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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Regulations Recall Railway Opposition

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A NUMBER of people are opposed to the construction of the causeway-bridge-tunnel across the Northumberland Strait. But there was keen opposition to the railway, for example, when it was constructed something like 90 years ago.

I was looking for something else when I came across some interesting references to regulations that were passed to make the building of the railway possible.

Penalties were laid down to prevent obstructing the railway commissioner, and others in setting out railway lines.

There was a fine of \$50, for example, for removing poles, trespassing on railway property, or blocking the passage of any person employed in building the railway. The same fine applied if a person refused to get off railway property when asked to do so.

For riding along the railway "right-of-way", or leading an animal thereon, the fine was not to exceed eight dollars.

The fine was up to seven dollars to the owner of any animal found "at large" on railway property.

For getting on the railway train, attempting to ride without paying the fare, or failing to get off when ordered, the fine was not to exceed 16 dollars.

Fines Went As High AS \$60

THE FINE could go as high as \$60 for carrying such dangerous items as lucifer matches, inflammable oil, or other goods of a dangerous character without distinctly marking a suitable warning on the outside of the package.

For getting on, or off the train while it was moving, the fine could be as much as six dollars.

But the penalty really became serious when anybody dared to do such things as "casting maliciously across any railway section any wood, stone matter or other thing, or willfully or maliciously taking up the rails, sleepers, etc. or hiding or removing any signal light on the railroad".

A person could be imprisoned for a term up to seven years for doing any of these things, the old regulations warned.

Another penalty was provided for overturning any railway engine, carriage or truck, or endangering the safety of any person travelling on the railway. I do not have the term of imprisonment for these actions.

Drinking Severely Frowned On

THE RULE against drinking by railway employees is one of the strictest, and most rigidly enforced law. It was also rigidly enforced then, apparently. The railway

commissioner had power “to seize and detain” any conductor, porter or engine driver of any train “who shall be found drunk while employed on the railway”.

To furnish teeth for the regulations it was provided that “lock-up” houses should be supplied along the railway lines, which should be lawful places of detention for persons charged with offenses against this (railway) act. The act was passed in 1873, the year Prince Edward Island became a province of Canada.

The right of way was 66 feet wide.

I TALKED last week about the early days of the operation of the Borden-Tormentine carferry and I find in some old notes of mine that car drivers would have to arrive at Cape Tormentine, or at Borden, one hour before the time of departure of the carferry itself.

The carferry made two roundtrips daily. The fare for automobiles was four dollars each way. Memory tells me that the fare for a return trip was seven dollars, but that is not covered in my notes.

An old paper told me that “about ninety percent of the time”, the carferry made an extra mid-day crossing each way.

Beach Grove is now a home for elderly people, but approximately 45 years ago it was advertised as “The most beautifully located summer hotel in the Maritime Provinces”.

The advertisement added “our own auto service running at 20 minute intervals places the hotel in close touch with Charlottetown”.

The Orient Hotel – the proprietor was H. R. Profitt, and the address Victoria, though I believe the hotel was in the Hampton area – had rates of \$2.50 daily, or \$12 to \$14 a week. The hotel’s transportation would meet trains, on request, at Breadalbane.

One of the P.E.I. Tourist Association’s advertisements featured a pasture field with a herd of Ayrshire cattle.

Garages were advertised in 19 centres – there were only three garages in Summerside at the time. At least that’s all that were advertised.

Black Fox Trail To Tormentine

VISITORS FROM outside the province were advised to “Take the Black Fox Trail to Cape Tormentine”.

Speaking of Black Foxes, Vimy Agnes, owned by Lt. Col. D. A. MacKinnon, Charlottetown was advertised as world champion in the fox show of 1922, with 95 $\frac{3}{4}$ points.

Here are some rules of the roads for motorists some 45 years ago. “Speed limit of 25 miles per hour while the driver has a clear view of the road ahead for at least 100 yards from turns, and intersections, in the direction in which the motor vehicle is proceeding.

“On streets or highways in any city, or incorporated town, the speed limit was 12 miles per hour.

“When approaching and passing any car, or carriage, slow down to a moderate speed and thus avoid accidents, and the dust.”

Help The Fellow Who’s In Trouble

THE ADVICE to motorists ended with this bit of personal philosophy:

“Help the fellow who is in trouble, your turn may be the next.”

The reference was to car engines, or some other part of the mechanism breaking down and leaving the motorist stranded on the road.

There were many stories told of motorists whose cars refused to go for them, in those early days of motoring. Garages were scarce, and so were good mechanics. The cars hadn't been operating long enough on the Island for many mechanics to be trained.

The best story I recall from boyhood days concerned the mechanic who spent an hour or more trying to get the car engine started, then found that the gasoline tank was empty.

It's a far cry from those early days of imperfect automobiles, and of roads we today would have called impossible for automobiles to our wide paved roads and finely tuned motor vehicles of the present.