

# B. C. PIPERS'



# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 1961. No. 10.

We would like to wish all of you a Happy New Year. It is our hope that 1961 will be a successful and active year for the British Columbia Pipers' Association. We shall continue to urge, at every opportunity, everyone who is interested in piping to come out and participate in our activities. Let us hope that the standard of performance and level of competition will continue to develop in British Columbia.

You are reminded that the 1961 membership fees are now due. Would you kindly send these dues to the Treasurer, Wm. McAdie, at 3288 East 27th Avenue, or would you let him have them at the next meeting. The dues are two dollars per year.

There are a number of participating members who have not yet paid their 1960 dues, and a few are in default with respect to their 1959 dues. Unless these arrears are met in the near future, these persons will be struck off of the membership list. The "Newsletter" will not be sent to those who are so far in arrears.

Enclosed with this "Newsletter" all members will find a notice indicating any arrears.

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A very pleasant evening was spent on November 24th, in the band room at the Seaforth Armoury. After the business portion of the general meeting, Roderick MacRae showed an interesting and wide selection of colour slides, taken at various piping functions during the past several years. The slides dealt primarily with the various summer games, the Indoor Gatherings, and the White Heather Concerts. It was very interesting to see the pictures of departed friends, such as Gordon Sinclair, Donald MacLeod and Dugald MacPhail. One of the most amusing parts of Rod's collection consisted of a series of four slides showing Ed Esson falling asleep on a train bound for one of the American Games.

This set of slides probably forms one of the best historical records of piping on the West Coast during the Nineteen Fifties. We were very grateful to be able to see these pictures, and it is hoped that another showing may be arranged in the future.

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This is your final reminder of the Members' Banquet, to be held on Saturday, January 14th. The Banquet will begin at 6:30 p.m., at the Stanley Park Sports Pavilion. Tickets will be \$2.50 each. If any of you are interested, and have not been contacted, phone Rod. MacVicar at RE 3-9053.

A General Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 26th, at the Band Room at the Seaforth Armoury. The Indoor Gathering will be discussed. Piping will follow the business part of the meeting. Why not make a New Year's resolution to come out and help us forward the objects of this association.

JOHN SUTHERLAND:

(Continued)

In May, 1943, John Sutherland's case of obstructing the police came before the Court of Appeal. The principal argument consisted in whether or not the policeman had been justified in asking Sutherland to move on, and whether there had been any evidence to suggest that the sounds emitted by the pipes constituted a loud and objectionable noise. The Court of Appeal decided that there had been no breach of the Noise By-Laws, and that the constable had exceeded his duty when he prevented Sutherland from playing. The appeal was allowed, and Sutherland was released.

Intoxicated by his unexpected success with the law, Sutherland decided to press the matter even further, and instituted action for false arrest against the unsuspecting constable, who thought he had just been doing his duty. To the surprise of everybody, including probably Sutherland himself, a payment of \$150.00 was offered by the Police Commission as complete settlement of the damage action. This payment was accepted, and Sutherland was thereafter said to have written a new bill of rights for the itinerant piper, in spite of the following facetious comment contained in a local editorial:

"The Court of Appeal, it appears, has with an admirable but unadventurous wisdom remembered the classic remark about bagpiping which is part of the legendary lore of the Great War. "Who called the piper a blighter? Who called the blighter a piper?" "

After his victory at court, Sutherland believed that he could not be silenced, although by 1947, when he served two months at Oakalla for kicking a constable, he had been in jail on twenty occasions. During his last visit, he reported that they had broken his bagpipes at Oakalla, and from that date on, his sole musical offerings consisted of wheezy tunes played on a tin whistle.

John Sutherland again sprang to public attention in 1950, when his brother, Laurence Sutherland, of Manchester, died intestate in England. Sutherland was the sole living heir, and inherited an estate valued at \$2,100.00. At this time, John, who was living in a crude home-made shanty below high water mark in North Vancouver shrewdly out of the reach of the property tax assessor, decided to buy a new set of bagpipes and return to Britain, and tramp around the country playing his pipes. He stated:

"I've had enough of it here. When I arrived I was nearly in rags and now I'm all in rags."

However, for some reason John's plans did not materialize, and he never managed to make the trip to the old country.

Sutherland remained living in his shanty until January, 1959, when he suffered a stroke. He managed to crawl from his cabin up to the main road, and taken from there to the hospital. Sutherland's illness did not squelch his spirit, and when he heard that in his absence the Harbour Board was going to burn down his illegally situated shack, he threatened to burn down the sawmill across the road from his home. However, John was never able to carry out this threat, for he died in the North Vancouver General Hospital in February, 1959. His funeral was paid for by the sum of \$270.00, found sewn in his dirty clothing.

At the time of his death, Sutherland, who had had a lonely life, constantly in a struggle with his neighbours and with authority, was probably the most noted (or notorious) piper in Western Canada, although he had never been a member of the piping fraternity, and although his ability could by no means be described as highly developed. However, the name of John Sutherland, amongst pipers, will long remain a symbol of tenacity, amidst the greatest of adversities.

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We were given the following newspaper clipping by one of our members. It describes in an amusing fashion one of our earlier Indoor Gatherings. Can anyone remember when this particular competition took place?

NEW VERSION of "LOST WEEKEND"

(Sam Nolan vs Rod MacLeod, Donald MacDonald, Malcolm Nicholson, et al)

The B.C. Pipers' Association held their annual Competition at the Seaman's Institute, Cambie Street, on Saturday night. The house was packed to the rafters but if the truth were told possibly Wrestling Promoter Sam Nolan will bring a charge against the piping members of the Police Force for obtaining money under false pretenses. Among the spectators were two husky red Indians, but the expressions on their faces seemed to belie their worship of pipe music. During the Pibrochs they put their heads practically between their knees, but in ~~the~~ ~~middle~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~competition~~ ~~they~~ ~~got~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~odd~~ ~~beat~~ ~~with~~ ~~their~~ feet. After submitting to the punishment for over two hours one of them was able to raise his head and addressed Jimmy Thomson of St. Andrews & Caledonian Society, who was sitting nearby, "When does the wrestling start or does this noise go on all evening?" On being assured that the pipers would carry on until midnight the Indians lit for the exit and on hitting the fresh air the buzzing noises in their ears suddenly stopped and when last seen they were streaking down Beatty Street heading for their happy hunting grounds and their wigwam in the vicinity of Powell Street. Now it is up to Magistrate MacKenzie Matheson to decide who gets the price of admission which lo, the poor Indians paid.

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We would like to welcome the following persons, who have recently been elected to membership in the B.C. Pipers' Association:

Ian G.M. Milne	Vancouver, B.C.
Ian L. Wallace	Nanaimo, B.C.
Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Donaldson	Seattle, Wash.

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DON'T FORGET:

MEMBERS' BANQUET:	JANUARY 14th.
GENERAL MEETING:	JANUARY 26th.

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