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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Boswall Named To Hall Of Fame

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I AM planning a feature column on Almon Boswall, Dunstaffnage later, but I just have to say something about the high honor this outstanding livestock breeder has received in his selection to Canada's Agricultural Hall of Fame.

The honor came to Mr. Boswall more than a month ago but it's typical of the modest farmer that he never said anything about it to me, even though I've known him well for many years. He's never been a seeker of publicity but this capable, likable agriculturist has long been regarded as one of the best in the business.

IF I had not been visiting farmers in that area on my hunt for material for this column, Mr. Boswall's honor would still be unknown to you. A neighbour tipped me off that Mr. Boswall had a "Hall of Fame" plaque so I called on him and found it was true. That's the way these papers got the story. As I said, Mr. Boswall is a modest man. I can't think of anyone who is more deserving, or whom I would rather see honored in such an outstanding way.

Almon Boswall attended the provincial exhibition here with his father in 1870 [? Date not clear and that would seem too early for this man to have attended - internet search states the exhibition started in 1888], the year the show was opened and he has never missed a show since that time. Over the years he's shown poultry, sheep and swine but in recent years he has not shown poultry.

Queens Medal Must Be Best

HE HAS won many honors, he has won barrels of ribbons and many trophies. But I think the Queen's Coronation Medal in 1953 must have been the best of all. He was recommended for it by the Canadian Swine Breeders' Association as the man who had done more than anyone else in Canada to promote the interests of the swine industry. That's a tremendous tribute to come from his fellow breeders across the nation, and there are many of them.

The Hall of Fame plaque that came late in 1961 merely brings up to date the recognition for this man which he has so richly earned over the years. It reasserts the dominant part the modest Dunstaffnage farmer has played in Canadian agriculture through the years.

I RECALL that he bred Woodstock Duke 14A, a boar that was acclaimed at the time the greatest sire of high class bacon hogs in the country up to that time. I recall writing a story that 14A had established three all-time Canadian records - that was back in the late 40's - but I can't recall just now what they were.

There's one more observation I want to make at this time. I got the impression as I chatted with Mr. And Mrs. Boswall in their home last week that the friendly, smiling lady in the Boswall home played a very large part in the achievements over the years. They started with little and "had some pretty tough years" but they are able to look back with laughter now on the problems they faced and overcame together.

I know these things aren't done, but I sometimes wonder why. If Mrs. Boswall's name were added to the Hall of Fame plaque, I think it would make the picture just about complete.

Many People Known About Sowens

I HAD an unusually large response to my query about Sowens a few weeks ago. Here are some of the people who phoned me, spoke to me or wrote letters.

Wallie Walker, Charlottetown, gave me a complete recipe and a description of how to make it. He also says it's wonderful stuff. Marion Langille Handregan, Charlottetown also phoned her comments.

The letter that came the greatest distance was from Mrs. S. M. Murdock, Hamilton, Ontario - she's a daughter of Mr and Mrs. John MacDonald, Caledonia, but she "did not care a great deal about the dish".

Charles S. MacDonald, Wood Islands; Mrs. Sadie G. White, Montague; Mrs. Finley MacFayden, Riverdale; Mrs. Neil Shaw, Summerside; a Charlottetown lady who didn't sign her name and our Women's Editor, Mrs. Helen MacDonald were others who wrote or talked to me about the old Scotch dish.

THERE ARE various ways of making it but most people, I think, said it was made of what was left of the oats after the oatmeal was extracted. Several people told me it was made from the hulls of black oats which recalls the days when black oats were revered as the only food for good horses, and horses got the best feed available in the barn at that time, because they were indispensable for power on the farm and for transportation on the road.

I think everyone said the parts of the oats were set in water for several days, or until they almost reached the fermentation stage. Then it was strained through a very coarse cloth "so as to take the hulls out but not the thick meal sediment."

THEN ONE person told me, "It was ready to boil, and it was in the boiling that success of the sowens came, so far as quality is concerned." \

Mr. Walker tells me they ate it "hot like porridge", or let it cool to a jelly like consistency, but most people said they let it cool.

I want to thank the many people who wrote or talked to me about it and I've told J.A. MacKenzie, Kensington, who wrote me about it in the first place that I shall send the letters to him. I'm sure he'll have an interesting hour or so going through them.

Early Federal Election Hinted

THERE WILL probably be a Federal Election before Easter, Senator George H. Barbour told me yesterday. "I don't think the Prime Minister will take a chance on

another poor crop in the west this year, and I don't think he'll bring down a budget before he goes to the country", the veteran parliamentarian predicts.

Easter this year falls on April 22, which would bear out the Senator's statement to me last week in an off the record chat, that he expects "a very short session of parliament."

Senator Barbour also told me that his deskmate for 12 years, Senator William Golding, died as the old year ended. Senator Barbour had received a long letter which his friend had written on December 30 and death, apparently, came the following day.

I met Senator Golding many times in Senator Barbour's office, and was always struck by his completely natural friendliness, and his total lack of anything approaching artificiality. I was not surprised when Senator Barbour told me yesterday "I never met a more sincere or a more honest man".

Slaughter Test Score Is High

JOHN COLWILL, Colville Road has a Yorkshire sow that has a record 99 slaughter test score for this province in advanced registry.

The Advanced Registry qualifying score takes into consideration such things as the number of pigs in the litter - the sow must save at least eight - the number of days it takes the test litter to reach maturity and the slaughter test of the litter.

The slaughter test is just what the term implies. It is based on the bacon excellence the Canada department of agriculture grader finds in the four test carcasses when they are slaughtered.

THE REGULATIONS require that there be at least two barrows or male pigs in the test litter chosen, and normally two females or gilts. But in recent years a bonus of five points has been allowed for each additional barrow over two. In other words if the whole litter should be barrows - and that has happened - a bonus of ten points would be allowed.

Stewart Eagles, Senior livestock fieldman, Canada department of agriculture, tells me though that starting January 1 this year, that has been cancelled. From now on two males and two females will be required, and the five-point bonuses are out.

Federation Of Agriculture Interest

THE PROVINCIAL Federation of Agriculture meets here next Tuesday, and that reminds me that the County federation meetings this year seem to have had a new spirit of enthusiasm.

I wasn't up to the Prince County meet, but I thought the ones at Cardigan and Hunter River were unusually good. The discussion was lively, the interest keen and the spirit good. I don't know how the overall membership compared in 1961 with that of the previous year - membership fees were increased - but the two meetings I attended were the best County meetings that I ever saw here.

It should be added that I haven't attended a County meeting for a few years, but this year's gatherings were so much better than the ones I used to see, there wasn't any comparison.

The Tuesday meetings are not open to the public as they are meetings of the county and the provincial executives, but they will be discussing resolutions and recommendations sent in from county meetings which were open to everyone.