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ACROSS THE ISLAND

1925-26 Winter Seen Really Big Snow Year

By NEIL A. MATHESON

HERE WE'VE been talking all these years about the terrific snow winter of 1922-23 and all the time another winter, close to that one, produced considerably more snow.

It was a St. Peter's RR 3 man who wrote some time ago suggesting I take a look at the weather records for 1925-26 – I was in Sackville that winter and do not recall it.

Last week I called Hector Arsenault, in charge of weather records at the Research Station, and SURE ENOUGH, that winter produced more snow than 1923, the one we've been talking about so long, and so have many others who stop me on the street for a chat.

Here is the snow fall of 1925-26 as contained in the record sheets at the Research Station:

There was no snow in October, none in November, December produced only a modest 18 inches.

But January saw a whopping 51 inches fall, February was also strong with 47 inches. March had 16.2 inches, April had 18.2 and May had four inches.

An Impressive 154 Inches

ADD THEM UP and you get an impressive 154.4 inches.

The snowfall recorded for 1922-23 goes like this:

November 1922 seven inches; December 42 inches; January 1923, 40 inches; February 5.5 inches; March 47.2 inches; April 6.7 inches for a total of 148.9 inches.

That means that the 1925-26 winter had six inches more snowfall than did the 1922-23 winter.

I had never heard anyone previously suggest that might have been the case.

The St. Peter's RR 3 man asked specifically that I would not use his name. However I am going to now, seeing that he made such an important contribution to our province's snowfall history.

So, Ken Ross my thanks for your letter, and congratulations on your keenness in keeping weather history straight in your mind.

Mr. Ross also recalls that there was some snow fall in October of 1922; he recalls that sleighs were used for a day or so around St. Peter's. The fact it is not recorded at the Weather Observatory charts at the Research Station is explainable in two ways. One is that a "trace" is recorded on the weather charts, which means that snow fell, but it was not enough to measure.

The other possibility, and indeed likely explanation, is that probably more snow fell at St. Peter's than fell in the area where the weather observation is made.

I had intended to talk of something else this week, but this revelation, credited to Mr. Ross, is so important that I just couldn't pass it up.

I have some observations made by H. E. Moore, City that I want to pass along, also a few other items.

Other Observations Noted

ANDREW BAGNALL, City recalls that back in the winter of 1904-05 Mrs. Bagnall's father and mother had driven to Charlottetown with a horse and wagon from their home in the Brookfield area and that was on January 28. It started to really snow that evening, he said. The parents were Mr. and Mrs. Archie MacPherson; it had been a fairly clear winter up to that time.

And Jim, (Big Jim) Pendergast, Charlottetown tells me that he recalls the next winter was very mild.

Hopgood Rayner of Clermont, near Kensington, harvested turnips in January.

Jim himself left home on February 2 for Georgetown on the way to Pictou. And the water was quietly lapping against the Pier at Georgetown where angry ice floes, or solid ice was seen during so many of the storm-tossed winters of the past. "There was not a bit of ice in Georgetown harbor", Jim tells me.

CMBA Hall Cellar Dug

BETWEEN CHRISTMAS and New Years in 1905 they were digging the basement for the new CMBA Hall in Kensington, Mr. Pendergast recalls.

They were using a horse-drawn scoop so there was no frost in the ground.

There was dust flying on the roads in February, he said.

Jim went from Pictou to Boston. In mid-March he was in Washington State. He had been in Vancouver. He left the West for good in 1911.

A long-time friend, Harry Craswell, Charlottetown, was the lucky guy who missed that hockey special to Summerside in 1923. He ran as fast as he could trying to catch it, but just missed; the train was starting to pick up speed as he dashed for the rear car. He was very lucky, for he missed a week of lonely, and often cold, waiting in the Special that was stuck at Emerald on the way back.

Hampshire Man Was Killed

ON JANUARY 18 I had an item from Norman Nicholson telling of Danny MacKinnon having been killed by the train after being trapped in a cutting near Wiltshire. He said one other man was killed the same year.

A South Milton lady, Mrs. Orville Curtis, tells me that man was her husband's grandfather, Wesley Stewart who lived with his family in Hampshire. W. Roy Stewart, Milton is a son; two daughters are Mrs. Stanley Curtis, Milton and Mrs. Charles Stevenson, Fredericton. Mrs. Curtis was not born at the time. She never did see her father.

Railway Contract Let In 1871

IT'S 100 YEARS since the tender was let for the construction of the railway on this Island – it wasn't a province until 1873 – so that this is the centennial of that important event.

Speaking of snowstorms late in the year, there were a number of noteworthy storms in April, I am told by Mr. Moore who has a record of them dating back to 1924.

In 1924, for example, heavy north to northeast gales with snow on April 15 caused snowplows to be carried on all trains. The following day all trains were delayed, and some of them were cancelled.

On April 20 of that year a snow storm caused a plow extra to be sent out between Borden and Summerside.

And here's an "ice in the Strait" item. The ferry arrived at Tormentine at 10 a.m. after being out since the 19th.

And on May 2 of 1924 an item said "The ferry made no crossing yesterday evening, arrived at Borden this morning, heavy ice."

Sleighbing On June 3

ENOUGH SNOW fell in Alberton for sleighbing on June 3, 1944.

On April 6, 1926 a "Double-header with wing plow went on the Tignish run. The train never left Tignish April 5 on account of the storm.

A note on April 7 said "Road west of Summerisde tied up, three double header plow trains up there."

On April 9 a double header went east to open the Elmira branch.

April 12 of that year the Georgetown train was stuck and the Tignish train never moved out.

The next day the rotary plow went out at midnight, "Georgetown branch still blocked."

And how about this one; on April 20 of that year the report said:

"Very Bad North East storm, one of the worst of the winter. There were double headers on all trains, and a plow to Borden."

The road was blocked west of Summerside and the Murray Harbor train stuck at Vernon on April 22.

Six inches of snow fell in Summerside on May 7, 1926 and two inches fell in Tignish on May 11.

There were two to five feet of snow fall on April 10, 1946; the Murray Harbor train was stuck at Grandview with no plow, and a plow extra was sent around by Mt. Stewart to dig them out.

All of the above is information from Mr. Moore to whom I express my thanks and appreciation.