON

I MET MANY interesting people last week while I was covering the livestock part of the Provincial Exhibition. One of them was an old friend, Irvin MacKie, who lived then on the Keppoch Road close to where my own home has been these last 25 years.

Readers will recall that I did a column week before last on a talk with Buller Murley. He talked about the Levin Fox junior hockey team and I found that Irvin had played on that team that won the Maritime title back in the very early 1930's.

A few years ago when Ottawa blatantly announced they were going to build the Causeway, The Guardian next day carried a story on Mayor Gilbert Bell's prediction that the establishment of a causeway would ruin Borden.

I suggested that day that somebody should go to the Strait of Canso and see how Mulgrave and Port Hawkesbury fared after the Causeway had joined Cape Breton Island to Nova Scotia and the ferries had been abandoned. I was assigned to the job.

Port Hawkesbury Thriving

I HAD DONE the Mulgrave side of the story and was just about to start looking up spokesmen in Port Hawkesbury when I bumped into Irvin MacKie and he made it much easier for me. He took me in his car and, because of his knowledge of the place and its people, he could and did take me to anyone to whom I wanted to talk.

I recalled that the Mulgrave spokesman told me the town had never recovered from the blow of losing the ferries. The Port Hawkesbury mayor's story was completely different. "I only wish it had happened 10 years earlier", he said. The town was thriving, the mayor told me.

The town continues to thrive, Irvin tells me.

Meeting my friend last week brought back many interesting memories.

Irvin had a trip to the Boston Bruins camp when Art Ross was their boss. He also had a turn in the training camp of Detroit Red Wings. When he arrived Jack Adams, the then manager, asked him if he had enough money to eat a few days. Irvin had not. So Adams handed him a 10-dollar bill. Payday was coming soon.

When the pay came the big Keppoch youngster handed Mr. Adams back his 10-dollar loan. Adams told him later that that was the first time such a thing had happened to him since he got into managing NHL hockey.

Adams is dead now but Mr. MacKie has at home a letter from Jack Adams which he treasures. "Next time I come to the Island I'll bring it with me, and show it to you", he said as we parted.

Recalls 1935 Triumph

GETTING BACK to Mr. Murley he recalled that he had written publicity for the Liberals when he was with The Patriot back in 1935. That's the time the Liberals elected 30 members and that is all the seats there were at the time.

One of his recollections stirred memories of stories I heard as a youngster from war veterans. It was the story of the way military units from this side were broken up and the men allocated to other units when they went to England.

Buller was 17 when he joined up when war broke out in 1914. He was stationed in Sydney, Cape Breton until he was able to join the Light Horse in Charlottetown – the old unit was recruiting for the 6<sup>th</sup> C.M.R., a mounted infantry regiment which mobilized in Amherst. This regiment was recruited from all over the Maritimes, he tells me.

They went to England in 1945 and they were in France by the autumn of that year. The unit under its original name never did become famous because it was broken up, and most of the men were assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> C.M.R. battalion which originated in the Eastern Townships of Quebec.

Thus, Mr. Murley explains, his original unit never did become famous under its own name, though the regiment with which they actually served “had a great fighting record”.

Buller was transferred from the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion to the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade Signal section.

### Could Dig Up Stories

I REMEMBER that I worked with Buller in my early days as a newspaper man, and I never did see a better man to go out on the street and come back with two or three stories in a very brief time just when they were needed most.

Buller left newspapering, though, and went with the Federal department of labor 1936 to 1941, and then opened the Unemployment Insurance office in Charlottetown as it was known at the time. He stayed with the job until he retires because of age in 1962.

Recalling the story of the special hockey train to Summerside, and to Charlottetown when the Summerside Crystals played here, a friend of mine has since told me that he once hired a special train to Summerside for \$75.

And that reminds me of the most unusual “special train” story. It was told by the late Calvin Lewis – he worked for both The Guardian and The Patriot at different times, when they were separately owned.

Once we were yarning about unusual experiences and Calvin recalled that he and Bill Agnew once hired a special train to take them from Charlottetown to Alberton. Memory is sketchy but I believe they had missed the regular train and it was mighty important that they get home that night.

I talked to Bill about it once, but he asked me not to mention it so long as he was alive.