

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., June 29, 1962

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Farmers Union Plans Are Laid

By NEIL A. MATHESON  
Provincial-Farm Editor

(Vacation comes up next week which means that this column will not appear again until Friday July 20)

AN ORGANIZED effort is being planned now to develop a strong branch in this province of the Farmers Union. The idea was developed at a meeting of the livestock producers called here in May by Woodrow Wheatley, Charlottetown, which endorsed his suggestion. I'm told now that an outside organizer, probably from Ontario, will be brought here next autumn at a time when Island farmers are best able to attend meetings which will be held throughout the province.

Federation officers and supporters will probably resent the idea but they have no reason to laugh it off. Opposition to the federation exists in many parts of the province. I've found that it crops up here and there in talks I've had with farmers in various parts of the province. I've no idea, though, how concentrated it is, but that is something that will be determined if a Union drive gets underway.

My own idea is that this province is too small for two farm organizations, as I've told representatives from both groups, though, I note that one of Canada's biggest farm magazines says competition among farm groups is desirable.

SOME OF the most ardent Union promoters here contend there'll only be one organization in a short time. One man told me the federation will disappear within 12 months. It's an ambitious goal, which indicates there may be keen competition for the farmers' support, and some interesting developments.

The Farmers Union was developed originally to get "grass roots" farmers represented. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture, it was argued, represents large groups like the powerful wheat pools and other large organizations, where the small farmer could not be heard. It's a bit different here where the P.E.I.F.A. has individual members, as well as a federation of farm organizations, like the Dairymen's Association, but more about that later.

The federation here takes credit for any advancements in rural and farm life. The Union backers say they've done nothing or at least not very much. There are other charges and counter claims. But that's for a future reference.

Can Identify Signature of 1895

HAROLD PALMER, Charlottetown gave me an interesting item this week which concerns my friend Charles S MacDonald, Wood Islands whose name appeared several times previously in this column.

Mr. Palmer, retired Judge of the Probate Court who has returned to the practice of law, was looking for someone who could identify, or attest to the signature of Duncan Crawford who witnessed the will of John MacLeod, late of Little Sands in 1895. Mr. MacLeod died in 1902 and Mr. Crawford died some years ago, but here we have Mr. MacDonald, 67 years later, assuring Mr. Palmer he knew Crawford very well and can easily identify his signature.

I SPENT several most interesting hours with Mr. MacDonald two weeks ago, and learned that he had been a Justice of the Peace for 67 years, and a Commissioner for taking affidavits, almost as long, though I forgot to ask him when he received that appointment. To me it's positively uncanny the way this talented gentleman can pick names and events out of the past and attach the proper dates with such ease and accuracy.

I often wished to meet such a man, and the fact that he came originally from the same general area as I did - he was born in Stanchel - makes my conversations with him all the more interesting and appreciated. Mr. MacDonald will be 96 on July 23.

### "Short Lobsters" And One Monster

A RECENT news story emphasized the poaching and the "short Lobster" fishing that is done in the Western Prince area. One estimate said that 50 out of 100 boats were taking short lobsters. Another paragraph suggested people of the area vigorously resisted efforts at control. Knowing the poacher must have a reason for fishing illegally, I found a man in that area who could tell me from his own experience.

I THINK I should say first of all that these people are not outlaws. The man to whom I talked is retired now, but I'm sure you couldn't find a finer, more dependable man anywhere in the province. He's one of our most law abiding citizens, except for the lobster laws, which he is convinced are completely unrealistic, useless and unnecessary.

The limit on small lobsters of two and one-half inches Carapace - measured from the part of the body where the tail hooks on to the front of the eye - is too big, he told me. I recall that it was made bigger in 1953.

"It's certainly too big for the North side. We have to throw away too many, and those smalls are just the right size for a quarter-pound can," he explained. My friend had fished for 50 years before he retired, and he had poached every one of those years, I gathered, though I didn't ask him that specifically.

"If the minimum size is made any bigger, we'll have to quit altogether here on the North side," said the man who blames the pressure for enlarging the minimum limit on fishermen from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

My friend can see little sense in throwing the small lobsters back. "Not more than four out of every eight get to the bottom," he told me. "The codfish get the rest of them."

Speaking of large lobsters reminds me that I visited with Fred VanInderstine in his Eldon home this week and asked him about the 21-pound giant he and Alfred Murchison, Point Prim, caught in a trap back in the Fifties. The thing was so huge it couldn't get into the trap. One huge claw was caught and the big fellow - he was longer than the 30-inch trap - was draped over the trap with his tail curled underneath.

A former Belfast, Everett MacKenzie who came from Melville took it back to Western Canada with him when he returned from an Island visit just to show those Westerners the kind of lobsters they really catch on the Island, Fred told me laughingly.

#### Here Is Guest For Our Centennial

HERE'S A suggestion for those who are planning our own 1967 version of the Confederation Centennial celebration. Mrs. Philip Rooney was born in Iona, P.E.I. on July 1, 1967 and I suggest this "Confederation baby" be brought here as a special guest in connection with our celebration, if she is still living then, and all of us here hope she will be. Mrs. Rooney will be 95 on Monday.

The grand old lady lives now in Antigonish, Nova Scotia but she plans to visit here early next month when she will be seeing her son William L. Rooney, 81 Gerald Street and her nephew Wilfred L. MacKenna, 64 Great George Street among others.

The former Ellen Josephine MacKenna moved to Vernon River when she was married in 1884 at the age of 16. They moved in 1902 to Cherry Valley where Mr. Rooney died in 1938. She later moved to Montreal for a time before taking up residence in Antigonish.