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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Ex-Athletes Are Candidates

By NEIL A. MATHESON

BEFORE ANOTHER one of these columns appears in print, this province will have told the campaigning politicians which party they want to run the P.E.I. government for the next four or five years. Technically the term is five years, but few governments hold on to power that long.

And that reminds me of a talk I had with a Summerside sportsman several weeks ago, and of some notes he left me on Island athletes who are competing in this election for the votes of the populace.

From long experience I know the danger of mentioning specific names, or items in a column that is read all over the province. However I'm going to pass on my friend's observations, and possibly add one or two of my own. I make no claim to know all of the former athletes who are candidates now, so to those I miss, please, the slight is completely unintentional.

My Summerside friend started with Gordon Bennett, present minister of education. I recall having the pleasure of watching Gordon and he was a capable and shifty backfielder in English Rugby. Memory tells me that I even played a game on the same team once, though this may be wrong.

Referee Of Ability

I RECALL TOO that Gordon was a referee of some reputation in the Maritime Intercollegiate League before the outfit dumped English Rugby for the present Canadian game. Gordon coached both hockey and football teams at Prince of Wales, my friend tells me. So he likely played hockey as well, though I cannot recall that.

Of Alex Campbell, now Premier, he recalled that he skipped the first Summerside team ever to win the P.E.I. Schoolboy Curling Championship.

Elmer Blanchard is now minister of labor and attorney-general but my friend recalls the time he was a snappy centre with the Charlottetown Collegians when they played off with the St. Mary's College team, Halifax back in 1948 – the date I got from our Pius Callaghan who is now president of the really good Maritime Junior Hockey League. Unfortunately our Collegians lost that series to St. Mary's who are a power now in Maritime College hockey and football.

My friend recalled that Willie Robertson and Nick Nicolle were other members of that Collegian club's first line. The latter two have no part in this election though.

Schurman And Hogan

IN SUMMERSIDE Bob Schurman and Charlie Hogan are contesting the election. Bob is running for the Liberals in Fourth Prince, Charlie for the P.C.'s in the Summerside district.

Bob, the owner and manager of radio station CJRW, was known as a catcher in baseball and goalie in hockey, my friend tells me. He caught for three consecutive Maritime Intermediate "A" Baseball Championship teams and played in the Maritime baseball finals for five years in a row. The team was the Summerside All Stars, sometimes known as Curran and Briggs.

Charlie Hogan was the coach of those teams which means that Charlie coached three consecutive Maritime Intermediate A Baseball championship squads, as well as two others that were runners up.

Doug McGowan Seen

THE CHAMPIONSHIP squads were in 1948, 1949 and 1950 I am told.

I realize that I must be leaving out some former athletes who are competing in this election. I recall that Doug McGowan had a tremendous snap in his arm and shoulder, along with good body co-ordination, when I saw him hurl the 16-pound shot at a Caledonia Club competition in the Kings County area back about 1938 or 1939.

I don't know whether Mr. McGowan ever competed seriously in this event or in other sports events, but I do remember the tremendous force he was able to get behind the shot as he tossed it through the air that fine summer afternoon. I believe the place was Caledonia, though I may be mistaken.

Doug, a former PC member of the legislature, for Third Kings, is running this time in the Fourth Kings riding.

Holland Anniversary

JUST AFTER I wrote the above on Monday afternoon I had a call from Mrs. John Kamphuis, Tea Hill to tell me about an essay her daughter Jo-Anne had written about the liberation of their area in Holland by Canadian soldiers away back 25 years ago. Tuesday, May 5 of this year was 25 years to the day since the treaty was signed that liberated Holland, Mrs. Kamphuis told me.

Twenty-five years is a long time, and much is forgotten in a quarter-century, I observed to Mrs. Kamphuis.

Her immediate reply "But we'll never forget, we'll never forget" impressed on me the fact that next week's election and any other election in our country, should mean more to us than elections often do.

It is a privilege, a real privilege, to have elections, where free men and women can vote. We are likely to forget that at times, because it has always been that way with us.

Imagine, if you can, what it would mean not to be able to vote, not to have any say in our country's affairs. Imagine if a foreign invader took over our homes and our institutions, that's what Mrs. Kamphuis must have meant when she told me "We'll never forget, we'll never forget the day those Canadian tanks and hundreds of Canadian soldiers came to liberate us.

Wants Old Car Plates

BRUCE LOBAY lives at 410 Washington Avenue, Winnipeg 15, Manitoba. He has been collecting sets of old car license, or registration plates from every Canadian province. He has spent a great deal of money, he says. Now he is asking for anyone who will send him plates of P.E.I. registration for the years 1918 to 1922.

Mr. Lobay says he has "the best collection of old license plates in the country," but he wants to fill out a few missing links.

If anyone is interested in sending him any of the plates he is seeking, he will appreciate it.