

Ted Reeve

and his SPORTING EXTRAS



Best tidings of the past week came in from Hanlan's Point where that sturdy old sailor John Hanlan Durnan is standing by the hard won and well done rights of his famed family. They are not throwing him out of his Bay-side bungalow without a battle.

No one has cheered more heartily than yours-as-ever McGruffey for the wonderful chore being done by the planners and administrators of the Metro and Toronto Parks Depts., during the past 10 years. Their efforts to regain some of our once famous but long lost green belt has been one of the few pleasant features of post-war growth of this pavement-packed hodge-podge called Hogtown.

But that nasty word—"evicted" has been tossed about a bit too airily, we do believe, on the Islands on the south of the Bay. It is good to see some waterside Hampden step up sturdily and remark quietly but firmly: "Who goes there?"

Some solution will be found, we trust, and might even say for certain, for like the rest of our Toronto old guard we have great faith in the common sense of William Allen.

The rap against Johnny D was that Metro, spending millions on beautifying the Islands development, found the famous old boathouse somewhat on the dilapidated side.

Well, how do they expect a man to keep up with the Royal Canadian Yacht Club in paint and polish when they deprive him of any income for the past two or three years by cutting off the ferry-boat service to Hanlan's Point? Once the grandest, handsomest playground (for clean sport and play) in all of North America.

Some Knowledge Is So Old That It Is New

If it was some Johnny-Come-Lately anxious to make a fast buck and dirty up the city with his concessions as has happened so often of late, we would be all for shouting "Throw the bum out."

Durnan, with his folks before him for more than a century and a quarter, has been the honest anchor of a tremendous part of the Islands' life.

If there were storm signals out for boats going down, there was an extra and most skillful aid to our crack life-saving crews. If there was a Mrs. This or Mrs. That, suddenly deciding that here was the arrival impending, "Phone Durnan's boathouse" was the cry and John and his aides would have them practically up Church st. and into St. Mikes before the stork could get sky-borne.

A sudden illness or casualties from some unexpected trouble (name the Island) and it was always Neighbor Johnny that was hauled out with his night cap and slippers still on, steering across the waters he knew so well in his speedy launch, and wondering in his strong, good-natured way, "Wonder what-the-H has happened now?"

On such occasions Johnny Durnan never seemed to remember to collect. It was that way with his Dad and long before that in this solid settlement of famous watermen. Who, in their spare time, happened to bring a fair share of world-wide fame to the then young hamlet of Toronto.

There has been much talk of all the beautiful island territory stretching in green meadows over there and not enough people going over to keep a ferry-boat running.

Well, for one thing all those lovely lagoons are going to waste. We recall Sundays and, yes week days and evenings when every one of the close to a hundred well-built (the Durnans built them by hand) boats and the canoes from their racks were being paddled or rowed leisurely by visitors from the city down the winding inlets under the willow trees and by the lily pads. It was part like the Thames over home, and in other vistas you would not have been surprised to have a Mississippi houseboat come in view (catfish anglers and all) or have Huck and Jim slide past you on a raft. When you turned north around some bank where the tiger lillies were glowing and saw the city skyline, it was like coming out of a dream.

On a moonlight summer night too it wasn't bad. Especially if you had a good baritone or could play a mandolin.

Beautiful the Islands . . . saved from going ramshackle in the Centre as one and all must admit . . . but don't spoil 'em by going too formal, either.

The talk is to ask Durnan to move over to Ward's and set up the same seaside shop. Maybe that is the solution. All our old gang are rooting for him and hope he does what is best. Can't see from here why they couldn't dude the old place up to battleship order once again (after all, Johnny did his long hitch in the Navy) and get along with boat business as before.