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## Real Old-timer Tells of Early Days in the North

### Robert Holmes, who Celebrated His 81st Birthday Last April, Recalls the Typhoid Epidemic and the Bad Fire in Cobalt in 1909. Incidents of 45 Years Spent in the North

Last week The Advance had a very interesting interview with Robert Holmes, a genuine old-timer of the North, having spent 45 years in the North and taking active part in its struggles and progress. Mr. Holmes, who celebrated his 81st birthday last April, recalled the typhoid epidemic and the destructive fire in Cobalt in 1909, and other incidents of interest and importance. The years have dealt lightly with Mr. Holmes but accident was not so kindly. These days he has to travel on crutches, having been injured in an automobile accident last year, one leg being badly injured. But though he is held back in physical action by this injury, his mind is as alert as ever, his interest in affairs as keen, and his eyesight much better than most men twenty years younger. Without glasses, he reads The Advance from newspapers on the desk to show how keen and sure his sight remains.

Mr. Holmes went to Muskoka 45 years ago, working there in the tannery, the

planning mill and the lumber woods. "How would you like to work for \$10 a month and keep a family?" he asked, answering his own question with the words:—"Well, I did that one winter, but it took some doing even in those days."

From Huntsville, where he spent four years Mr. Holmes went to Sturgeon Falls, where he spent 11 years. Part of this time he conducted a carting and draying business in the days when Sturgeon Falls was a busy centre. At Sturgeon Falls he was elected to the school board for six years, spent two years as a town councillor, and for a year was assessor and tax collector.

In December, 1908, Mr. Holmes and family moved to Cobalt, and took their part in the development and progress of that area. Mr. Holmes recalled the typhoid epidemic that broke out in June of 1909. The disease spread so rapidly that its seriousness was recognized at once. The chief of police was appointed sanitary inspector with instructions to

clean up the town. The unfortunate chief of police, however contracted the disease, and died. Another police officer (Sam Newton, well-known throughout the North) was given the post of sanitary inspector, but he also contracted the fever and was off duty for six months as a consequence. Next, the post was given to another man named Dean, but he only stayed two weeks. On August 1st, Mr. Holmes took over the difficult task, staying as sanitary inspector until 1911. It cost the town \$9,000 to clean away the unsanitary conditions responsible for the epidemic. Before the disease was conquered, however, 1100 cases went through the hospitals, and there were over 60 deaths.

The same unlucky year for Cobalt, saw half the town wiped out by a disastrous fire. On July 2nd, 1909, while the typhoid epidemic seemed more than any young town could survive, fire started and before it ended the whole north part of the town was burned out.

Another test for the service and faithfulness of the sanitary inspector, as well as for other officials of the town, came in February, 1910, when there was an outbreak of smallpox. There were 66 cases, but no deaths. Dr. Bell, one of the provincial health department officials, spent much of his time at Cobalt during the smallpox epidemic and aided in the measures taken to curb the outbreak.

After leaving the position of sanitary inspector in 1911, Mr. Holmes developed a business of his own, buying timber and selling it to the mines then active and needing this service. A big business was developed in this line and continued until the outbreak of the Great War when business in general was dislocated, with silver mining especially cramped.

At Easter, 1915, Mr. Holmes was appointed school attendance officer for Cobalt public school, a post he held with credit to himself and value to the community for over twenty years. In the winter of 1916-1917 Mr. Holmes acted as assessor for Coleman township, and also added to his public duties the position of sanitary inspector. Success and satisfaction seemed to be given in all the public and semi-public positions held by Mr. Holmes, but there was one accepted in this winter of 1916-17 that Mr. Holmes recalls as more or less a failure. This was the case where he and Fire Chief Brady and the town solicitor, Mr. Ross, were appointed a committee to prepare a case and go to Toronto to interview the fire insurance companies with a view to securing better fire insurance rates for the town of Cobalt. He noted that in those days the fire insurance rates in Cobalt ran from \$18 per \$1,000 to \$65 per \$1,000 a year. "The rates were about prohibitive and a serious burden on the town and its people," said Mr. Holmes. "We made out a very strong case for greatly reduced rates, but the insurance companies practically said to us that if the people of Cobalt didn't like the rates, they would withdraw from the Cobalt area altogether."

In August, 1917, Mr. Holmes resigned as sanitary inspector for Cobalt and took over the handling of the mail between Cobalt and Giroux Lake. In April of 1936 he has completed 19 years and 8 months with the mails and on the first of May had served twenty years as attendance officer for the Cobalt public schools. In honour of his service and record the post office department presented him with a handsome pen and pencil set, while the teachers of Cobalt joined in tendering him a banquet. At this event an address signed by all the teachers was presented to him, as well as a silver-mounted walking cane and a large volume of Klipping's works.

