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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Horses Must Be Led Through City Streets

By NEIL A. MATHESON

THANKS THIS week to Victor Purdie, 13 Sydney Street I have an interesting flash back to the 18th century.

The year was 1771, in the nineteenth year “of our Sovereign Lord George the Third, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, defender of the Faith etc.” to give him full benefit of the flowery title bestowed upon him in that time.

“An act to prevent disorderly riding of horses, and driving of carts, trucks and sleds, or any other carriage whatsoever, within Charlottetown.

“In order to prevent the Inconveniences and Misfortunes which may arise from the Disorder of riding of Horse and Negligently driving of carts, or other Carriages of Burthen of any kind whatsoever within Charlottetown: shall ride such Horse or Horses, or remain placed in or upon any part of such Cart or other Carriage within any of the Streets or Highways of the said Town.

“And no such driver shall omit, during such Time to lead the Shaft or Thill-Horse by a Halter not exceeding four feet in length; nor shall he or they drive any Horse or Horse faster than a foot-pace, upon pain of forfeiting ten Shillings for every such offense.”

Thill Means Shaft

IN ONE OF the paragraphs above “Thill” means shaft or shafts between which a horse is harnessed.

Having quoted the old act verbatim up until now, I’ll switch to modern language usage. The remainder, in present-day language, goes something like this:

Refusal to pay that 10 shilling fine within 24 hours after the offense has been committed, and the offender continued to refuse payment, the offender would be put at labor for the space of four days repairing the streets of the town, or the highways adjoining the town.

The work would be done under the direction of one of the overseers of the District of Charlotte township.

Committed To Prison

IN CASE THE offender refused or neglected to perform such services, it would be possible for any Justice of the Peace, upon complaint of the Overseer, to cause the offender to be committed to prison for six days, there to remain at his own costs and charges.

The man would be sent to prison, presumably and would have to pay for that “privilege?”

That is the end of the old document kindly loaned to me by Mr. Purdie a man whom many will remember from the days of the Perdue-Ferguson shoe store on Grafton Street.

A talk I had some time ago with my friend, Mr. Justice George J. Tweedy suggested some of those old laws may still be on our statute books.

Early, Late Snowstorms

WITH SIGNS of spring in the air – Canada Geese were seen at Clyde River last week – I feel out of date talking of snow and winter. But a letter from Little York flashes back to early and late snow storms that are interesting.

Back in 1937 four to six inches of snow fell on October 15, and that is early.

In 1952 a snow storm struck on October 20.

In 1907 a heavy snow storm struck on May 12.

A snow storm brought good sleighing on May 4 back in 1957.

In 1940 a snowstorm on April 26 provided such good sleighing that my correspondent drove a horse and a loaded sleigh from York to Fitzroy Street, west of the Island Telephone Company building.

Islanders Sing Of “Abegweit”

WE THINK today of the number of superlatives used by people who publicize and plug their favorite merchandise.

But listen to this. It came from The Patriot back in 1928 when Phil MacDonald, a member of the Charlottetown Abegweit Club was representing Canada in the Olympic Games.

The Patriot wrote editorially as follows:

The name of “Abegweit” is known and respected from the North Star to the Southern Cross. The glory of the Moon in the Milky Way shines with a dimmer luster when compared with that of “Abegweit”.

There are two reasons for the brilliant fame of the name “Abegweit”. First, it is the original name of this beautiful Isle of the Sea.

Secondly it is borne by an athletic club whose prowess on track, field and ice have won the enthusiastic praise of all peoples.

Today the Abegweits are represented at the Olympic Games in Paris by Phil MacDonald of Charlottetown.

That is the end of the old item. The rest was missing from the old scrap book where I located it. But there was enough to show that Islanders can pour on the praise when they let their emotions have full rein.