



ENCOURAGING STREET SCENE as cement workers install new sidewalks in the downtown area. Small trees, new lamp standards, brick edging and vari-size concrete strips are expected to transform the downtown scene. The wooden poles are temporary installations.

I recently heard about a man called Crapper, who is alleged to have developed the flush toilet and was later knighted by Queen Victoria. Is this true?

B. Barrowcliffe, Strathroy, Ont.

A AUG. 19 1972

Thomas Crapper (1837-1910) did indeed develop the flush toilet, though he did not invent it: if it goes to any one person, that distinction must belong to Sir John Harington who, in the late 1500s, invented a water closet with a controllable trap. But 16th-century England was sanitariously squalid, far behind the Minoan civilization of 3,000 years before, and even farther behind the Romans, who had an early water-flush system in ancient Britain. So another 200 years passed before a water-closet patent was granted to London watchmaker Alexander Cumming in 1775.



THOMAS CRAPPER

A century later, Crapper's improvement on the existing water-closet system came at a time when authorities were worried about the possibility of Britain's reservoirs drying up. The pre-Crapper system, simply put, involved a plug which the user would pull out when he needed water: in many households the plug was left out all the time. The considerable velocity of Crapper's invention almost overnight cleansed the British system of its lavatorial impurities. It was called Crapper's Valveless Water Waste Preventer ("Silent Action", "Quick and Powerful Discharge Maintained Throughout"). It did what it had to do with speed and powerful efficiency: after pulling the chain, which unleashed the rushing of waters from the overhead cistern (up there near the ceiling), the cistern filled again and automatically shut itself off.

Thus it wiped out waste in more senses than one and formed the basis of the flush toilet as we know it today. Such genius could not long go unmarked. Crapper was the Royal plumber to Edward VII as both Prince of Wales and King, though he was never knighted. His firm continued the distinction well into the reign of George V. Crapper's developments in the field had compelling names like The Torrent, The Deluge and The Rocket, and they went hand in hand with the invention of the perforated toilet roll, which occurred in the 1880s and for some years fought an uphill battle since stores found it indecent and un-Victorian to stock it. A humorous, gentle, dedicated visionary, Crapper, after the death of his wife in 1902, lived out his last years with two maiden nieces in southeast London, where he died at the age of 73. We might well spare a thought for him today as we go about our duties.

Could you please tell why we throw confetti at newlywed couples?

Dennis Hancrar, Windsor, Ont.

A The custom goes back to pagan times when grain or rice was tossed at the blushing couple — the seeds, of course, symbolized fertility. The ancient Greeks substituted dates, nuts, figs, and little coins: Italians got into the act by using sugared almonds. The word confetti, in fact, is Italian for sweetmeats. Today, we've replaced the tasty tidbits with tiny pieces of colored paper, but even in this age so concerned with population control, the symbolic meaning of confetti remains the same — a form of wishing the bride fertility.

Canada 71 Census Shows Fewer Farms But Market Value of Machinery Up

Despite the continued decline in the number of census-farms from June 1, 1966 to June 1, 1971, the market value of farm machinery and equipment, as reported by farm operators, continued to increase from \$3.6 billion to \$3.9 billion for Canada as a whole. The machinery investment, at market value, per farm increased from \$8,300 in 1966 to \$10,700 per farm in 1971, a rise of 29 per cent.

In 1971, as in 1966, about 75 per cent of farms reported automobiles on the farm. On average, such farms had more than one automobile per farm and this increased during the five-year period, although total automobiles reported declined from 356,000 in 1966 to 324,000 in 1971.

The number of farms reporting trucks declined from 261,000 in 1966 to 248,000 in 1971 but the number of trucks increased from 345,000 to 370,000. Thus the average number of trucks per farm reporting rose from 1.3 to 1.5 during the period. There were 68 per cent of the farms reporting trucks in 1971 compared with 61 per cent in 1966.

Among all farms there were 31,000, or 8.4 per cent which reported neither automobile nor truck located on the farm, but many of these would be farms on which no one was living.

The number of tractors reported on farms in 1971, at 597,000 was practically unchanged from 1966. The percentage

of farms with tractors increased from 85 per cent to 88 per cent and the average number of tractors increased from 1.6 to 1.9 per farm reporting.

GRAIN COMBINES

Grain combines reported on farms in 1971 totalled 163,000 compared with 170,000 in 1966. The number per farm changed little on a national average basis but, taking into account the reduction in total number of farms, the proportion of farms with combines increased from 37 per cent in 1966 to 41 per cent in 1971. Swathers on farms increased from 124,000 in 1966 to 140,000 in 1971 and the number of farms reporting swathers rose from 117,000 to 128,000 over the same period.

Pick-up hay balers also became more common on farms in 1971, with 153,000 reported, compared with 137,000 in 1966. Over the same period, the number of farms reporting balers rose from 135,000 to 151,000.

The number of forage harvesters increased from 24,000 in 1966 to 29,000 in 1971. While this was the least frequent of the farm machines reported in the Census of Agriculture, it showed the greatest percentage increase at 17.4 per cent. The percentage of farms reporting forage harvesters increased from 5.4 per cent in 1966 to 7.3 per cent in 1971. Marking the general shift from dairy to beef production, farms reporting milking machines declined from 103,000 in 1966 to 81,000 in 1971. The proportion of farms with milking machines, which had risen from 22 per cent in 1961 to 24 per cent in 1966, reverted to the former level by 1971.

Little Old Red School-House

Sept. 30/72

Experimentation has always been a part of education. Sometimes the experiments seem to take us backwards suggests the St. Catharines Standard editorially.

The Lincoln County Board of Education was told at its last meeting about an experiment at Woodland School where pupils from various grades are being grouped together. For example, children from grades 1 to 3 were grouped together in classes, and the officials say the result indicates that the project has value.

It was explained that, once the students

were put together, the emphasis was put on the pupil learning, rather than the teacher teaching.

The stronger students helped the weak, and the older helped the younger. "In most cases," said the report, "it resulted in children having a greater sense of responsibility."

Somehow it all seems more than faintly reminiscent of the little old one-room schools where six or eight grades might be lumped together and which are now being wiped out as rapidly as possible in the name of improved education.