At that time Mr. Holmes retired from active service to come to the Porcupine camp to be with his daughters, Mrs. C. G. Kemsley, of the Dome, and Mrs. H. G. Laidlaw, of Timmins. On Sept. 6th last year he was struck by an auto and as a result of the injury received he has to go on crutches, but apart from this and a touch of deafness he still has large measure of the energy and keenness that carried him through the long years. Intensely interested in literature, no less than in affairs, he likes to read The Advance, and gives the fullest support to this newspaper's belief in the great future of the North. "It is a great country—the North," said Mr. Holmes last week, "and it is going to be a greater, with progress and development beyond even the firm faith of those who have pioneered it."

## The Porcupine Advance Amateur Photography Contest

### A Valuable Prize This Week a Grand Prize of \$30 Value IT'S EASY TO ENTER

Just take your films to be developed to one of "The Advance Photography Contest" Stores. When the pictures are finished select the ones you wish to enter. The Contest Stores staff will gladly fill out the Entry Form for you and turn it and the pictures over to The Advance for the judging. It's just as simple as that. Start taking prize-winning pictures at once. The more you enter the better chance you have of winning the weekly prizes and the grand prize.

There is a prize for the best picture each week for Two more weeks and a grand prize for the best picture of the whole contest.

### Enter Pictures at any of these Stores

- Burke's Drug Stores 3 Stores in Timmins
- C. A. Remus, Jeweller 17 Pine Street North, Timmins
- The Goldfields Drug Co., Ltd. 30 Third Avenue, Timmins
- The Royal Studio 9 Balsam Street North, Timmins
- Moisley & Ball, Druggists 36 Third Avenue, Timmins
- The Ramona Studio 65 Third Avenue, Timmins
- Pearce & Cross Drug Stores Ltd. 34 Golden Avenue, South Porcupine

### RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. This contest is open to any person living in the Porcupine District, other than professional photographers.
2. Contestants may enter as many pictures as they wish any week.
3. Pictures to be entered in the contest must be taken to one of the stores advertising in the contest section for developing and printing, and be entered at that store.
4. All pictures must be finished during the term of the contest: July 18 to September 22, 1938.
5. Each week's entries must be made before 4 p.m. Thursday. Pictures received after that time will be included in the next week's judging.
6. Contestants are cautioned against placing names or initials on pictures entered. A number will be used by the Contest Manager to identify each entry.
7. In the event of several particularly good entries being made in any one week, the judges reserve the right, after selecting the winning picture for the week, to re-enter any of the remaining pictures in any future weeks.
8. Prints entered in this contest become the property of The Porcupine Advance.
9. Glossy prints are required and negatives less than 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 inches must be enlarged.
10. Employees of The Porcupine Advance and their families are not eligible to enter the contest.
11. The decision of the judges shall be final.

### South End Kiwanis To Run Excursion

To Charter Special Train for Queens-Varsity Game. Other South Porcupine and Dome News.

South Porcupine, Sept. 10—(Special to The Advance)—The Young People of the Anglican Church opened the fall session on Wednesday night by having a weiner roast round an open air fire on the first rocks on the road to the Springs. They had a wonderful time; it was a glorious night and they sang songs and toasted weiners under the light of the moon. These young people would be glad to open their ranks to any young folks who would like to join with them. The A.Y.P.A. is primarily for Anglicans, but others who wish may belong. They meet each Wednesday in the Parish hall, and next Wednesday have been offered an invitation to join with Timmins A.Y.P.A. in a social evening at St. Matthew's.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Anthony and Freeman spent the week-end in Kirkland Lake.

Miss Genevieve McDowell, of Ansonville, is the guest of Mrs. W. Thomas, of Dome Ex., over the week-end.

Mrs. Levinson and son, Uly, left on Sunday for a week's vacation in Toronto.

Some of the grocery stores in town have entered upon a "gentleman's agreement" to stay open on pay nights and Saturday nights until 9 p.m. Among them are the Dominion Stores and Purdon & Lafamme. The early closing arrangement has been in force all summer, and has worked satisfactorily, but the present agreement will be tried out for a short time for the benefit of customers. The co-operatives stores are both holding to the early closing idea.

The Rebekah Lodge is holding a special bridge night on Friday next (16th) and would be glad to welcome any bridge players.

Mrs. Clarence Farrell, of Shawville, is visiting friends and renewing acquaintances in town for some days.

Mrs. Woodley, of Lakeview, with children returned from holiday in Toronto, and has taken up residence in the house on Evans St., formerly occupied by Mr. and Mrs. E. Covey.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Harris spent the week-end in Toronto.

Mr. and Mrs. Huo returned last week from holiday in the Province of Quebec. While in Sherbrooke they dined with Father Lagrevel, who was parish priest here before Father Gelinus. They report him as being in the best of health.

and acting as travelling missionary priest for that section. His nephew (also of South Porcupine with him)—Peter Saby—was ordained a year ago and is now teaching theology in the Seminary at Joliet.

Mrs. Theodore Hutz, of Pembroke, is visiting relatives in town. Mr. and Mrs. E. Wood, of Hamilton, are visiting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Arbour. Mrs. Wood is Mrs. Arbour's sister.

