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Aged Indian Tells of Pioneering Days

Hunter's Point Resident Gives Interview at Halleybury in Regard to the Early Days of the North Land.

Chene Mechelle, an Indian of eighty years of age, was in Halleybury last week and to newspapermen gave an interview that is of more or less historic importance. He was in Halleybury to visit his daughter who is recovering from a recent attack of appendicitis at the Halleybury hospital. All his life Mr. Mechelle has been a resident of Hunter's Point on Kipawa Lake, but he has travelled rather widely in the North and has a wide knowledge of this country. In addition he has an excellent memory and can recall persons and events in this North and incidents in the life of Temiskaming that have particular interest and value now from the standpoint of the story of this country. Mr. Mechelle is a fine specimen of Indian manhood and despite his age is upright and active and has all his faculties alert. He enjoys telling of the days long past and recalling affairs now passed from general memory. One of his delights is to explain the meanings of the many Indian words used to designate rivers, lakes and other places and things in the North. In view of the fund of information that he has in regard to the North, and the pleasure he experiences in passing on accurate information of days long gone by, days in many cases that were passed before most people alive to-day were even born, it can be understood that in his interviews with the press he had a happy time as well as the newspapermen finding the chat of interest and informative.

During his stay in Halleybury Mr. Mechelle had long talks with the news-

papermen and among other things he told of the work he performed many years ago while in the service of the Hudson Bay Company of Gentlemen Adventurers. His duties during the years that he worked for the Hudson Bay Co. took him up and down the north's waterways, and one of his memories has to do with the disappearance of McLean, the free trader who had, so the old story goes, encroached on the company's hunting grounds despite warnings, and who vanished from a camp he had made on a small island below the Narrows and was never seen again. To this day, the island bears his name and is pointed out to the curious sightseer sailing on the lake.

The old Indian knew the late C. C. Farr, founder of Halleybury, when the latter was Hudson's Bay factor at Hunter's Point, and he told how he used "to mind Mrs. Farr's baby." Mr. Mechelle worked under "Old Mr. Rankin" and he can tell stories of the many trips made between James Bay and the outside world in days when the canoe was the only means of transportation. He remembers when the only settler on the Ontario side of Lake Temiskaming was a man named Wabis, with another man whose name was Piche the sole resident on the Quebec side. In those days, Mr. Mechelle says, the shores were lined with green timber, chiefly red pine and spruce, and there had been no forest fires until 50 years ago, when one swept a portion of the Quebec shore and the island now known as Burnt Island.

North Bay Nugget:—It is announced that there is likely to be a fish hatchery located in North Bay. Too bad they couldn't raise a few fish like those pictured on the souvenir post cards. That would help the tourist trade.

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About the Timmins Band and Its State

Secretary of Timmins Citizens' Band Writes in Regard to Letter Published Last Week Enquiring About the Band.

Last week The Advance published a letter regarding conditions in the Timmins Citizens' Band and the failure to provide music here during the summer. This week The Advance received communications from both the acting president of the band and from the secretary. The letter from the president of the band will be found elsewhere in this issue. The secretary's letter is as follows:—

Timmins, Sept. 21st, 1931

To the Editor of The Advance, Timmins.

Dear Sir:—In reply to the letter you published in your last issue, Sept. 16th.

First, we beg to state that the Timmins Citizens' Band is still functioning and is progressing as well as conditions will allow, according to the way the members are employed at the local mines, being on two and three shifts each week, at different hours, and most of them are on shift work when required for concert or other engagements. Last year we were able to pay the bandmen for the time they lost at work but we cannot do it now for reasons I will state further down. The Sunday work which has been this summer at the mines has made it almost impossible to muster enough players to put on a band concert in the band stand. Also, we sacrificed one month this year to put on a regatta and carnival in July, which was arranged during the office of our late president (A. E. Mortimer) and was widely advertised, so we had to go on with the said regatta and carnival. It will be good to mention the reason of regatta and carnival was to raise funds for the band as we were informed that the council desired to withdraw our grant, which has been donated yearly to the Timmins Citizens' Band. I will state here that is the reason we could not pay the players for lost time at all concerts.

