

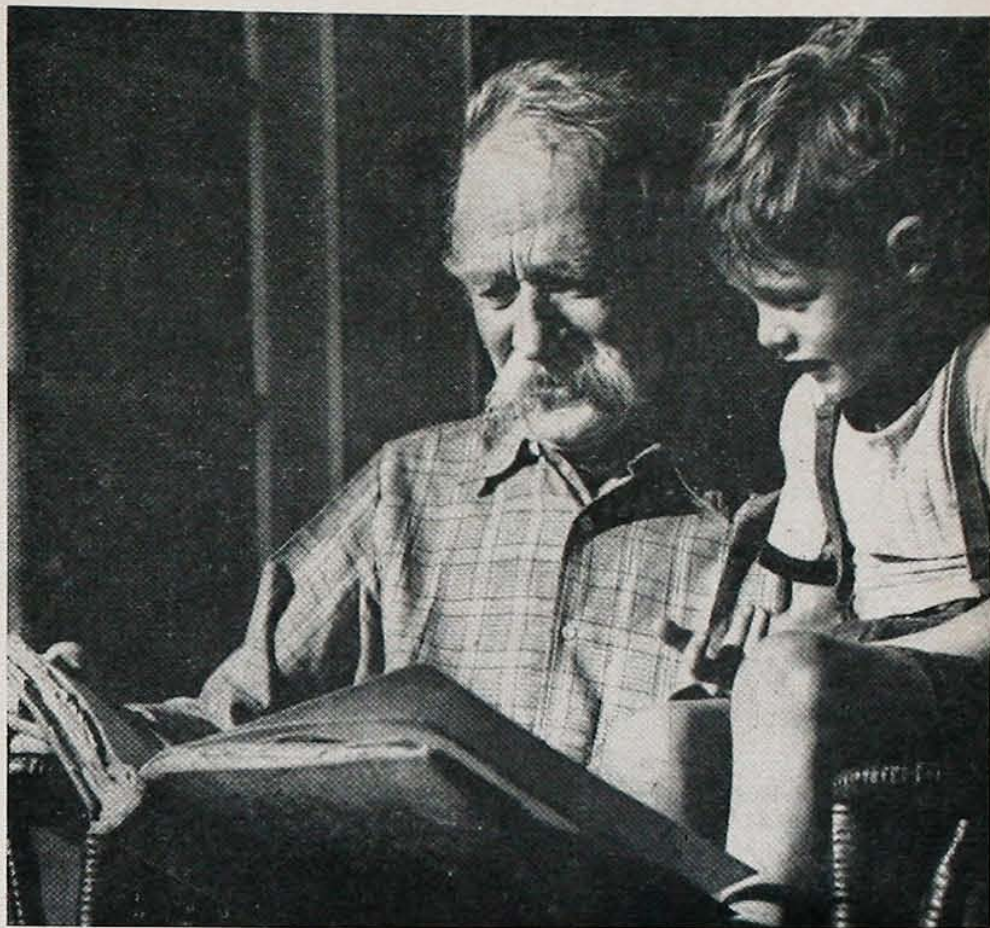
## *Young Canada's Book Week —*

### **Concerning Food for Young Minds**

**By Marian Brown**

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If a book for children is so well written as to be "good literature" grown-ups can usually enjoy it too.



November 15th to 22nd is Young Canada's Book Week. Between those dates there will be radio talks, T.V. programmes, magazine articles, newspaper columns, window displays and elaborate programmes in some schools and libraries, all dealing, in one way or another, with books for boys and girls. Why? Why all this commotion about what children read?

Well, let's think about it. Children today are bigger, stronger and healthier in body than ever they have been before, and this is undoubtedly to the good. It comes in part, we are told, from better and more careful feeding during infancy and childhood. It seems logical to assume that a carefully fed child will be healthier than one carelessly or inadequately fed.

But what of the mind? The power to reason, to make decisions and form judgments, is an essential part of the human character, and is the function of the unique instrument, the human mind. The mind, like the body, must have proper nourishment if it is to function properly, and a healthy body which shelters an undernourished, malfunctioning, or non-functioning mind is of far less use to our society than a healthy, vigorous mind in a weak and sickly body.

The food the mind requires is knowledge. Knowledge is gained through experience, but, since the experience of most individuals is decidedly limited, and the sum total of human experience both broad and deep, the child of today must supplement his own experience in order to find the food which will enable his mind to keep pace with his growing body.

This is where books come in. Books are the deep-freeze in which the knowledge and wisdom of mankind is stored. From books a child can

benefit from the experience of others, thereby broadening his outlook and deepening his understanding of the world in which he lives. Unfortunately, not all books provide healthy nourishment for growing minds. There are books which are as light and frothy as the meringue on a lemon pie — and contain even less nourishment; there are books which are merely sweet and which make a child's mind fat and lazy as a steady diet of sweet food makes the human body. There are yet other forms of reading matter which, like bad food, contain poisons against which the innocent child has no defence and which may permanently sicken and cripple his mind.

The books which nourish a child's mind are those which give him the information he wants, thus nourishing his growing mind, which present to him new ideas and differing points of view, thus stimulating both mind and imagination by making him think, an exercise which develops his mental functions as physical exercise develops his body. Through reading such books he joins in the experience of others, and through them broadens his knowledge and deepens his understanding of people, places and things. Besides these essential qualities, the books a child reads must be those he enjoys reading, for without enjoyment he will miss that pleasurable excitement compounded of intellectual stimulation and vicarious experience which is the true end and supreme joy of reading.

This is why, for one week in the year, parents and teachers, librarians and publishers, and all others who have the welfare of children at heart, take time out to discuss the importance of children's reading and to bring into the limelight those books which they believe children will enjoy and from which they will derive benefit.