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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Delayed Burial Of 'Poor Old Bill'

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Provincial - Farm Editor

Premier Walter Shaw tells a good yarn about one Hugh MacFayden, a son of St. Catherines who finished a winter in the Maine lumber camps and found summer employment nearby with a dour farmer. Talk was scarce as Hugh also was saving on the words; the work was hard and there was little time for conversation which explains, in part at least, the rather weird tale that follows.

"One day," to use Hughie's own words, "it had rained some during the night and the morning sky was overcast. It looked unfit for haying, so the old man said, 'Go and get the team hitched and back the wagon into the shed. I think we'll bury Bill'. Well, I didn't know who Bill was, but thought perhaps an old bull or a boar had died. After I backed the wagon into the shed, the old mossback said 'Come on, give me a hand,' and going over to a pile of straw, he kicked it away, and I'll be damned if under it there wasn't a rough coffin containing the body of Bill, who, I ascertained, was the former hired hand. After we had lifted Bill's remains into the wagon, and had gathered up some shovels and crowbars for grave-digging purposes, I was told to drive up the road about four miles to the cemetery.

"AND WHEN did Bill die? I asked after we had proceeded on our way. 'Oh, a day or so before you blew in,' he replied, 'but the weather was fine and I didn't have time to bury him.' "I thought that was a damn funny procedure," commented Hugh. However we kept on in silence, and after we had got a mile or so on the road, the clouds began to lift. The old guy took a squint or two at the sky, gave his whiskers a hitch or two, and said: 'You'd better turn the team, Hughie, it's going to be a hay day after all. We'll have to leave burying Bill for another time."

Hugh turned the team around, backed the wagon into the shed, helped lift Bill out and deposited him in his former resting place in the straw. They put in another hard day at the hay, but tired as he was Hugh could not sleep that night.

"I HAD seen some pretty tough sights in my woodsman experience, but nothing quite so disturbing or so cold as this. I began to wonder if my fate might be similar to Bill's, and I could see myself lying in a rough, hand-made coffin, under the straw, in a Maine manure shed, waiting for a rainy day to be buried. I don't mind getting killed by a falling tree, or going under in the swirling waters of a log drive, but I'll not wait for this lousy kind of an end," thought the quiet Scot from P.E.I. Hugh packed his few belongings, stole quietly into the night without his pay, and arrived eventually on the Island.

But, in his dreams, he often saw that lonely farmstead in Maine and wondered what had finally happened to poor old Bill."

Speed Limit Proved To Be Too Slow

I STILL get the odd letter about the early days of the automobile, and this week I heard an interesting story about a Charlottetown development.

Charlottetown police were instructed to set up a speed trap on Euston Street between Prince and Weymouth, Phil Barlow recalls. They hauled in many of the people who had cars in those days - Mr. Barlow is not sure of the date but it was in the earlier days of the horseless carriage here - because they were exceeding a speed limit of eight miles per hour.

Finally one man, Jim Offer, challenged the court's opinion after several men preceding him had been fined. Mr Offer said he owned the only car in the lot - it was a Chalmers - that could travel in high gear at a speed as low as eight miles per hour.

The story, as Mr. Barlow recalls it, is that the court was asked to come out for a demonstration, and the test resulted in the fines being returned to those who had been assessed.

I RECALL that Dr. Leo Frank, a former Southport neighbour, had a picture in his office of a farm horse hauling his car through Kensington. A sign had been painted which informed bystanders he wasn't out of gas, nor was he having engine trouble, then added "We are just trying to stay within the Kensington speed limit". That quotation is from memory but I believe it is substantially right.

Mr. Barlow recalls that he saw an old sign in the St. Avar's area not far from where the MacKay Construction Company is now located that bore the "Eight mile speed limit" warning.

First Car On Kings Northside

PETER McLELLAN, Souris, wrote me a letter in which the names are camouflaged but he tells me he knew the people concerned, and the story was said to be true.

"On the North Side road, St. Peters to St. Margarets, Angus who was in his seventies, was driving a few fat cattle to "The Bay" (St. Peter's Bay) where Mr. Pratt was preparing a shipment. He got along fine until he dropped in to D.M.'s at Cable Head East for a cup of tea, and to collect two more cattle that were to go.

"After Mrs. M. prepared the tea, and it didn't take much preparation as it was always ready in case of a caller, she went to the byre to get her cattle ready for the road. It was while she was out at the barn that this car came along, the first seen on that road, and D.'s cattle took to the woods for shelter. He came out to see what was making all the noise and missed the animals, and Mrs M. was standing in the byre door stunned by the development. He asked "In the name of God Nancy, did you see the thing?"

"I did," was the reply.

"And did you ken what it was at all , at all?" he continued.

"Indeed and I have no idea at all, at all what was it, unless it was a piece of the devil's train that went off the track at "The Bay", was the reply.

"This was told to me as a true story, and I used to know the parties concerned when I was with the department of fisheries", writes Mr. McLellan who was a fisheries inspector.

I have heard many comments on cars through the years, but I still like the one I

heard as a boy. Two men were discussing the fact that some horses were afraid of cars. One couldn't understand the horses' fear, but the other replied:

"Well a horse is used to seeing a wagon coming down the road with another horse in it. If you saw a pair of pants coming down the road with no man in them, you'd be scared too." And I imagine he would have been.