The regatta and carnival was a failure owing to lack of public support. It must be understood it is impossible to carry on a band without funds. The players are giving their time for the love of music having received no remuneration for their services this year. Without public support it is impossible to carry on a band successfully. As far as loggerheads are concerned it does not exist in the Timmins Citizens' Band. We turned out a little while ago to give a concert on the band stand and when we got the music and stands and instruments ready there were no lights, reason was the meter had been taken out. And, "Timmins Citizen," the above band practices twice per week, on Mondays and Thursdays. We would welcome you or any other citizen interested in T. C. Band. Any information you may require regarding T. C. Band will be given you at their headquarters in the Central school basement on the above nights between the hours of 7.30 p.m. and 9 p.m. My concluding statement is that we are and never have been anything than Timmins Citizens' Band. Trusting that this fills all your enquiries, we are,

Yours very sincerely,

Timmins Citizens' Band,

O. McCann, Secretary.

The above is no reply at all to the letter written last week by the ratepayer of the town, signing himself "Timmins Citizen." The painfully detailed mention of the different shifts does not answer the query as to why no concerts were given this summer. The difficulty in regard to the shifts has been one that the band has had to contend with since its organization, yet year after year twelve to twenty open air concerts were given during the summer. In other years the band made an honest effort to overcome the difficulty and of course they were successful in this because of their sincerity. Conditions this year in regard to the shifts are no different to what they were in other years, it is the band that is different.

To suggest that the council is responsible in any way for the condition of the band is to be most unfair. The council gave the heartiest support to the band and showed rare patience this year in the matter. The grant was not withheld until the council was publicly informed by a responsible official of the band that the grant was no longer desired as the band did not intend any further to "sponge on the ratepayers." Former officials of the band will resent the insinuations made against the council for they know the council has been sympathetic and generous in its attitude to the band. The goodwill and generous treatment of the Hollinger to the band is also worthy of mention at this time when the band seems inclined to forget these things.

There will be equal resentment at the suggestion that the public has failed in its support of the band. The public in Timmins have never yet failed to support any worthy cause. That is a broad statement, but it is true. The goodwill of the public was one of the most valuable assets of the band in years gone by. If that goodwill has been alienated, the fault does not rest with the public. The lack of patronage at the regatta event was indeed an evidence of the good spirit of the public, because the band deliberately staged the regatta on the day celebrated by the North Land as a whole as Firmen's Day at Schumacher. Schumacher people also, it may be noted, have been generous in their support of the Timmins Band, which makes the conflict of dates the more deplorable.

It is refreshing to learn that an ac-

tual attempt was made this summer to hold at least one concert. Surely there is insight given into the real trouble with the band in the excuse given by the secretary for the failure to proceed with that one concert. The bandmaster and the secretary in previous years would certainly have considered it their duty to see that the light bill was paid, and so the meter would not have been removed. In any case they could have been depended upon to have looked to the re-instatement of the meter had it been removed. They could have been expected at the very least to have assured themselves that things were in order at the stand before the carrying over of music, stands and instruments. Yes, though all these terrible things had happened once, they would surely have seen that they were righted before the next time, and that there would be a next time. In telling about this one concert that did not materialize the secretary forgets to mention the one that did. That was a concert held at Kirkland Lake at the expense of Timmins money, and apparently carried through despite the difficulties of different shifts and removed meters.

Acting President of the Band Writes

Reply to Letter in Last Week's Advance Along Same Lines as by Secretary Elsewhere in This Issue.

This week The Advance has received the following letter from the acting president of the Timmins Citizens' Band. This letter follows much the same line as taken by the secretary of the band in the letter published elsewhere in this issue. The conditions specified in the two letters are no different from what have obtained since the organization of the band and in no sense constitute any reply to the letter by "The Timmins Citizen". The suggestion of the acting president that a

public meeting be called and a committee appointed apart from the band members has some merit, but The Advance is inclined to think the real remedy lies in a re-organization of the band itself, the officials apparently being unequal to the task undertaken. However, as the case is covered by the comments on the letter of the secretary, the letter of the acting president may be given without further comment:

Timmins, Ont., Sept. 21st, 1931

To the Editor of The Advance, Timmins.