The regular weekly dinner of the Kiwanis was held on Thursday in the Masonic hall with President Blake acting as chairman. Mr. Gordon Cross gave a speech on pioneering in the Porcupine and delegates were elected to attend the District convention to be held in Kingston on Sept. 17th, 18th and 19th. It was definitely decided to charter a special excursion train to attend the Queen's-Varsity game in Toronto on Nov. 12th leaving on the Northland at cheap rates. The Kiwanis would like this to be as widely known as possible before hand so that fall holiday-makers may plan to take advantage of this excursion.

Many in camp will regret to learn of the death, on a farm in Connecticut, of Arvo Bostrom, brother of Mrs. W. Gernecki of Front St., a lad who was brought up here in South Porcupine. He died on Wednesday last after having been sent to the farm for his health from New York City.

Mrs. Yorke and her two sons, of O'Brien Avenue, who have been spending a month's holiday in Nova Scotia, returned last week.

Miss Kathleen Barron, of Noranda, spent last week-end with her parents in town. Mrs. Kinnunen is in the Porcupine General Hospital, doing well after operation on Wednesday.

Mrs. Belle, of O'Brien Avenue, had the misfortune to fall one day this week and sprain her ankle badly.

At the Rebekah Lodge business meeting on Friday election of officers for the ensuing term was held. The following were elected to office:—Miss Lempi Niemi, Noble Grand; Mrs. E. Stanlake, Vice-Grand; Mrs. Libby, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Acton, Financial Secretary; and Mrs. Pyke, Treasurer.

Mrs. Wm. Christie, of Timmins, is coming back to South Porcupine to live. She is having her building on Bruce Avenue made into a 22-roomed house with cement basement and furnace, and Hill-Clark-Francis are now making the necessary excavations.

Mrs. L. Welsh is on holiday this week in Toronto, Lindsay and points South.

### To Decide Holder Of I.B.L. Title

Play To-Night and To-Morrow with Fifth Game on Wednesday if Necessary.

Porcupine Miners and Lake Shore are playing the third game of the series for the championship of the senior Temiskaming Baseball League in South Porcupine this afternoon and indications were that a large crowd will witness the game, provided the weather remains clear.

The Porkies made a brilliant comeback in Kirkland Lake. They dropped the first game 14-5 but won the second 3-1 behind superb pitching by Dominic Senese.

The fourth game will be played at South Porcupine to-morrow with a fifth and deciding game on Wednesday if necessary.

North Bay Nugget: Northern Ontario and North West Territories appear to be in a gold-discovery contest. They have taken daily turns in recent weeks in reporting new strikes.



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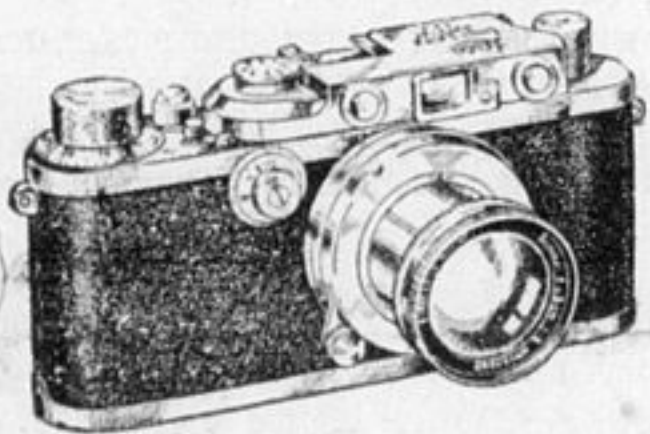
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For the best picture turned in this week up until 4 p.m. Thursday is

## A Gold Plated Picture Frame

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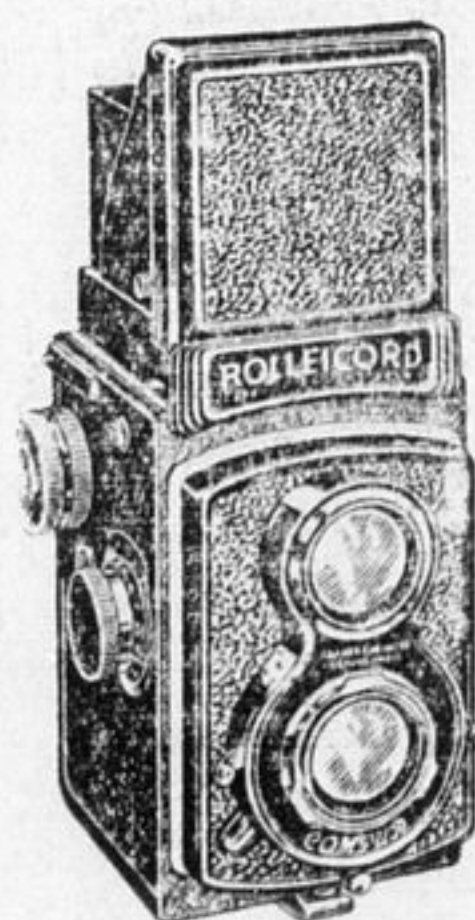
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