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## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Early Motoring Days Recalled

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LAST WEEK'S column on the early days of automobiles brought so many reactions, I think I had better tell you about some of them right away. I have not been able to pinpoint the year that the rule of the road was changed to "drive to the right" though I have diligently searched through the yearly issues of "The Laws of Prince Edward Island" and there's no sign of it until 1928, as I said last week, but Dr. D. Trevor Waye, Charlottetown has a picture of a car with a "Drive to the Right" sticker on the windshield, and the date is May 25, 1924. So that, I believe, must be the first year the rule was in force. A letter from Kenneth Ross, Bridgetown yesterday tells me the Stewart Government passed the amendment in 1934.

One of the more interesting calls came from Professor J. H. Blanchard who taught me at PWC when both of us were considerably younger. He was a teacher at St. Dunstan's College - it was not a university then - in 1908 and sat in the gallery of the Legislature when the bill was passed banning the cars from Island roads.

THE OPPOSITION was strong, some speeches were really violent," said Mr. Blanchard who recalls one Bedeque member "who had a great gift of language and expressive gestures. Caouette had nothing on him", the retired teacher told me. "We won't be able to keep our cows in the pasture, no fence will hold them" the Bedeque man had thundered, "if we allow those fearsome autos to run on our roads."

"Woe to us if we ever allow those machines into this province", another man had shouted. The public feeling against automobiles was terrific my old teacher told me. "And when the law was changed in 1913 to allow cars on roads where at least 75 per cent of the residents signed an agreement that cars could run on their road, I often wondered how safe those who signed were from the 25 percent who refused", Mr. Blanchard recalled.

### Union Road Was First Opened

BART HARDY, Union Road, 86, told me this week his road was the first to be opened to cars and he is the only man still living who signed that agreement in 1913. Promoters of automobile traffic wanted that road opened to permit tourist traffic to the Cliff House, now the Stanhope Beach Inn, on the north side. After the feat had been accomplished "we had a big dinner at the Cliff House to celebrate the accomplishment", he told me.

Mr. Hardy is also the last surviving member of the P. E. I group who went with the Canadian contingent of soldiers to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, in 1897 and he

showed me the medal he received from the hand of King Edward VII, who was then Prince of Wales.

ONE OF the calls directed me to W. C. Lawson, 60 Green Street, who owned the first car in Alberton where he was a bank manager, and he had some interesting recollections. He bought the car in 1918 and recalls it was quite an experience to make a return trip to Summerside - about 90 miles - in one day.

He was returning from Summerside once when he got a stop signal from two men in a horse-drawn wagon. Then he got a sign to come ahead slowly, but the horse was nibbling at the grass on the side of the road, by the time Mr. Lawson was driving past him. "The animal didn't even recognize us," he told me. Yet the owner of the horse was out on the road several days later trying to stop motorists with a pitch fork.

### Stuck In Mudhole Even In Summer

"WE WERE stuck a great deal in mudholes," even in the summer time that would happen after a heavy rain, he told me. Mr. Lawson recalls that a Captain Taylor who was in charge of a government boat that looked after buoys, and R. H. Rogers, who was then superintendent of education, wanted to get from Alberton to Summerside one evening so they could catch the morning train to Charlottetown.

Mr. Lawson agreed to take them after his office closed, and he made Summerside about 10 o'clock at night. But he got stuck on a back road on the return trip - the main Western road wasn't open to cars - when he got into ruts that were hidden by pools of water that covered the road. He had to get a team to haul him out, "but that was only one of many similar experiences", he assured me.

THE FIRST car owned in Western Prince was purchased by B. I. Raynor on the Kildare Road who lived where Don Campbell lives now, I was told. Raynor was a prominent fox man and that recalls an era which is a story in itself.

Recalling stories I had heard of the long swamp on the Western Road, I asked Mr. Lawson about it. There were five miles of corduroy road with logs laid crosswise on the top and you had to bump over them, he told me. If clay covered the timbers at first, it got shaken off, or filtered down through the timber by the movement of traffic. It made really rough going.

### Early Incidents Are Recalled

I DROPPED in on John MacKenzie last Friday on my way across country from Crapaud and Westmoreland to Breadalbane, and found he had first-hand knowledge of several things I talked about last week.

John who lives in Rose Valley, was at Breadalbane the day Fred Wotton's car arrived on a flat car from Summerside, and he helped him unload it. It had to come by railway because Mr. Wotton was not allowed to take it over the roads. He drove the 34(?)-mile round-trip mail route Breadalbane to Victoria, and had canvassed the box holders and received their consent to use the car on the route. John thinks it was two years before the First Great War, which started in 1914, though I think it must have

been in 1913, for that's when the law was passed allowing cars to operate on roads where residents gave their consent.

JOHN ALSO remembers the other incident I spoke about, when a prominent Charlottetown man stopped just in time to avoid having his tires cut by a hay-mower knife that had been spiked on to a plank, and buried in the sand at the bottom of a very steep hill.

The man was Sam Kennedy, later mayor of Charlottetown, whose son Sam and daughter Mrs. Ireta Sutherland, are well known here. He had the knife in the back seat of the touring car he was driving, and asked a group who had gathered near Neil MacKay's store if they knew anything about it.

Earle Howatt, Tryon tells me he remembers the first car the late W. K. Rogers owned in 1904. "You could hear it a mile away", he recalls. Early cars were noisy, they didn't have the whisper quiet mufflers of modern times.

### First Regulations Are Listed

SEVERAL HOURS hunting through old laws of the province revealed some interesting regulations. The Motor Vehicle Act of 1922, for example, provided that cars were limited to 12 miles per hour in any city of incorporated town - it was changed to 15 M.P.H. in 1928.

The speed limit was 10 M.P.H. on highways approaching an intersection, a steep descent, a bridge or if the operator had not a clear view of the road at least 100 yards ahead.

The overall speed limit on any highway was 25 miles per hour. The driver of the automobile had to stop when requested to do so, and slow to 12 miles per hour when meeting a man "in charge of a horse or other animal" and must use every precaution to avoid frightening the animal.

A bell, horn or other mean of warning was required.

THE ACT had one clause which prevented "strewing tacks, bits of glass, scraps of metal or other materials that are liable to injure tires on motor vehicles." But the penalty of \$25 to \$50 for violators was light compared, for example, to the \$500 fine that had been provided 14 years earlier for a man who would drive an automobile on the road, when the ban on cars was imposed in 1908.

The speed limit was six miles per hour on heavy vehicles with rubber tires that weighed more than four and one-half tons when loaded, and four miles per hour if the heavy vehicle had iron or steel tires.

The total width could not exceed 96 inches.

### Old Parties To Sweep P.E.I.

I HAVE a quick answer today to the question many of you are asking "Who is going to win the April 8 election?" Both of the old-line parties are going to take all four Island seats. They told me that this week in all seriousness. I didn't ask the New Democrats because they do not choose candidates until tomorrow night.

One of the top PC spokesmen told me they have won the four Island seats in the three elections since 1957, and see no reason why they should lose any of them now, considering how the Diefenbaker government has treated this province, and the way it is handling the present situation.

MEN WHO are directing the Liberal campaign here insist their party will win the four seats, and contend the goal is feasible on a percentage basis. "Even in Queens where the majorities were greatest in 1960 - Angus MacLean had a margin of 2,745 and Heath MacQuarrie 2,218 over the top Liberal who was Ira Lewis - "we have to cut them down much less than we did last time. The PC's had a 28 per cent plurality in 1958 and we cut that down to 11 per cent last year. An equal percentage reduction this time would give us a six percent edge", one of the top party strategists told me this week.