

Lost At Sea

by RON BURNS

A few billion years ago a great movement of nature tore off a chunk of New Brunswick and made Prince Edward Island. This shows on a map, as the contours of Cape Tormentine nicely fit into Summerside Bay on the Island side. It is here at Cape Tormentine that the great Northumberland Strait narrows to nine miles to form a three knot tidal current. In the past Cape

Tormentine was populated entirely by mosquitoes. It was they who put it on the map by tormenting a French explorer until he left.

It was here late one hot humid Saturday afternoon, when all the people were within to avoid the tormentors without, that a sound of quarrel broke through a mosquito covered screen door.

"I don't give a damn if she is

a mic. I don't give a damn if she's a black muslim. It's all hair splitting anyway."

Inside, an angry young man named Tom pushed back his chair, nearly upsetting it as he got up from supper. Everyone was quiet for a moment. Then Tom's minister brother George said: "Those hairs look mighty big to me. I think . . ." He paused, reluctant to be trapped into a prejudiced stand by his little brother.

"You'll have enough to fight about without religion," broke in Tom's mother, "anyway, seventeen's too young to be married."

Tom's politic and pregnant sister-in-law, Cathy, kept out of the battle. So did Tom's father.

"Well," drawled Tom, sitting on the other side of the room in the rocking chair by the stove, "the way I figure it war's caused by differences between men. And the more you act on the basis of difference the more you increase the possibility of war, so for the peace of all I'd better marry her and make her an honest woman."

The people at the table sat confused by the philosophical generalization and shocked by the conclusion. Tom rocked the chair nearly tipping it backwards in violent glee over the success of his speech.

"But," he added tormentingly, "I suppose an R.C. isn't good enough for me."

His fifty year old mother eyed the worry of her old age and replied primly, "I don't doubt that she's a perfectly good girl but . . ."

"I think I'll go marry a nigger!" Tom interrupted merrily.

His mother looked at his father but his father's look said: "It's no use, can't do anything with him."

Just outside the table window Tom could see a green ruby-throated hummingbird flit from blossom to blossom of the snowball bush. Beyond, a smooth thick green ran to the flower

