

*The North Star - Parry Sound
January 17th 1935*

Elizabeth On The New Road To Fly In The Ointment

"What's the matter with Dr. Armstrong?"

"He's all right."

If you doubt this statement just come over to Parry Island and see the men wielding the pick and shovel on the opening operations of the new road building. A road that will cross the island from Depot Harbor to the channel at Galna's, where two years ago Rev. J. A. Felstead established the scow ferry.

Oh, no! Dr. Armstrong did not wave a fairy wand and call the road into existence. He labored early and late; sparing neither time nor strength—and time means money—in his efforts to have building of the road possible. On days of discouragement and doubt, he sang around his office "The best way to get there is by keeping up your grit," and he certainly kept it up to good purpose. Even in the days when it was conceded that there would be no road, Depot Harbor said: "Dr. Armstrong has played the game, no man could do more, and few would have troubled to do as much." Of course, there were those who scoffingly said: "We told you so, the Liberal party is a poor thing to pin one's faith to." But when word came that the road would surely be built, Liberalism marched down the centre of the street and Conservatism took the back fifties. But on the morning of January 14th the sheep and goats marched out together and no one could distinguish a Conservative pick from a Liberal pick.

In the afternoon of the same day a little Canadian boy of eight and a little Slovak boy of seven came dancing into the home of the writer each wishing to be the first to tell his news, which was "My daddy is working right over there."

To the Doctor we would say: "In moments when rumors of adverse criticism come to your ears; in hours when problems of your position pile up breast high; on days when you are weary in body and soul, and you wonder if the effort made to get the Island road was worth the trouble after all,

Alas there is a fly in every ointment and the fly in the new road is a communication which appeared in The Canada of January 10. Now unless Parry Island wants an open break with Depot Harbor she better curb the tongue and pen of her councillors. Just because there is to be a road across the Island, which the white people can also use, the council strikes out with this false and scurrilous attack on their agent and the people of Depot Harbor. Of course the intelligent reading public will take it for what it is worth, considering where it comes from.

Always Depot Harbor has shown a most friendly spirit towards the Indians of the Island. Thousands of dollars have gone into the Indians pockets for wood sold in Depot and when Depot was a flourishing terminal it was a regular mecca for the dumping of all sorts of Indian wares and a fine place to pass a subscription list. Right now, although they have a very fine school of their own many Indian children are attending Depot Harbor school, rather than walk two miles to their own.

At Alderville, Rama and Walpole there are splendid roads right through the Reserve and to hear Parry Island making such a jabber about granting a right of way is amusing. Is it any wonder that over twenty five years ago it was said the Parry Island Indians appeared to be the least progressive in Ontario. Now after reading this communication we feel like adding—and the most ignorant.

The statement "They bar us from work at Depot Harbor" is absolutely false. Any and every Indian who wishes to work at Depot Harbor warehouses may do so. Of course in so doing he must come under the same rules and regulations which

Just think of those two darling little boys with dancing feet and sparkling eyes, arms waving toward the new roadway, and hear their proud and happy voices say: "My daddy is working right over there."

govern other laborers. In other words he must be on time to answer to the roll call and not come wandering in at any time which suits his own convenience. Neither can he if there is a boat to be unloaded, decide to take a pleasure trip, and later account for absence by saying "I was not belly well."

On September 17th they voted, sanctioning the building of the road and on October 2nd they passed an amendment which amendment they strengthened on January 2nd. They say "Mr. J. M. Daly put his foot on our amendment." If this be true, rising generation of Parry Island Indians will bless the name of Daly in years to come. Efficiently and faithfully Mr. Daly has worked for the best interests of all Indians under his care, and during the past few years the problems he has met re relief, have been almost insurmountable. In spite of this fact we see the spectacle of a Chief and Councillors inciting the members of the band against an agent who has made it possible for them this winter to earn their living as all selfrespecting citizens try to do. But we are all glad to be able to say that this harangue of the council does not voice the sentiments of the band as a whole.

DEPOT HARBOR CITIZEN X