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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Tires Are Cheaper Than 1910 Figures

By NEIL A. MATHESON

WITH MOST everything we buy selling at sky-rocketing prices, it is good to know that one item – a very important one sells at a price greatly reduced from what it cost more than a half century ago.

This information is reliable because it comes from men who are in a position to know.

Roy Mills of our staff handed me an item recently that says automobile tires sold for much higher prices back in 1910, for example, and they were not nearly as good as the tires we use today.

The item says that George L. Andrus, merchandising manager, tires, for the B.F. Goodrich Company gave some most interesting information after finding an automobile tire price list for 1910.

Tires Cost Nearly \$90

IT REVEALED that the most popular tire in 1910 sold for \$75.85. And the tube for it sold for \$13.85, or a total of \$89.70.

In 1910, he adds, tires were narrow, high pressure types similar to a motorcycle tire. They rode hard and a motorist could only expect them to last two or three thousand miles.

And here's a surprise – they had studded tires in those days. "Metal stud tires sold for about 25 percent more than their all-rubber counterparts.

"For limousines geared not to exceed a speed of 20 miles per hour, some tires were guaranteed to carry loads up to 1,375 pounds (front wheels) and 1,100 pounds (rear wheels)."

By contrast the item adds, "Today, automobile tires in Canada cost anywhere from . . . (I am not sure of that latter amount as the figures are blurred in the item), they do not require tubes, and are capable of withstanding high speed driving for extended periods.

My thanks to Roy for the item; it came to him through the "OK Tire" people. I recall vaguely hearing about the high cost of tires when automobiles started to run here, but I never could recall what the prices actually were. And I wondered if some of those stories were mostly "tall tales".

Now we have accurate information and readers should be interested as I have been.

Holman's Hotel Story Is Told

SEVERAL WEEKS ago I had a story in this column on the hotel that had been built on Holman's Island, which is across the water from the Summerside waterfront.

That story told how the hotel had thrived for some years, then had been burned to the ground.

My friend Byron Burns, sent me a copy of "Historic Sidelights" published perhaps 15 years ago by the P.E.I. Historic Society and edited by Mrs. Mary Brehaut

Its story is somewhat different and it states J. Leroy Holman, a former Summerside businessman has the information. Mr. Holman should know for he was a nephew of J.L. Holman, the man who conceived the idea of a tourist hotel on that spot and brought it into effect.

One paragraph of the "Historic Sidelights" story says:

"Alas the enterprise was doomed before it began. The mosquitoes had not been considered and presently the location became uninhabitable because of the numbers of those pesky creatures."

### Thrived For A Time

BUT APPARENTLY, the tourist hotel idea must have thrived for a time for one paragraph notes that the builder J.L. Holman – he's called the pioneer of Prince Edward Island's tourist industry – was "a believer in advertising for he had pictures of his hotel printed in New York, showing its piazza occupied by several visitors basking in the incomparable Island sunshine".

"It also showed a carriage driven by a pair of the famed Island coach horses, two riders just leaving for a morning canter, ladies with hooped skirts and parasols, and the Union Jack and Stars and Stripes hung side by side overhead."

And here is a paragraph from the "Historic Sidelights" story which makes me wonder why the place did not thrive in summer, before the mosquitoes became so plentiful. If that sounds silly, and it does, read this paragraph and think again:

### Broadway Actors Were Guests

"THE PATRONS of this resort (Holman's Island and its hotel) included the best of Broadway actors, actresses, musicians and singers, who have staged entertainment for their own enjoyment, the likes of which had never been seen on Broadway. Never since has our Garden Island had the privilege of entertaining so many of the Theatre great."

As I noted in a recent column, this same piece indicated that the tourist hotel had not been completely destroyed in the fire. It quotes F. Leroy Holman as saying "a portion was destroyed and the rest was hauled across the ice to Summerside where it still stands as part of the Queen Hotel, no doubt accounting for the Queen's location near the water's edge."

The Queen was well and favorably known for many years, and it was destroyed by fire some years ago. But this "Historic Sidelights" had been written before the "Queen" itself was burned.