

Main Street

with Ford Moynes

Following on the heels of World War One there was a rush of young men in the British Isles to cross the Atlantic Ocean to seek fortunes in what was then described as "Glorious Canada, the land of opportunity, the beautiful land of tall corn and well headed wheat in farm fields." An interesting story came to light a few days ago but for bona fide reason no names are mentioned.

British lads wishing to seek their fortunes in Canada had to be sponsored, particularly for farm work. A lad of sixteen left a job in the coal mines and sailed for Canada landing as per sponsor agreement on a farm in Fenelon Township. The agreement was that he had to work for this farmer for one year and wages were practically nil, but as a rule there was a decent bed and wholesome meals.

This young immigrant sent letters back home and he pictured Ontario much as the posters did which hung on the walls in English towns and cities. This young man's younger brother left his work in a coal mine and also landed in Fenelon Township, signing for a year. The experience of this youngster, however, was different. The farmer he worked for was stern, hard working and demanding. He was an official in the church, but although he and his family were faithful in their attendance the young lad from the Old Sod was called on to clean up the horse stable and do other hard farm work.

First the horses had to be fed and while this was going on, the farm lad proceeded to play tunes on his mouth organ. This irritated the farmer who had a raging temper and when the farmer reached for a snake whip the lad had to dodge in and out of stable doors to escape a whipping. This was enough and the young immigrant ran to the farm of his father and mother a few miles away. The parents had in the meantime, answered the call to beautiful and bounteous Ontario.

One day when this young hired hand descended from a cold heatless room in the attic of his employer, to the dinner table, he was prodded on the hand with a fork by the young daughter of the farmer because as she said: "The meat is for us, the bone is for the hired man."

When the old countryman heard his son's story about being chased by the irate farmer with a whip, the father walked several miles to where church was being held and asked to see the boy's employer whom he told in no uncertain terms that he would beat up if the farmer ever threatened the lad with a whip again.

In the meantime the older brother had secured a position in Lindsay and the younger brother a job as a farm hand with another farmer where he got along well.

As the years went by, the English family moved to Lindsay where father and sons secured work. Being a devoted member of the Catholic faith the mother never missed church, but the sons attended a nearby church, St. Paul's Anglican Church, when the Rector was Rev. Canon Marsh. Canon Marsh was beloved by all people of all churches. "When mother developed

arthritis and was badly crippled, Canon Marsh would send a taxi cab to our house so Mother could attend her church. He paid for the car," related one of the boys.

The mother and father moved to the States to be near a daughter, but the two sons remained in Lindsay and have, to use an old expression, "made good", but they had their ups and downs as many a young English lad had in those days.