

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., Aug. 7, 1964

ACROSS THE ISLAND

High Price Lobsters Once Were Fertilizer

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Provincial - Farm Editor

(Beginning next week this column will appear on Thursday instead of Fridays as in the past. The change in days will be in effect for a trial period which may become permanent.)

THE WESTERN Prince area is known as the most concentrated spot of poaching lobsters in the province, but I talked to veteran fishermen there on my last trip to the area of North Cape, and was told emphatically "the lobsters would never be fished out if fishermen didn't take the spawned lobster," and that's the female that is covered with eggs.

My friend Hedard Robichaud - he's now minister of fisheries for Canada - may have success with his program of education. I hope he does. But I've talked to many of these west Prince fishermen, and know he'll have to convince them that what he's saying really makes sense. And, I imagine, they'll take a lot of convincing.

Many of these men have been poaching lobsters, or fishing out of season so long it's become a way of life. I talked for example, to Joe MacInnis, 85 of Anglo Tignish who fished for more than a half century before he retired. And, I gathered, he poached for many of these years.

"I WAS on the patrol boat once" he told me, and that must have been 1930-35, for he has been a lifelong Conservative and that seems the most likely period. But he never caught any poachers. "I didn't want to", he told me, though he chased and frightened many of them. Joe's partner on patrol had suggested several times they should catch the men they chased. But Mr. MacInnis replied "we'll be fishermen again some day and we've got to live with those fellows."

The point I'm stressing here, though, is that those people don't believe they are damaging their industry by fishing out of season and they've been doing it so long many of them know no other way of life.

Many Lobster Tales Heard

THEY ARE ordinary human beings like you and me, friendly, neighbourly, kind and generous as I've found in my visits with them. They're not the outlaws type as some people seem to believe.

I heard many tales of lobster fishing, some of them dating back for almost a century.

Joe's brother, Jim McInnis, landed 110,000 lobsters in one season back in the days when the tasty shell fish were bought by the unit, not the pound, I was told. That was a long time ago and the distance of the years could have added to the size of the tale.

But I was told by William MacLeod's widow in Tignish that her husband had taken 80,000 in a season. She recalls that he landed two boatloads on a single day once.

That name Will MacLeod kept cropping up in many of the conversations I had with older fishermen in the area. Apparently, he was one of the best known fishermen of his day.

THE SEASIDE residents gathered lobsters once and piled the bodies on the land for fertilizer, several people told me. And that's a change from the luxury product status of today. That was before the days when the lobsters became marketable, but I couldn't pin down the date. If someone can give me the date, with a reasonable degree of proof of its accuracy, I shall appreciate it.

But several people told me that the lobsters often washed ashore in bad storms in the long ago, and Joe MacInnis said they fished close inshore in the days that are gone. "Never deeper than four fathoms".

They used "a long two-headed trap" when he was a youngster.

25 Cents Per 100 Lowest Price

THE LOWEST lobster price I have been able to track down was 25 cents per 100 lobsters but most of the older fisherman tell me it was 50 cents per 100, or one-half cent each for some years. A four-pound lobster brought \$2.20 and sometimes more in the past season. It would bring two cents at one-half cent per pound, which emphasizes the difference in value.

Perce Morrissey, Sea Cow Pond told me he had his first boat engine in 1911. It was an upright engine brought here by the Portland Packing Company, and "it was awfully noisy".

Joe MacInnis told me he had an Adams engine and later Peter Conroy - horsemen and racing fans will recall the veteran driver who was still a familiar figure on Island tracks when I was a boy - had a later model.

Moase Story Is Interesting

W.A. MOASE and Son, Kensington is a name you often read in the exhibition results and record of performance listings in Ayrshire breed of cattle and his farm has been noted for prize winning sheep and hogs in the past few years. I did a story on the Moase livestock in this paper last fall, but a note I came across this week reminds me that W. A. Moase, the son's name is Wendell - was awarded a bronze medal which carries the Robertson Associate membership for producing top notch mangel seed.

Mr. Moase developed the Prince White Giant mangel and he started, he told me with three superior mangels grown from Rennie's seeds. The medal indicates Mr. Moase has grown registered seed for more than 30 years without ever having a crop turned down. The Moase people have been growing seed for some 40 years, I gathered.

All of the Moases in the province are descendants of Henry Moase who was born in 1823 and landed in the Malpeque Bay area in 1842. W. A. is a grandson, Wendell is a great grandson and Wendell's family are great-great grand children, so now there are five generations.

Old Bill Prohibited Quacks

IN 1890, I find from an old paper made available by Woodrow Wheatley, the provincial legislature was concerned with a bill that would prohibit quacks and unqualified surgeons from practicing on the Island. It provided that students should have to pass a satisfactory examination before the medical council before they entered upon the study of medicine.

John Dickieson was advertising choice building lots on Harvard, Belmont, Barrack and Eustace streets.

Charles Taper was advertising a clearing out sale of most everything you could think of, including lines of tea that he was offering for 15 to 25 cents, "prices that cannot be beaten on the Island".

THE RAILWAY was advertising a train that left Charlottetown at 7:45 a.m., reached Summerside at 10:40 and arrived in Tignish at 5:15. A train left Emerald Junction at 4:10 p.m. reached Cape Traverse - Borden was unknown at the time - at 5:00 pm.

An Alberton firm was advertising cut prices until the election campaign was over and that was on April 14, 1780.

One man said he "scratched 28 years" and then cured it with a popular remedy of the time, and "Hair Magic" was advertised as "A Positive Promoter of Growth".

Tale Of Tragedy 123 Years Ago

CLARENCE REEVES, Charlottetown brought me a story of a tragedy of April 13, 1841. William Smith a young man from New Glasgow was walking from New London - he had only recently married a Sellers girl and they were then living in New London - when a severe spring storm overtook him. There were no houses along the way except one or two at Hope River, and the hospitality of their homes was urged upon him.

However the young man decided to push on for New Glasgow, in order to reach his parents' home, but the ever increasing drifts made the travelling increasingly more difficult and "he evidently sat down to rest as he was slightly lame", an old clipping said, and his lifeless body was found the following morning about a mile from his destination. Smith's faithful dog was still licking the face that had grown cold in death by the time the grim discovery was made.