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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Blindness Can't Halt SDU's Class Topper

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I HOPE my good friend, Joe Gaudin, North Rustico and his son will pardon me if I use Lionel's outstanding scholastic record in the face of most unusual difficulties, in an honest effort to encourage students who may now be feeling discouraged and inadequate, as the final examinations for the term are approaching.

There is no doubt that some students will fail to pass their examinations this year, who could make the grade if their morale could be improved as they approach the task.

A column I wrote on May 12, 1962 told how a rare operation performed in Montreal restored sight to the eyes of Lionel Gaudin. Prior to that he had been rapidly losing his sight from "Diabetic Retinopathy", a condition that sometimes develops from diabetes.

LIONEL HAD been taken out of St. Dunstan's University on March 12 of that year, but the prospect following the rare operation was all good. I met his father later that year however, and found to my sincere regret that the news was all bad. The eyes had hemorrhaged and, apparently, there was nothing that could be done further.

But it failed to stop the young man who was so grievously inflicted. His purpose may have wavered, but I learned from Registrar Mike Hennessey of St. Dunstan's University that Lionel led his senior class in the mid-term examinations, and he's now on his way to a degree at next month's convocation.

Working Under Difficulties

THE EYES are improving again and - I have my fingers crossed when I write this - it looks as though he will have fairly good sight again. But the battle against adversity, the battle to maintain his university status, has been fought, and won, by the use of braille, by tapes that have on them the kind of thing a university student has to learn and understand; and I believe fellow students have helped by reading excerpts to him.

I'm not too clear on the details of what I have said in the preceding paragraph, but I am using Lionel's story here, as I said earlier, as a challenge, as well as an inspiration to students who even now may be feeling like quitting the task because it seems too formidable. I know from personal experience, from talking with other students and from conversations with some teachers, that many a student can make the grade, if his or her confidence can be restored enough to face the task of examinations with a spirit of confidence, at least of challenge, instead of defeatism and despair.

I hope this may help some students who are serious about their aim in life, and I hope that Lionel and his dad will forgive me for using him as my example in this effort to help.

## Howlan Called To Senate 3 Times

IT WAS my friend Professor J. Henri Blanchard, who suggested that Senator George Howlan, to whom I referred in a column several months ago, had been appointed to the Senate several times. And I find that is correct.

Our Parliamentary Guides do not go back that far, but John Mullally, MP was good enough to look up the record in the Archives and here is the story of this unusual Island man who spent many years of his life in an unsuccessful effort to promote the idea of having a tunnel constructed between this Island and New Brunswick.

Most people think it is quite the feat to get appointed to the Senate once, but this man was appointed three times. He was called to the Red Chamber after Prince Edward Island entered Confederation in October 18, 1873. He resigned in 1880 and was reappointed on January 5, 1881.

BUT HOWLAN resigned again, this time to contest the federal election for his Conservative party. He was unsuccessful at the polls but he did manage to get appointed to the Senate again in March 1891.

Born in Ireland, Howlan came to P.E.I. with his parents in 1839 at the age of four years. He was educated at the Central Academy, forerunner to Prince of Wales College. He was later vice-consul for Sweden, Denmark and Norway; was vice-president of the Dominion board of trade, and a governor of Prince of Wales College among other things.

Mr. Howlan entered the Executive Council of Prince Edward Island in 1866 and remained a member of the government without interruption until June 30, 1873; part of the time he was co-leader.

Prior to his tunnel sponsoring activities, he had been a strong advocate of the P.E.I. railway.

## Clock More Than 200 Years Old

A.H. MUTCH, Cherry Valley tells me that he has a Grandfather's clock "so old that the shadow of the pendulum has worn a hole in the back of the case." This bit of exaggeration is his way of emphasizing that the instrument is really old. It's a replica, apparently, of the clock owned by William Johnstone, Kensington RR, Mr. Mutch believes.

Mr. Mutch believes that it was about 1750 that the first Irving man to come to this province, came from Scotland to Murray Harbor and he brought the clock with him. Irving later came to Cherry Valley and is the ancestor of the Irvings who live there at the present time.

Mr. Mutch's grandfather bought the clock at an auction sale about 100 years ago, Houghton tells me, and "it's keeping perfect time." It has the days of the month and the phases of the moon on it, though the moon face is so faded that it is no longer recognizable.

"Of beautifully polished mahogany, the case is the most beautiful I have ever seen on a clock", Mr. Mutch told me.

THIS WEEK I talked to a man who with his sons thinks farming is the best occupation a man can follow, and to another man who is starting something which most Island people have said for some time is impossible. I'll tell you about these interesting and enterprising people in a later column.

### Tall Tale Told of Island's Past

MANY STORIES have been told about the intrepid and hardy men who carried on this Island's business and lived here in earlier years. Here's one of the most interesting I have found in recent years. It's taken from a booklet the Guardian published more than 30 years ago, and I want to thank my friend Walter LePage for making it available to me.

William Dutton wrote about the Island in the American Magazine and here's the excerpt:

"Captain Alex Taylor, now a farmer in the Belfast district of the Island, but who in his seafaring days sailed with Jack London's famous character, Wolf Larson, told me a story of one of the old-day mail carriers whose route took him across the ice. The story shows the type of men that Prince Edward Island begot in those days when the ice in the strait was unbroken.

"ALONE AND on foot, with the heavy pouch of mail slung over his back, this mail carrier set out one winter's day for Pictou, Nova Scotia where he was to deliver the mail to the stage driver who was to convey it to Halifax, where it was to be placed on a boat sailing for England.

"However a storm delayed the carrier and the stage had left, for it had passengers for the boat which was sailing next day for England. It was 90 miles from Pictou to Halifax over the stage road, and that road was deep in snow. Without a word of complaint the carrier from Prince Edward Island shouldered his mail and walked to Halifax. He caught the boat."

AS I have said, it's a good story. Only thing wrong with it is that it's completely impossible. Imagine a man walking 90 miles through deep snow in one day, with a mail pouch on his back.

It's apparent that Captain Taylor was having a bit of fun with the American writer, or the latter expanded more than a little on what the Belfast veteran had told him.

SEVERAL FRIENDS called me last week to explain that the term "Corn" as used in England covers all grains, not merely "corn" as we know it here. It started with John Smethurst and ended with Jim Pendergast. So there's the answer to the use of the term "corn" to which I referred in last week's column.