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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Canning Of Lobster Started In Province

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HERE'S ANOTHER "first" for P.E.I. "Captain Walter Rowe, well known Nova Scotia mariner, states that Prince Edward Island was the scene of the first experiments in canning lobsters." The quotes are from a copy of Canadian Fishermen, made available to me by Francis Campbell of the P.E.I. Fisheries department here.

I don't know just who Captain Rowe is, but he has told the magazine that the canning of lobsters was carried out in this province back in 1860. He produced an old lobster can label which contained the picture of a huge lobster and this inscription "Fresh lobsters, hermetically sealed, prepared and put up by Percy Pope, Charlottetown, P.E.I.

The N.S. captain also had another old label indicating Salmon was packed in a hermetically sealed container, and he said that both products were packed in Prince Edward Island about that time, though the Salmon label contained an English name. The labels, he explained, were not put on the cans until the product reached Liverpool.

NATURALLY THE sealing of the containers was not so effectively done as it is now. For example a Shag Harbor, Nova Scotia man, Gilbert Nickerson, explains that the mode of work was crude compared with today's standards. His elder brother had worked in the old canning plant and he said "in soldering the sides of the cans my brother had to hold the cans in his hands while the other man soldered the seam in the side of the can."

If some reader can give me more background on the early canning days here, I'd be glad to tell you about it in a future column. And that reminds me that a local packer has invited me to speak to one of his veteran employees about earlier days in the packing business.

Man Knew He Had Years Ahead

I'VE CHANGED the names in this story, otherwise the story is exactly as it was told to me by a man from the Eastern part of this Island.

A Father Murphy – first name unavailable – from Kinkora once in the long ago, came to the Eastern area to preach a mission in a Roman Catholic Church there. John Carragher, a well known figure in that area was introduced to the visiting priest.

The clergyman asked Carragher "Are you making the mission?" and on being told "no", the priest tried to impress on the likable Irishman that he should attend the mission.

"You never know, this might be your last opportunity to attend a mission", the priest warned.

But Carragher insisted that he had more years ahead, to attend a mission if he so desired.

The priest retorted “that’s something about which none of us know. You, or I, might die at any time. None of us ever knows.”

But Carragher insisted he would have other opportunities. I’ll get another chance, and perhaps I’m the only man alive who can say that with assurance”, Carragher observed.

On being pressed for the reason he was so sure there were still some years ahead of him, the Irishman explained that he had recently been walking along the road late at night, when suddenly he saw a bunch of bright lights on the road a distance ahead of him.

After sizing up the situation Carragher had summoned enough courage to investigate. He found that there were a bunch of automobiles piled up in a tangled mess, and it was their headlights that were making the light.

“And,” explained Carragher, “I saw the number plate on one of the automobiles and it was dated ‘1942’”. It was about 1935 that the Kinkora priest was preaching the mission, so the Irishman figured he had until 1942 – at least that long – to live. The rest of the story, as it was told to me, suggests that the Irish resident of that area actually did live until 1942.

Remember that I have changed the names of the people concerned. I have done so because the man who told me the story felt the names of the participants should not be revealed, just in case some surviving relative might take offense, though offence is not intended. It never is in this column.

Minute Of Wife’s Death Known

MANY PEOPLE to whom I talk in various parts of the province insist that there is nothing to ghost stories, that there never was such a thing as a ghost. And some of those people include forerunners among the nonsense items that never happened.

But I keep hearing forerunner stories from reliable people – I hear ghost stories at times as well. Readers will probably recall the name of Nellie Rogerson of Midgell who was one of the Prince of Wales College “quartette” that included Lucy Maud Montgomery.

This lady is now Mrs. Dingwell, but she told me some time ago that her father, Thomas Rogerson, at his home in Pisquid had told to the minute the time his wife died in Charlottetown. Mrs. Rogerson, who had gone to visit her daughter in Charlottetown, took a stroke and died suddenly. Her husband came into the house and told the family their mother had died. When the word arrived later from Charlottetown the time of death was found to be the time at which Mr. Rogerson said his wife had died.

Winter To Strike Here Oct.27?

HERE IS one weather prediction I hope does not come true. It suggests that winter, frost and probably snow, will hit the Island in earnest on October 27. That’s two months to the day from the time the first frost struck. Leo McIsaac told me about it last week on our way to the fair at Windsor, Nova Scotia. I cannot recall at the moment who is responsible for the prediction – it wasn’t Mr. McIsaac – but both of us hope the prediction does not come true. Who wants winter to strike in October??