

NEVER TOO OLD

A soft-spoken, fair complexioned elderly man of medium height and build, a kind and open face that shows no hint of emotional, mental or physical strains, a cheery smile and bright twinkling grey eyes.

That's a picture of John Elliott of 305 King George Terrace, retired superintendent of power stations of the British Columbia Hydro, with an exceptional record of 43 years of faithful service to the company, and one of its former key members of the staff.

This is the man in whose honor the spanking new and spacious Elliott dam at Jordan River to be opened next year is being named.

Mention his name anywhere around these parts and there is sure to be someone who knows Jack as his friends and numerous acquaintances call him. He is one of the many interesting persons with a colorful background in this city.

Mr. Elliott's popularity does not lie merely in his personal qualities, and the affection his character inspires in his friends and even chance acquaintances, but in his many talents. These cover a wide and varied range which prove that he possesses a natural versatility in addition to an adventurous spirit, and a forward-looking outlook. Over the years John Elliott has been engaged in a vast number of civic, community and cultural activities.

These run the gamut from being a musician, school board trustee for the Jordan River and Sooke area, chamber of commerce president, vice-president of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Vancouver Island, life member of the Sooke-Jordan River Chamber of Commerce, Boy Scout governor, community leader, choir member, Sunday School teacher, Justice of the Peace for British Columbia, to holder of the St. John Ambulance medallion.

In addition to his civic and other accomplishments, he has exhibited a spirit of leadership in the field of sport.

Every program he has launched so far has stayed afloat. All forms of sport both indoor and outdoor have been among his favorite activities.

He has been actively engaged in baseball, basketball, fishing, hiking, tennis, prospecting, hunting, swimming, indoor five-pin bowling, dancing, bridge and above all golf.

He lived and worked in the Jordan river area for 39 years, and became involved in every program affecting the well being of the entire district and adjacent areas. He was prime mover in the formation of the Jordan River Athletic Community Association which put Jordan River on the map 50 years ago.

As a result in 1956 he was awarded an honorary life membership in the association. His pioneering spirit inspired and was the motivating force behind a large number of projects, and he contributed extensively towards the development of the entire area.

In reminiscing on those times Jack Elliott says:

"Life was really exciting in those bygone days. We worked hard and we played hard. We raised money by raffles and other means and built a gymnasium, and tennis and badminton courts. We cleared a swamp and turned it into a baseball diamond.

"The summers were for us glorious times with picnics for the children, and outings of all description in which everyone in the district joined. We would go prospecting, exploring creeks and spending time in the bush. Then in season we hunted grouse, deer, black bears and ducks. In winter there was a lot to occupy our time with basketball in the cookhouse and skating parties. We also had an eight-piece orchestra, and we bought our own instruments and sometimes played at Sooke. On Saturday nights we had dances, and these social affairs attracted girls from all around, and many of them found life partners."

"Then there were always card playing and

general carousing. We were just one large happy family," he concluded.

But during this time Mr. Elliott never neglected upgrading himself and furthering his education where his work was concerned. In order to keep abreast of his job which became more and more important and demanding as time went on he took a course in electricity by correspondence. Although the work was enjoyable yet there were many problems and it was exacting, with him being on his feet most of the time.

By MILLICENT LINDO

He had to control a large staff with extra people being hired during the summer. Then there were the numerous tours around the plant, and the entertaining of social and fraternal groups such as the Kiwanis Club, Four X Club, Optimist Club, Rotary and others. There was also a constant traffic of reporters, writers, newspapermen, public relations and publicity people.

In addition there were regular visits from very important people and noted personages such as the governor general, the premier of the province, the mayor of Victoria, the aldermen, doctors, and



JOHN ELLIOTT

"... days are too short"

people from as far away as Montreal and other distant places across the country.

Every summer for at least five years the Jordan River plant was a scene of excitement with a concourse of visitors on a conducted sightseeing tour with Jack as the host.

