

Flying Machine Built By Islander In 1890

By NEIL A. MATHESON Provincial-Farm Editor

IT WAS not until 1903 that the Wright Brothers, Orville and Wilbur, first got their heavier-than-air machine to fly—Orville flew it at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina on December 17 according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica—but an Islander, Patrick Peters, had flown in a heavier-than-air machine some 13 years previously.

I have to thank Will Mountain, Alma and Mrs. Robert Murphy of Clermont, for the details on the story I've been researching now since early last summer. Mr. Mountain gave me a clipping last October that indicated Patrick Peters—he came from the Palmer Road in the St. Louis area—had flown the machine on his farm and once had flown over his barn. The Mountain clipping also said that Mr. Peters was going to fly to Tignish the following week.

MRS. MURPHY is the former Edna Fitzgerald, who was born in the Palmer Road area and I understand that Patrick Peters who was sometimes called "Pat Felix" by his neighbours, lived near the Palmer Road, church. Mrs. Murphy actually knew the man who built the flying machine.

The old clipping Mrs. Murphy found in an old scrap book indicated that Peters had gone to Portland, Maine to give flying demonstrations.

The Island man had made up his mind in 1885 that he was going to build a machine that would navigate the air, the old story said.

Peters said he objected to balloons "because they are too far beyond the control of those who risk their lives in them." He believed a machine could be built "capable of being under the management of the flyer, as much as a horse rake." And that's a homely illustration, for horse rakes were simple machines that were used by every farmer who could afford to buy one.

Birds' Wings Used For His Model

THE OLD story says "he took the wings and motion of a bird" for a model, believing that if he could fly like a bird it would be enough. Nowhere does either of the old stories describe in detail just how the "flying machine" Mr. Peters built was powered, though I suspect the Palmer-Road man had to supply the motive power himself.

From head to tail the machine was 16 feet, and it was three feet from the body to the end of each wing. Depending on the width of "the body" the machine could have been anywhere from eight feet to 10 feet wide, perhaps.

Powered Detail Is Not Described

"THE SEAT was in the body", and here's the only reference to the power.

"The motive power used in propelling the machine was obtained by a combination of wheels".

Mrs. Murphy remembers the reference to "the wheels", but nobody to whom I talked could describe just how the power was applied. She believes he would take off from a platform, or the top of a flat building.

But it's fairly clear that it was a powered flight. It's my impression that the "wings" were probably used as wings to fly, though it's only a guess, made after carefully studying the old story.

"His first flight"—the reference is obviously to Portland, Maine—"passed over a forest, making about two miles in four minutes". And that would be moving rapidly in those far-off days.

"From Peters' description of the way things looked below, it would appear that he went at least 2,000 feet up in the air, and perhaps to twice that height", the story of 75 years ago suggested.

Peters told the newsman that he "went up and down at will, managing his 38-pound machine without the least degree of trouble".

Having gone to Portland to make some money by giving public exhibitions of his machine, he was willing "to give any desired test and can go any distance desired." He could "keep a few feet above the ground, or can go up in mid air. It's a perfectly easy thing to fly with one of those machines," he emphasized.

Spectators Were Still Skeptical

BUT ALL the information I could dig up indicated that Mr. Peters didn't succeed in impressing many people with his flying machine of 75 years ago. One writer said, almost in a defensive vein, apparently, that "Portland people who know Peters best say that he is honest, and he acts that way," but even the people who saw him fly apparently didn't quite believe it.

And, who could blame them. This was probably the first time the people had heard of anyone claiming to fly since the mythical Greek architect and sculptor, Daedalus, who was said to have built the labyrinth for Minos of Crete. Later, the old story said, he fell under the displeasure of Minos and fashioned wings for himself and his son Icarus and escaped to Sicily, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, though an old school book said the son flew too high and the heat of the Sun melted the wax which held the wings to his body, and he fell into the sea and drowned.

There was the difference that Patrick Peters actually lived, and he did build a "flying machine" in which he could fly. But if many people were unwilling to take him seriously 75 years ago, perhaps it's not so surprising.

My one regret that I've forgotten the man who suggested I look for this story in the first place. If you will refresh my memory, I'll give you credit in a future column.

Klu Klux Klan Story Is Recalled

THE PROMINENCE given to the Klu Klux Klan in Alabama a few days ago reminds me of an experience I had away back in the summer of 1932. I had been out of work from April and it was late in the summer, I believe, when I heard of an opening for a man on the City police force and I applied.

Several days later a member of the KKK here in Charlottetown—yes they were here at the time—got in touch with me. I told me they were interested in me and were going to back me for the appointment. As far as I can remember the KKK's chose me "because I was a Protestant" and they were going to "put" their weight behind me. The man told me they had never had a man lose out whom they had backed.

The position was not filled at the time and I was hired by The Patriot as Sports writer before it was filled, so I missed out on the police job.

I was just as happy, because I never did feel that I would have made a good policeman, though I have a great deal of respect for the men who man our police forces. And I do like newspaper work, even though I got into it more or less by the accident of the depression of the Thirties.

