

BRUCE WEST

## A rare tycoon

A few evenings ago, out at my house, we watched with much interest the CBC documentary called Cyrus Eaton, the Prophet of Pugwash. Over the past 15 years I had on several occasions met the Canadian-born U.S. tycoon and industrialist who, on Dec. 27, will be celebrating his 94th birthday.

I found him to be a truly remarkable man, who has never allowed his rise to great wealth and power in the United States to lessen his abiding love for the country in which he was born, and particularly that part of it which lies down along the coast of the Atlantic.

Of this area, of course, Pugwash, N.S., is his favorite spot, although he does spend a lot of his time in the summer months at his big cattle farm near Chester, N.S.

He is inordinately proud of his humble birthplace and doesn't hesitate to set straight his U.S. colleagues in the lofty realms of high finance when they confess ignorance as to just where and what Pugwash is.

"Pugwash?" he once exclaimed in mock dismay to a U.S. captain of industry who had admitted he'd never heard of the place. "Why, good heavens, man, it's just north of Tatamagouche!"

(Actually, there may be oldtimers in Pugwash who would say that the famous local boy was putting on airs when he claimed that town as his birthplace. The truth of the matter is that he was really born in even smaller Pugwash Junction, a spot a few miles away that then consisted of little more than a railway station.)

I first met Mr. Eaton some years ago when I interviewed him during one of his trips to Toronto. After that we exchanged notes from time to time. One day while I was in Cleveland on a chore for the paper, he invited me up to lunch at the headquarters of his Chesapeake and Ohio Railway in the Terminal Tower.

One of the other guests at the table that day was the head of a big U.S. airline who, I gathered, was trying to swing some kind of deal with Mr. Eaton, and his C & O directors, who were also present. As we were having our coffee (while Mr. Eaton sipped plain hot water from a teacup) the airline president was extolling the economy of shipping things by air.

"Why," said he, "do you realize that my airline can transport from Switzerland to the United States enough watch parts to keep a jeweller stocked up for a year for less than two dollars shipping charges?"

"Hmmm," said the wily white fox from Pugwash with a twinkle in his eye. "That's quite interesting. . . . Well, we're quite willing to leave that part of the market entirely to your company, while we keep on hauling lots of coal and steel. . . ."

I have an idea that the deal between C & O and this airline never really did get off the ground.

Some years ago there was an eclipse of the sun which was total along a fairly narrow band that ran smack through Pugwash. Mr. Eaton invited a number of the foremost astronomers and space scientists of the world to view the phenomenon as his guests at his fine old home in Pugwash.

My own background in the science of astronomy having been confined to one peep at the stars through a sidewalk telescope whose owner was offering the heavenly view at 10 cents a look, I was quite startled to receive a telephone call from Mr. Eaton inviting my wife and daughter and me down to Pugwash to join him and his guests. But we went along and it was a most enjoyable visit.

The Squire of Pugwash was the perfect host, nattily clad in a white suit that seemed to nicely complement his silvery hair. He sometimes regaled the scientists with tales about some of their illustrious colleagues who had come to Pugwash.

"I remember the time when we were sitting right out there on that dock while Sir Julian Huxley, the great biologist, was explaining to us in some detail how lobsters made love," he recalled. "It happened that an old Pugwash friend of mine, who had been a lobster fisherman all his life, was sitting there with us, listening carefully to Sir Julian. When the lecture was over, old Joe grinned and told us all how lobsters *really* made love. It must have been a bad day for Sir Julian, because we all agreed that Joe sure knew a lot more about lobsters than he did. . . ."

And Cyrus Eaton's delighted chuckle over how one of his plain-spoken fellow natives of Pugwash had one-upped one of the world's leading scientists told a lot about Cyrus Eaton himself.

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