Dear Sir:—Re the letter of the 16th Sept. will you kindly publish the following:—

Mr. "Timmins Citizen":—In answer to your request for information regarding the progress of the Timmins Citizens' Band, also the reason for non-appearance at the band stand this summer I shall endeavour to explain.

Firstly, The members being working men chiefly miners, they cannot choose the working shift most suitable for attending practice which is essential for concert work. The present employment of members leaves the band in two fractions, one practising each week. Our only hope to overcome this state of affairs is Sunday practice. We of the executive did not think that we would be justified in arranging Sunday practice during the summer months for the simple reason that bandmen need other recreation besides blowing an instrument, band work being their hobby not their means of livelihood.

The second reason:—Concerts have been difficult to arrange in that members of the band take their turn working Sundays. They have no other option; their living depends on it. During last winter we could sometimes arrange for bandmen to get off for a concert, but at the same time we had to make good their lost wages. This summer we were unable to do that, the funds being too low. If we had no grant from the Hollinger Mining Co., the band would now be out of existence.

The third reason is we had to sacrifice one month's practice to carry out the regatta and carnival arranged to raise funds. I might say that the whole affair was a failure owing to lack of public support, chiefly owing to the understanding that the town looked after the band and so the affair was unnecessary, neither would it have been if the council had carried out their part, which, perhaps, wasn't their fault alto-

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Now, Mr. "Timmins Citizen", if you and the others you would like to operate with you can straighten out the above tangle, we bandmen would much appreciate your services. It is my intention to call a public meeting in the near future with the object of electing a committee of management outside of band members. We would like at least one representative of the council, one of the Hollinger staff, with three or more citizens. Perhaps, then something can be done to strengthen the position of the Timmins Citizens' Band and give the members a chance to progress to a brass band second to none in Canada.

R. N. JACKSON,
Acting president,
Timmins Citizens' Band

GAME COMMITTEE THROUGH WITH ITS WORK OF INQUIRY

The special provincial game committee appointed by the Legislature last session concluded its work in the North last week and left for the South to complete its report ready for presentation to the Government. The committee spent several weeks touring Northern Ontario, and made a special feature of receiving the opinions of fish and game clubs, rod and gun clubs and game protection associations, as well as the ideas of individuals on fish and game conservation and expansion. The committee were particularly impressed with the possibilities of the tourist traffic and considered that one of the biggest attractions that Ontario had to

offer tourists was the wealth of fish and game. For this particular reason, as well as for the usual general reasons, the preservation of the fish and game of the country is of prime importance. The committee while noting anything in regard to fish paid special attention to game matters, another committee a year or so before having dealt exhaustively in the fish question.

The committee visited Timmins last week a full report of their meeting here being given in the last issue of The Advance. Other places where meetings were held were:—Chapleau, Schreiber, Port Arthur, Fort William, Kenora, Fort Francis, Minaki, Sioux Lookout, Kapuskasing, Cochrane, New Liskeard, Temagami. They also visited the sanctuary at St. Ignace Island where they saw six moose and one bear. At Cochrane one member of the party had his automobile surrounded by a wolf or two, according to the despatches.

The following are the members of the committee:—Hon. W. D. Black, M.P.P. for Addington, former speaker of the legislature; J. Lewis Milligan, of the Dept. of Mines, secretary of the committee; D. J. Taylor, M.P.P. for North Grey; Coulter MacLean, M.P.P. for Toronto; Wm. Newman, M.P.P. for North Victoria and Haliburton; T. P. Lancaster, M.P.P. for Peterborough County; Lynn Hollingsworth, president of the fish and game association at Sault Ste. Marie, said to be the largest club of its kind in the province; Frank Spence, M.P.P., Fort William; A. Aubin, M.P.P., Sturgeon Falls; and Jack Miner, noted nature lover, of Kingsville, Ont.

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