The man who got in touch with me has long since died. He moved from this province not long after I had met him. I was telling the story last fall to Frank VanDerstine of Charlottetown, while we were on our way to a meeting in O'Leary and he told me that he had been invited to join the KKK's once. He also told me that a "fiery cross" had been burned once in Montague. That's the full extent of my knowledge of the Klan's connection with this province.

Button Hooks For Mr. Burke

I FORGOT it last week but it was Ronald MacGillivray who was the father of Charles MacGillivray the former Charlottetown boy who won the Congressional Medal of Honor. And only last week I noticed that I had not used the correct surname of Maurice Burke, the retired newspaperman who had gone into a local store looking for a button hook. Incidentally a lady from the Kensington area—she did not give her name—sent a couple of really fancy button hooks for Mr. Burke. I passed them on to him and he is most appreciative to the thoughtful lady who sent them, though he had no intention of asking somebody to give him any.

Another reader offered this week to give me a button hook for you, Mr. Burke, but I assured him you are now well supplied.

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PREMIER SHAW MAKES PRESENTATION

Civil Servant's Retirement Honored By Party Yesterday

After 28 years of public service, Miss Alma Mason, of the department of the provincial secretary, retired yesterday.

In honor of Miss Mason, a party was held yesterday afternoon in the Province Building. Attending were Premier Walter R. Shaw, cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and a large number of employees of government departments.

Miss Mason was showered with gifts from the various departments and Premier Shaw, in making a presentation, said "here is a civil servant that rendered tremendous service to the people of the province."

"Never once did I hear a complaint or criticism of what she has done and what is more important is that Miss Mason has never criticized or complained in regard to the various people she has been associated with in government during the past 28 years."

"I hope the greatest blessings will rest on you for many, many years."

NATIVE OF BUNBURY Miss Mason was born and raised in the Bunbury area where her family has lived for generations. She attended the consolidated school at Mt. Herbert and following her elementary schooling she attended Prince of Wales College where she completed the requirements for a first class teacher's license.

Her first teaching assignment was at the Flat River School and like so many Island teachers of that time, she was responsible for instruction in all 10 grades.

After some years of teaching, Miss Mason returned to Charlottetown for further study, this time to the Union Commercial College. Securing her commercial diploma, she joined the migration from the Island and spent some time with the federal civil service in Ottawa.

Miss Mason joined the public service of Prince Edward Island in 1937 for a two-week relief period. This relief period stretched into 28 years of unbroken service in various government departments.

After that first two weeks of the provincial secretary's department, Miss Mason transferred to the tax office where she remained until November of 1937. Then followed five years in the Women's Institute branch of the department of agriculture.

In 1942, she returned to treasury and the tax office. Her last change of office came in 1947 when she returned to the department of the provincial secretary.

Premier Shaw referred to Miss Mason's career as "the finest example of a public servant in the whole civil service of the province."

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ISLAND NEWS PAGE

2 The Guardian, Charlottetown, Thurs., Apr. 1, 1965.

Missionary Has Itinerary Here

A noted Baptist missionary to Angola, arrives in the province today and beginning Friday will carry out an extensive itinerary of engagements in Charlottetown and points from O'Leary to East Point. He is Rev. Charles Harvey, who as one of a team of ten missionaries from the Maritimes went to Angola in 1957. He is now on furlough and his return to Angola is dependent on political conditions in that country. Mr. Harvey, with his wife was



REV. CHARLES HARVEY

able to do outstanding work in Mt. Boca, both in construction of missionary housing and pastoral work among the many village congregations connected with that missionary station. In 1961 they were forced to leave their mission station when the rebel uprising took place. They then worked at Cabinda until they came home on furlough one year ago. Rev. Mr. Harvey was born in

JACKSON'S GROCERY advertisement listing various products and prices.

Satisfaction Derived From New Milk Policy

By J. LINCOLN DEWAR

The different farm organizations which have been pressing for a better deal for the milk producer have some cause for some satisfaction in that their requests have been met almost exactly as presented.

One aspect of the new policy is that it tends to create uniform prices for manufactured milk in all parts of the country. This hasn't been the case in the past. Possibly this statement needs to be modified as the deficiency payment will likely be calculated on the national average price for milk going into the different products. It needs to be realized that every producer isn't guaranteed the full price at every plant.

However, the Government is undertaking to make up the difference between what the milk is worth for the different products and \$3.30 per hundred. This will be accomplished through a deficiency payment. Over and above this will be a special payment made to producers on the following basis: Under 10,000 pounds of milk no payment. Over 10,000 pounds to 48,000 pounds, 25 cents per hundred. Over 48,000 to 96,000 pounds, 50 cents per hundred. Over 96,000 pounds 100 cents per hundred.

This latter arrangement tends to put the brakes slightly on the larger producer while providing extra compensation to the smaller man. Reasoning here is that the larger farmer produces more efficiently and at lower cost than does the smaller man. In any event the new policy is going to mean a worthwhile increase in income. The amount will vary but should mean in many cases between 40 and 50 cents a hundred more than was the case last year.

