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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Regulations On Cars Were Most Unusual

By N. A. MATHESON
Provincial-Farm Editor

I CALLED J. David Stewart this week concerning an interesting and humorous reference to early automobile regulations, which I am going to tell you about today. But here's an interesting note about Dave, as I know him, and a trip he's making to New Zealand later this year.

When New Zealand's high commissioner to Canada, Sir Leon Gotz, was here early this month, The Guardian recalled in its editorial columns that back in 1858 a fairly large number of people from this Island – it would be a colony of England then – emigrated to New Zealand on the ship "Prince Edward".

Mr. Stewart is going to New Zealand for a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which will be held in late November and early December. He would appreciate hearing from any Islander who may have relatives in New Zealand, so he can get in touch with them when he is there.

IF ANY of you have such relatives you can either write or call Mr. Stewart personally, or you can tell me about it and I shall gladly pass the information on to him.

Mr. Stewart is serious about this matter, so I hope that some of you will get in touch with him, if any of you still correspond with descendants of the Island people who went to that country 107 years ago.

Reason I called Dave was to ask him about a reference to old automobile regulations he made in his speech on the Budget in the legislature last year.

Automobile Regulations Read

MR. STEWART read an item from an old Guardian which must have applied to the time in the very early 1900's, though I don't know the date. The old paper had been sent to Mr. Stewart, who was a minister in the Shaw government at the time.

No. 1 said: "Upon discovering an approaching team, the automobilist must stop by the side of the road and cover his machine with a blanket, painted to correspond to the scenery."

No. 2 concerned the speed limit, and listen to this:

"The speed limit on country roads this year will be a secret, and the penalty for violation will be \$10.00 for every mile that an offender is caught going in excess of it."

No. 3 was also good: "In case an automobile makes a team run away, the penalty will be \$50 for the first mile, \$100 for the second mile and \$200 for the third mile that the team runs, in addition to the usual damage.

Horns, Bells, Revolvers, Bombs

BUT HERE'S the real odd ball one: "On approaching a corner where he cannot command a view of the road ahead, the automobilist must stop not less than one hundred yards from the turn, toot his horn, ring a bell, fire a revolver and send up three bombs at intervals of five minutes."

Regulation number five said "Automobiles must be seasonably painted, that is so they will merge with the pastoral ensemble and not be startling. They must be green in the spring, golden in summer, red in the autumn and white in winter."

And about the final one Mr. Stewart quoted:

"Automobiles running on country roads at night must send up a red rocket every mile, and wait ten minutes for the road to clear. They may then proceed carefully, blowing their horns and shooting Roman candles.]"

This has been a rare departure from my normal custom of writing about things that are purely of this province. But the combination of the fact the item was voiced by an Islander in our legislature and the interesting look at the past of automobiling – at least I found it interesting – caused me to use it. I don't really know what area the regulations applied to.

For the younger readers, the above precautions were for the benefit of those who traveled in horse drawn vehicle, as just about everyone did when the cars were first introduced.

And don't forget to tell Mr. Stewart if you have some relative or friend in New Zealand, whose ancestors came from P.E.I. Or tell me about it and I'll pass it on to him.

United Church Is Affiliation

LAST WEEK this column was on Rev. David MacDonald and Father Gerald Steele of Alberton and their unusual spirit of co-operation. Several times I referred to the young minister as a "Presbyterian". He is a minister in the United Church, as I have always known, though I did make him a Presbyterian in several references. For those of you who are keeping scrap books of this column, please change that to United Church, in the interests of accuracy.

Since then my young friend has heeded the call of the world of politics. Following my usual policy of impartiality, I'm merely going to extend good wishes and leave it at that.