

1972.

Goodbye Monteith Farm

There used to be a philosophy that there was nothing like getting up with the cows to make a man feel like a man. Generation after generation of city boys were packed off to cousins' country farms to be turned into men.

So widely held was the belief, the Ontario government operated six prison farms where city criminals were given a taste of a new kind of life and picked up a few pointers on farming.

Times change and so do penal theories. Farming is a dying industry, especially

the one - man operation, and the Department of Correctional Services is closing down its farms, including the one operated at Monteith since 1948.

We are sorry to see it go because there are still many local persons who could learn something of value from being a part of the farm operation there but also because as long as a Monteith inmate heard the sounds of animals, smelled those unique farm odors and saw the barns and other facilities, it made his sentence pass a little quicker and a little easier.

Farming to go at Monteith

Increasing mechanization and the consolidation of small farms into larger ones is changing Canadian agriculture - and such institutions as the Monteith Correctional Centre.

The Department of Correctional Services has announced that most farming operations at correctional centres throughout the province will be discontinued in the near future.

It is understood that the move will mean a gradual phasing out of agricultural operations, rather than cessation by a particular date.

The other correctional centres involved are Burwash, Burtch, Guelph, Rideau and Thunder Bay.

"In the past, farms at these institutions provided training for the inmates who might wish to seek employment on farms upon their release. The value of this type of training, rehabilitating inmates has been minimized in recent years by the decline in employment opportunities in the agricultural field due to increasing mechanization and the consolidation of small farms into larger ones, states the department.

did not indicate what type of training would be offered in lieu of farming at those establishments now providing it.

What will happen to Monteith's herd of 140 prize-winning cattle?

"The department will follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture as to how to best dispose of its beef and dairy herds to the benefit of the farming community in Ontario," says the department.

"Those correctional centres which have operated market gardens to produce vegetables for department use will continue to do so, while staff from the farming operations will be considered for transfer to other positions consistent with their qualifications."

The Monteith complex is a three-in-one institution: the training centre for youths aged 16 - 21 years, the industrial farm for persons 18 and up, and the district jail.

The Monteith establishment began as a boarding school for pioneer children, and has also been an experimental farm. During the Second World War, Monteith was used as a camp for German prisoners-of-war.

The Monteith centre's staff is headed by superintendent Mr. D. B. Griggs; deputy-superintendent Mr. R. N. Groulx, assistant superintendent Mr. J. C. Moclair, and Captain J. Simmons.