Next week April 6 to 9 the Maritime Departments of Agriculture in co-operation with the CBC are bringing four extension programs to farm listeners. The topics have been chosen with care and judgement and should bring valuable information to all listeners. From 10:30 to 11:30 each morning for four days there will be an hour long program starting off with the topic "Farm and Home Planning" and moving to "Better Quality Forage" followed by "Better Cattle Husbandry". The series will conclude on April 9 with a program on "Additional Income Opportunities". This latter is one which should excite the interest of all farmers and their wives.

We would like to suggest that farmers overcome their reluctance to be caught in the house during the forenoon and definitely plan to spend at least one hour each morning obtaining up-to-date information which can pay even better dividends than cutting wood, hauling manure or grading potatoes. Valuable education will be piped right into your home, why not be around to turn on the tap?

FARM BUILDING PLANS Farmers who are planning the construction of buildings may be contacting Graeme Linkletter of the Department in Summerside obtain information and plans for any type of farm building. Requests sent to the Department of Agriculture, Box 2000, Charlottetown will be relayed to Mr. Linkletter who is accepting the responsibility of providing this engineering service.

There are new ideas in building and savings can be made in many cases by consulting with those who have access to modern information.

TRACTOR LICENSE While farmers will no longer need to register a tractor they will be required to see that operators hold a license. This is the same license as for automobiles but there is an important difference. Persons from 14 to 16 years may obtain a special license for tractor operators on the highway but this license will not be valid for operating cars or trucks.

This means that no person under 14 years of age can legally operate a tractor on the highway and all should govern themselves accordingly.

Finally our understanding is that these regulations do not apply to operation of the tractor on the farm, here there are no restrictions other than those imposed by good sense, judgement and safe practice.

HOW MANY DOLLARS While it is difficult to make an accurate estimate, the new dairy policy could mean \$750,000 in extra income to the dairymen of this province. Stated in another way the average might be about \$150.00 per producer.

Thus it will be seen that the new policy represents a very worthwhile shot in the arm for dairying.

DAIRY COMMISSION In addition to the price support announcement related to milk prices the intention is also stated to proceed with the setting up of a Canadian Dairy Commission.

This body, in co-operation with the provinces would have considerable authority over the dairy industry in respect to prices, price supports, marketing, pooling, etc. This Commission can be considered the outcome of recommendations made by the Dairy Industry Committee set up some three years ago by the first National Dairy Conference.

POTATO MEETINGS Already four meetings of the series planned by the Potato Marketing Board have been held and generally there has been quite moderate, if not enthusiastic, reaction. We suspect that the growers are more than a little bit puzzled and confused by a plebiscite in which there doesn't appear to be any definite pros or cons, no real opposition and no real villain to criticize.

At the moment all seems to be quiet sailing on the Pictou Sea nor does there appear to be any likelihood of any violent storms.

SPRING THOUGHTS For little boys the coming of spring means thawing of the snow, the excitement of running water, the opportunity of wet feet, new kittens, the return of spring birds, and a final snow storm in late April to provide excellent snow ball material.

For the women of the farm household, spring means house cleaning, redecorating and trying to balance the advantages of waiting to do both until the mud has disappeared. If the husband has been properly domesticated, there is the possibility of having his assistance at these chores in the early part of April even though many of them have a pronounced allergy to the smell of paint.

Spring for the farmer means the baring of the fields, examination of the clover for survival.

2 Convicted Of Speeding

Two persons were convicted of speeding charges by Magistrate A. J. Haslam, Q.C. in city police court yesterday.

They were Michael Ronald MacDonald, Parkdale, 200 a g.c. costs, and Donald P. Wood, Kensington, \$15 and costs.

Arthur Quint, Charlottetown, pleaded guilty to possession of stolen goods amounting to \$7.45 and was remanded to April 7.

Harry Edward Miller, Charlottetown, charged with being the owner of a dog which bit a person, pleaded not guilty to the charge and his case was adjourned to April 7.

Prunty of Charlottetown had his case adjourned to April 7.

For possession of liquor in a place other than his residence, a Murray Harbor resident was fined \$20 and costs or 30 days.

Fishermen's Loan Board Sec'y Quits

The secretary of the P.E.I. Fishermen's Loan Board, A. Wathen Gaudet, has sent his resignation to the provincial government.

Mr. Gaudet yesterday declined to comment on his reasons for resigning, and Premier Walter Shaw said he wanted to discuss the matter with Mr. Gaudet before making comment.

Mr. Gaudet, the former mayor of Charlottetown held the loan board position since 1959.

Two-Year Suspended Term Given In Break, Entry Case

Charged with break, entry and theft, George Louis Joseph of Pownall Street, Charlottetown changed an earlier plea of not guilty to guilty in Queens County Magistrate's Court yesterday and was given a two-year suspended sentence.

The accused was charged with theft of plywood valued at \$97.44 from the Island Fertilizer Company Inc.

In passing the sentence, Magistrate James B. Johnston, Q.C. required a \$1,000 bond, made up of two sureties of \$500, be posted, that restitution be made to Island Fertilizer Company and that the man report to the probation officer once a month during the period of suspension.

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