

The Former Lime Kilns at Dolly Varden, Near Acton, Abandoned 30 Years Ago, Now a Scene of Bustling Activity Again

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Second Section

New Acton Quarry

Tranquillizers, Tums Standard Diet As Reporter Tracks Down "Scoop"

By Don Ryder

"So you want to be a reporter?" was the startled reply I gave the young lad tagging along close at my heels as I headed east on Mill Street in search of what the boss termed a "red-hot scoop". As the fast pace began to bother my breathing, I slowed to a trot and above the noise of the passing trucks, shouted, "Well, son, all is not sunshine, you know. It entails a lot of hard work, abuse from the boss and phone calls when a name is spelled wrong or an article left out of the paper."

"Only this morning as I was sitting with my feet up on my desk, shades drawn to keep the office dark, phone off the hook and my swivel chair tilted back at a precarious angle, snoring, in plops the boss around 10 a.m. and shouts, 'Get going! There's a red-hot story about to break. You know! The same one I wrote you for last year about the same time.'"

Destination Secret

"Say, Mr. Ryder," remarked the young lad as he caught up to my quickened pace again, "where are we headed?" Now, this was the opening I wanted. "Can't tell you, son, can't tell you. A good reporter never gives out trade secrets. Whenever anyone asks 'What's new?', just say 'Oh, not much.'"

As we passed the town dump and headed down the third line toward Dolly Varden, the young would-be cub reporter wisecracked, "How come you are walking—car break down or something?"

I never see you walking—either you're in at Watson's Restaurant drinking coffee or sitting beneath a tree at the park."

"The boss forget to sign my swindle sheet and the paymaster wouldn't divvy up any cash for gas and the tank's empty," was my sad reply as I stopped to take off my shoes and rub my feet. As we headed down the hill again and neared the railway crossing where the "old haunted house" used to be, memories of younger days dulled my mind until a fast-moving freight train zoomed by and I dived for the safety of the ditch.

"Is this one of the hazards of being a reporter?" chortled the youngster.

"Just one of the many, son," I sighed as I brushed the mud from my trousers and picked up my hat.

Over the Barbed Wire

After crossing the tracks, we came to a new gate erected at the entrance to the old lime kilns, which have been idle for at least thirty years. Seeing a low section in the fence guarded by three strands of barbed wire, I instructed the youngster to hold the strands down while I scaled the fence. Just then, the roar of a heavy machine startled the lad and the barbed wire dug into my leg, ripping a good pair of trousers, as the youngster took off down the road.

"If you want to be a good reporter," I shouted above the roar of the bulldozer, "you gotta learn to keep cool and collected! Get back here and untangle me!" As we landed in a maze of holes in the ground and making peculiar marks on a chart. "No one would tell me what was going on," I sighed.

I told the lad how I snooped around and nearly fell off the cliff into the gulley below, talked to nearby farmers and sensed there was something big in the wind, but no one knew or they wouldn't tell. In the winter, I kept checking.

That Executive Look

Sighting an important looking man in the distance, I asked the young lad to hold my pad and pencil. "I'd better look sharp for this guy. This might be the big moment," I remarked. Donning my sun glasses, every good reporter wears sun glasses on assignments. I told my companion, straightening my tie and lighting up a cigar, "I remarked, 'how important it is to look like an executive on this type of assignment.' We quickened our pace."

"Never know," I stated, "might even run into important fellows like Frederick G. Gardner, Donald Gordon or even the Duke of Edinburgh on this type of job." I reached into my pocket for another tranquilizer pill.

Looks Like a Siding

As we plodded up a newly graded road toward the lime kilns, we could see this important looking man watching a bulldozer, power shovel and several heavy-duty trucks, moving fill and levelling off a large area. "What are they doing?" my curious companion asked. Not wanting to plead ignorance, I remarked, "I understand there is going to be a 90-car siding to haul the finished product out. Maybe that is what the men are levelling for." Glancing over by the railway tracks, the tired but interested lad asked what the men were doing up the telegraph poles. "I guess the wires and poles will have to be moved to make way for the siding to come in. Can't you see they are moving them from one side to the other?"

"Look at those guys over in the field near the Esquesing dump!" shouted my companion. Sighting gas line pipes and machinery he wondered if maybe the quarry was going to fire their boilers, to melt down the rock. Sensing he had a lot to learn, I told him rock is not melted to make gravel, it is crushed. I also said it was understood this was to be quite a different process from the normal operation and rock would be crushed and loaded in one process, ready for shipment.

Peer and Wheeze

Getting back to the gas line, I suggested perhaps it was the main line from the gas well and they had to move it to the north side of the track to clear the way for the siding.

