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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Livestock Toll Stresses Peril

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial-Farm Editor

THE HEAVY losses suffered by some P.E.I. cattlemen from potato-top-killer poisoning is most regrettable but it should serve as a grim warning to use the utmost caution in future.

John Roberts, Middleton seems to have had the heaviest loss with eleven animals dead, but there are many others across the province. Mr. Roberts told me this week that his herd battered down a gate and got into the potato field, and that is something that happens occasionally despite the utmost care. The fact cows like the salty taste of the poisonous chemical makes it even more dangerous.

There are so many ways that the stuff can be fatal that it requires more than the usual amount of caution. It can drift across a fence into an adjoining grass or pasture field. It can be washed down a slope by a heavy rain. One man stopped to open and close a gate on his farm after spraying a field. A small amount leaked into a slight depression in the lane. A later rain made a small puddle, cows drank the poisoned water and five or six animals died, Dr. Hammond Kelly told me this week

The heaviest loss, Dr. Kelly recalled, involved the loss of 18 fat cattle several years ago. The farmer was feeding 20 in the spring. Wishing to spray for flies one day, he grabbed what he thought was a can of fly spray and lost all but two of them. The can contained potato-top killer, Dr. Kelly explained.

The stuff is terribly dangerous - it's dynamite - and merits all the caution that can possibly be taken in handling.

There are machines in use that cut the potato-tops but Glen Ramsay, district seed potato inspector, tells me that they don't do the job the top killer does. Agriculture Minister Andrew MacRae tells me manufacturers are experimenting with a non-poisonous top killer but results thus far have not been successful.

Islander Seen At Halifax

A WEEK AGO today I was in Halifax to watch Mrs. Gwen MacLean, wife of Fisheries Minister Angus MacLean, clunk a bottle of champagne against the bow of MV Confederation, a second before the new ferry slid down the ways of the Halifax shipyards.

The charming Gwen showed that she's thoughtful, too, when she sent her beautiful bouquet of red roses to the lady who makes the Matheson house a home. Thinking I might be embarrassed carrying a bouquet of roses across the Strait on a plane, she even got another lady (Mrs. Heath Macquarrie) to carry them for me. The bouquet, and the thought, were deeply appreciated.

The scene was the Nova Scotia capital but it might have been Charlottetown so far as the people attending were concerned. Premier Walter Shaw, four of his ministers and two of his private members were there. Mrs. Shaw was making her first plane flight and she enjoyed a smooth trip with nary a bump in beautiful weather.

IT WAS the first time I had seen Lloyd MacPhail, MLA since he won the 2nd Queens byelection July 17, so my congratulations were belated. And it was the first time I had the pleasure of talking to Health Minister Hubert MacNeill. I was interested to find that Dr. MacNeill has a farm at Mont Carmel, not far from the farm of his colleague, Labor Minister Henry Wedge. Dr. MacNeill specializes in Shorthorn cattle on his farm.

Mr. Wedge is not sure yet whether any of his Wedge North Country Cheviot sheep will be showing at the Royal Winter Fair this year. Animals he bred have gone to the championship circle at the last two fairs, though they were shown by another man, which memory tells me was Allison Stewart, Dunstaffnage.

THE PRESENCE of the four P.E.I. members of Parliament made it a distinctly PC gathering so far as this province was concerned. I had a pleasant chat with Mrs. Margaret MacDonald MP and found she has come through her first brush with the difficulty of a Commons job, just as good as any of her male counterparts. The jobs can be exacting and discouraging at times. Anyone that tells you something else is trying to run a big bluff.

Among those I met was Allie Kerr, now manager of the Bank of Commerce at Halifax. Allie was a star basketball player when he was with the bank here in the early 30's. Last time I saw him was in Ottawa in 1957 when he was manager of a branch there. He returned to Halifax, he tells me, several years ago. Montague folks will recall that he did a managing stint there once while the regular manager was on vacation.

Montgomery Hall Is Admired

MANY FORMER students who visited Montgomery Hall Monday must have wished that they had been born later so they could enjoy the comfort and convenience of such a beautiful and well-appointed building.

I admired just about everything I saw, but the thing that struck me most forcible was the fact that there is a beautiful reception room provided where the boys can call to meet their girlfriends.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of former students will recall with me that in the days of the late Dr. Samuel Robertson, for example, a boy could get into real trouble if he as much as spoke to a girl in the corridor, as they traveled from one classroom to another. Another former student recalled this week that boys and girls had to use separate stairways at that time.

I'M SURE, too, that many former students will recall the figure of Dr. Robertson standing just inside the front door, watch in hand, as the zero hour approached in the morning. When the minute hand reached the deadline only the head would shake negatively, and the rest of the students would be turned away.

It happened to me just once. The chap ahead of me made it but I got the shaking head that turned me down. Luckily, I was a football player, and knew a backdoor entrance through which we need to enter the basement from the practice field, which

was located where the Vocational School now stands. So I made my class and avoided trouble. It must have had a good effect on me at that, for I cannot recall ever being late again.

Lime Spreader Is Demonstrated

A LIME-SPREADING demonstration at the Queens Plowing Match, I'm told, emphasized the new look in the application of ground limestone. The idea is to get the lime here in the fall and get it on the land, thus avoiding the rush of spring work on the farm, and the annual pressure of freight transportation across the Northumberland Strait.

Not so long ago, most farmers believed that lime had to be applied on red land. It had to have direct contact with the soil if it was to be effective. Now, I'm told, they apply lime anytime, on grass or grain, or on the land when it is being cultivated.

THE SPREADER, a new idea here - I'm told the only one on the province is in the Millview area - operates from a power take off and can spread up to two carloads per day. It will handle the lime when it is wet, spread it over a 25-foot strip. The wet or damp lime will not drift across the fence into a neighbour's field, like the dry stuff does, I was told this week by a man who is pushing lime sales, and is enthused over the new machine.

He claims the lime can now be bought in bulk and spread, for the money it used to cost for bagged lime.

Incidentally, a 100-pound bag of ground limestone, is the heaviest, soggiest 100 pounds I ever tried to lift. A bag of dairy ration, or some other livestock feed feels light by comparison. If anyone doubts that statement, just try lifting them.