Among the various interesting items in the B.C. Hydro file concerning Jordan River is the record of a visit of Premier Oliver and his staff in 1920. It was in the days when the plant was not as developed as it is now. Today, Jack recalls that visit with a certain amount of pride as he was only a young man at the time. He feels an added glow over the rapid development of the River and regards it as his second home.

Mr. Elliott's birthplace and boyhood home were right here on Vancouver Island, not across the years has he ever moved away from these Pacific shores. In fact he is one of those men with a share of the west's blue skies in his eyes. He is also one of those nearly indestructible characters that are a special product of the west coast and Victoria in particular.

John Mackenzie Elliott was born at Burnside in 1894, and attended Elk Lake School when Professor F. S. Wood taught there around 1903.

He was the first youngster to pass out of Elk Lake elementary at the age of 14, and is a prime example of the kind of citizen that this school produced. From there he attended the old Victoria High in the days when it was on the site now occupied by the Central Junior High School. His only complaint today is that he has lost track of most of his schoolmates whom he said were a

fine bunch. He also taught in the Sunday School at St. Barnabas Church at Cook and Caledonia where he was confirmed. He was a member of the choir, and always went on Summer camps to Maya and Saturna islands as a group.

But it was music which was originally the means whereby John Elliott as a young man decided to leave his native Victoria and settle in Jordan River. He had left school and was then working with Cecil Heaton who ran the music department at the former David Spencer department store before Eaton's took over. He worked in the music department for a year and a half and thoroughly enjoyed it. Then one night he went out to Jordan River to play the piano for a dance. Once there he fell in love with the place, and on the spur of the moment decided to remain there.

He felt that here at last he had found a little niche where his talents could come into full play, and he could carve a path for himself. This was away back in 1916, and he followed a hunch then and has never since had occasion to look back. He has many happy memories of the time spent in such pleasant environment. He immediately got a job at the well-known H.C. Hydro plant as timekeeper.

From then on it was an upward climb with his becoming in succession oiler, operator, engineer in charge, and lastly filling the important position of plant superintendent.

During this time he hurled himself wholeheartedly into every phase of the operation, and participated in every form of activity in the area.

"I even brought back a fellow to life by artificial respiration, which I had learned in three years' of training with the St. John Ambulance. He was electrocuted and badly burnt and was in the hospital for a year. That was away back in 1919. I am very happy to say he lived and raised a family. He just died two years ago," Jack said in his own modest way.

It seemed that so far whatever he tackled, he tackled hard and effectively always pushing through to the ultimate success he envisaged for himself.

After 39 years at Jordan River Mr. Elliott returned to Victoria to take up the position of superintendent of all B.C. Hydro stations on the Island. He continued in this capacity until his retirement a few years ago.

He is one of the few men today who is never too old for work or play.

At age 68 soon after his retirement this remarkable man launched out into an entirely new and exciting career. He applied to a motor oil company for a job as a salesman, "just to keep busy," and was accepted. Within two months he displayed his prowess in salesmanship by selling over \$3,000 worth of the product which surprised and delighted the company.

Still he had plenty of time to sit outside of his delightful Straits home where he has an unobstructed view of the sea, and watch ships go by. He also plays bridge, and is on the retired employees team of the B.C. Hydro in indoor five-pin bowling.

His team had the honor of winning the Arnott trophy played against Vancouver and the mainland.

"The days are too short now," says Jack in reference to his various activities. "I can't cram enough into them."

The years many though they be which have passed over his head have not furrowed the brow, nor dimmed the brightness of his eyes as they would have already done with most men 20 years his junior. His firm rugged frame carries a surprising resilience for a man of 76 who has accomplished so much.

He is alive and vibrant, has a calm forceful character, a buoyant personality, and a strong physical stamina. This is proved by his ability to still work hard at selling, and play golf regularly two mornings a week, and a surprisingly good game he plays, too. It is positively exhilarating to be in the company of men such as John Elliott.

Why does Jack work and still take a lively interest in so many things, and lead such a full and strenuous physical life? "To keep from getting old and crotchety, and to meet people," he says.