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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Two Reactions To Diefenbaker

By NEIL A. MATHESON  
Provincial-Farm Editor

I WAS feeling satisfied with myself this week, as I had my column written early, before I was assigned to report the speech of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker to the annual meeting of the Progressive Conservative Association Wednesday night. Normally I work late into Thursday evening before I finally send the column to the boys on the linotypes.

But the dramatic PC leader sent me back to my typewriter for two main reasons. I think my PC friends who saw me there would expect me to say something about the impression their leader made. And I just have to correct an impression he left when he suggested the PC party conceived the causeway idea in the first place.

Speaking entirely from an impartial viewpoint - and if you ever think this column is biased politically, it will either mean you are mistaken, or I have unwittingly given the wrong impression - I thought Diefenbaker was once more the old master of the kind of political oratory that lifted the PCs from the bottom of Canada's political heap in 1957, to an all-time high for any Canadian party in 1958.

MY OWN reaction to the possibility of eventual causeway construction was that it is increased. I'm basing the opinion not so much on the carefully worded statement that "engineers are hopeful it will be feasible from an engineering standpoint", as I am on the estimated cost of \$100 million.

From conversations I have had with government economists whom I knew in Ottawa, I am sure that the amount is either within the immediate range of economic feasibility, or that it's close enough to be pushed into the realm of practicability by the type of political expediency that develops at election time.

My biggest disappointment with the PCs national chief came when he said "if as a result of further examination it (the Causeway) is found feasible, we who conceived the idea will be in a position to carry it out."

It's typical of the sort of error that Ottawa speakers can make at times - I know of several similar Liberal bloopers - when they speak to people in areas far removed from the capital.

I'm sure the leader of Canada's government was unaware that the man who first proposed the Causeway project in the House of Commons, on a dreary afternoon late in January 1956, was sitting at the press tables not 10 feet from his rostrum on the Queen Charlotte platform. That man is an impartial columnist now, but he was the Liberal member for Queen's at the time.

Angus Cattle Herd, Ballet Schools

IN ALBERTON recently I met Andy Wells, a young Ottawa man who has taken to farming near where his father, Jimmy Wells, was born. Andy is developing a fine herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle. "I'm still awfully green", he told me with his friendly smile, but I gather he must be happy, though he's still trying to solve some of the problems a newcomer to farming faces.

His answer was straightforward when I asked "Why would a city boy like you come to a P.E.I. farm?"

My wife and I came here on our honeymoon four years ago", he told me. "We came back for two summers, and we liked the place so well we decided to stay."

I was interested to learn the charming Mrs. Wells is an accomplished ballerina, who I understand is thinking of developing ballet schools in the province.

The former Marlene Stanton of Ottawa, she was leading ballerina in the Ottawa Ballet Company and was invited at one time to join the Sadler Wells troupe, which is top rung in ballet circles.

#### N. Rustico Harbor-Bridge Problem

A VISIT to North Rustico last week - I sat in on the meeting of Village Commissioners - reminds me of the harbor -bridge problem that several federal government departments have been trying to solve for ten years or more.

Little Harbor, the direct outlet to the sea for the water of Rustico Bay, was closed in the mid-fifties. The theory was that the remaining much stronger flow of water through the North Rustico harbor would cut a channel through the sand bar, immediately outside, deep enough to give fishermen sufficient draught for their fishing boats.

Linked with that was a project involving the department of northern affairs and national resources that would complete the Gulf Shore Drive linking up the sections of the National Park, and constructing a bridge across the North Rustico harbor high enough to permit passage of ships that would use the port.

THE LITTLE HARBOR closure, and the other planning followed a series of current studies, made by Dr. S.J. Mazur, N.S. Technical College, Halifax. The survey verdict might have made sense to Ottawa at the time, but the desired result has not been obtained.

Instead of cutting a deeper channel through the harbor channel, the stronger rush of water has cut so much off the Western end of Robinson's Island that by now it has cut a new channel to the sea, with an "island of sand" between it and the original harbor opening. And neither channel is deep enough to reflect any improvement for the fishing boats.

The Western tip of Robinson's Island, which was to have anchored one end of the proposed bridge, has been cut back so far that completely new planning is needed if the harbor is to be spanned and the Gulf Shore Drive completed.

I haven't any figures but a rough guess would say several hundred yards have been eroded from the Island's tip and a further section of the Island close to the present or remaining tip, has been worn so thin that the first bad storm could easily break through, although the public works department has done considerable work to strengthen it.

A National Research Council team was here to survey the problem this year and they are now making "scale model" tests at Ottawa before making further recommendations.

### Knowledge, Experience Is Not Used

MY FIGHT with Ottawa - and this has nothing to do with party politics; the Liberals started it - is that the people sent here to survey such things do not confer with people in the area who could normally be expected to help them.

There are fishermen in North Rustico who have been sailing in and out of the harbor for scores of years. I think, for example, of Beecher Court, who, at something over 70, must have nearly 60 years of recollections and experience, for I recall he told me he often went with his father, when only a boy. And his dad had fished out of the harbor for a lifetime before him.

No man knows the currents or the vagaries of those waters better, yet Mr. Court told me no one asked for his opinion when the Mazur survey was being made, or so far as he was aware, were any other of the veteran fishermen asked for an opinion. And these men know those waters like they know the back of their hand. I know they are not technical men but it seems a pity that no effort is made to make use of their years of experience.

THE SAND bar outside the harbor has created a problem for North Rustico fishermen for years. There have been times when their shallow-draught boats were scraping the bottom at low tide. If enough draught could be provided over the bar, the harbor could accommodate modern draggers. One could envision processing plant developments ashore, similar to what has meant so much to Souris, with employment for a large number of people.

The bridge across the harbor, to complete the Gulf Shore Drive, was originally planned for completion in 1959. Jean Lesage, now premier of Quebec, told me that in 1955, when he was federal minister of northern affairs and natural resources. I don't think anyone knows now how long it will be before the job is completed.