"Where is this siding going to run?" was the next query tossed in my lap. "See these razor-back embankments here? Well, once they are cut down and the ground levelled, the siding is likely to start on the straight-away on the approach to the crossing cut over here and end up in the area where the men are levelling below those cliffs of stone."

"The boss told me to look for a number of heavy vehicles, count the number of workers, make a note of any buildings and talk to someone important," I wheezed as we climbed back over the embankment.

"There's a building over there. What's that?" queried the lad. It turned out to be an old bread truck van being used for an office.

Occupational Disease

Just at this moment, an air compressor began to hum and the rat-a-tat of the drill hammer caused both the lad and myself to jump. As I reached into my pocket for a Tums, I explained briefly, "For ulcers, my boy, ulcers! Every newspaper man has ulcers."

New Cigar

"Why don't you go over, and talk to them?" challenged the upstart. Straightening my tie, tossing away the soggy cigar butt and lighting a fresh one, I ordered him to stay where he was. "I'll tackle those guys myself!" Taking my clean handkerchief from my pocket to wipe dust from shabby but polished shoes, I grabbed the pad and pencil from the kid and tucked them in my pocket. "Never approach important looking people with a pad and pencil in your hand. They think you're out for an autograph or to have them sign a cheque for some worthwhile charity." I warned.

I strode toward the group, coughing generously in order to attract the men's attention, I inhaled some kind of fly and by the time I reached the group, my face was red, my eyes bulged and my throat was hoarse. One man in the group hit me a thump on the back and shook my hand.

One of the Biggest

"I see things are lining up for the siding," I remarked in a voice barely audible to the man with a Scottish accent and another who soon enquired if I knew Ken Hassard. "There's a lot of work to be done yet," one replied. "Where is Ken Hassard now?" enquired the younger of the two men, who said he and Ken roomed together during the war. After explaining where Ken was living, I broached the subject of the assignment again.

"Going to be a big operation shortly," I remarked. "One of the biggest!" one man replied, as he told me that, as soon as the gas lines and telegraph poles were moved, the area levelled, the work on the siding would begin.

"Great thing," I replied. "What is your name again?" one man asked.

"Don Ryder," came the answer.

"What company do you represent?" he enquired, thinking I might be from one of the companies who supply material or equipment. "The Acton Free Press," came my humble reply.

That's Different

"Good gosh! Don't quote us! Get a statement from the president!" the tallest of the two pleaded. I agreed a news release from the president was ideal. I hurried back to the young lad. "Okay son, let's go." Curiosity immediately sprang into his eyes as he asked, "What did you learn?" Remembering the duty of a good reporter never to tell, I remarked, "Nice men, nice men! I got to the top man on the ladder. Won't be long now and all the facts will be safely tucked away in my private safe until publishing day." Asking if even the boss wasn't going to be let in on the secret, I remarked, "No sir, can't take a chance with any leaks on this one."

Staggering up the hill toward the town dump and Glenora subdivision, I enquired again, "You still want to be a reporter?" "Yeah!" came the excited reply.

Test His Nose

Testing his nose for news, as we stopped at the top of the hill, I enquired what fact he had acquired on his escapade with me that morning. "Well, there is going to be a quarry there. Seems like a siding is going to be there. Gas and telegraph lines are being moved, earth moving machines are on the job, important looking people are looking the place over and it seems as though plant equipment might arrive any day," he replied.

Asking him what else he would say if writing a story, the youngster whom I nicknamed by this time "Eager," stated he would note how trees had been cleared during the winter a new piece of equipment for quarry operation moved in and was being tested, the amount of potential stone to be used was unlimited and then wait for further information from that president you heard about.

Two weeks later, the young lad met me on the street, stopped and enquired why he hadn't read my story in the paper. "I phoned and I wrote and I went back—and then started all over again. But I'm still waiting for that official news release. Still waiting."

MOFFAT

Youngsters Assist In Family Service

Members of the church school took part in the Family Sunday Service in Nassagaweya Church on Sunday, Cathy Davies read the responsive reading, Doris Robinson read the lesson from Isaiah 6: 1-8 and Matthew 5: 13-16 and Dorothy Dredge led in prayer.

Sixteen ladies of Nassagaweya Presbyterian Church held their May W.M.S. meeting at the home of Mrs. E. Donovan in Galt.

Burned Out Again
Another Pioneer building of Nassagaweya situated on the east half of lot 18 concession 2 was destroyed by fire in the early hours of Sunday morning. The back part of the house was log and the front part one of the first cement block buildings put up in the district. Mr. and Mrs. French have been living in it. They all got out safely but one child is in the hospital with smoke on its lungs. It is hoped it will soon recover.

Their close neighbors took them into their home and found another dwelling. Several articles of clothing and furniture were gathered up to help give them another start. This is the second time that the French family has been burned out. We wish them better luck for the future.

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