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Poet's Corner

A MEMORY by Mary Ellen Varley

I sat in church again to-night, And saw the windows glow with light, Sang the words that angels spoke, And in the choir familiar folk. I saw the walls where baby hands Had left smudge marks along the bands Of blue, that had been roads to me, When life had been pure fantasy! I saw the organ pipes gleam Like marshalled candles in a dream The windows where the Shepherd stood And made me feel all warm and good. 'Tis lonely to remember this When years have changed the edifice!

Chronicles of Ginger Farm

Written Specially for the Acton Free Press by Gwendoline F. Clarke

"What in the world are you doing?" That was Partner's question when he came into the kitchen a little while ago. The reason? I had our big kitchen table literally covered with little piles of newspaper. By my side was a big carton filled with paper—the overflow was strewn all around my chair. And at the end of the table there were, by actual count, 71 brown paper envelopes.

In case you haven't already guessed, this was the completion of my clipping orgy. I had been clipping steadily for the last two days and now the clippings were ready to go into the envelopes. Of course, I soon found there were more headings than envelopes, so more envelopes had to be hunted. It has been quite a job but I am well satisfied now it is done. And, because I had everything so well sorted, I was able to give away all kinds of good reading material. With the stuff that was unsuitable to pass along I had one glorious bonfire. My sorting took me through a big pile of farm papers and magazines and I found all kinds of interesting little articles that I don't remember having seen before at all. In my reading, two facts I noticed particularly in thumbing over the pages—the number of things that happen on farms to upset and worry the farmer; and the wonderful hobbies and handicrafts that farm folk take up in their spare time.

Among the worries the first thing I read about was the outbreak of Newcastle disease among poultry. Then came the Red River flood and the loss and suffering of the Manitoba farmers, stories of hardship and courage reminiscent of pioneer days. In Ontario Dutch elm diseases and the spruce bud worm were causing considerable concern. But all these troubles — except the Red River flood — paled into insignificance with the advent of foot and mouth diseases. It was heart-breaking to read once again of the terrible slaughter and of the embargo that affected farmers right across Canada—and still does. Anthrax was next in the limelight and then the decline and fall of the hog market. Synthetic dairy products and the possible adverse influence of the Farmers' Union occupies the spotlight today.

Perhaps you may think I found all this reading somewhat depressing. On the contrary—getting it like that, all in one dose as it were, I just sort of sat back and said to myself — "My goodness, farming must be all right after all." Farmers have met with all those set-backs and disasters and yet most of us are still here pitching. It ties in so well with a little piece I jotted down after hearing it over the radio—"I am not afraid of tomorrow, for I have seen yesterday, and I know today."

Then I turned to hobbies, handicraft and new ways of doing things, all the way from feeding hens to oil painting. Suddenly I thought — maybe this is the answer — farm people are so busy experimenting to save time and labour, and then using the time they save to take up other interests, that they don't have a chance to worry too much about problems that they, personally, find impossible to solve.

Or it may be that the farmer is filled with optimism after attending various annual farm meetings such as we mentioned in this column last week. As for hobbies and handicraft — among farm women their number is legion — and a better type of occupational therapy could not be found. But from what I read I think the top honors should go to a woman in British Columbia who had no less than 17 hobbies, most of which she had learned by sending for material and a book of instructions.

If you wonder how she had so much time on her hands listen to her own explanation. "It passes the winter months after I have given out two children, 11 and 8, their school lessons. They cannot go to school during the rainy months because we are practically surrounded by water. We put our cash into this farm when my husband came out of the army but the real estate agent forgot to tell him the place would be under water during the winter. My husband works at Port Albert, and wades through the creek every day to get to the road where he leaves his car. Learning how to do new things takes my mind off our worries."

Well, under those conditions I am sure you will agree it would take at least 17 hobbies to keep one completely on an even keel! But how many of us would have the courage to start even one?

450,000 Canadian families reported earnings of more than \$3,000 in 1951.

HALTON FORUMS REPORT

MORE LEADERSHIP TRAINING, ENCOURAGEMENT NEEDED — GROUPS

When a group in Dundas county, Ontario, was asked recently at a Leadership Training Course, to define a good leader, this is what they said: "A good leader is one of the group. He does not try to dominate but acts as a guide. He influences people towards the goal set by the group. He commands respect and he knows his job. Democratic leadership is shared leadership," they said.

With the above definition in mind, farm forum groups set out to discuss and answer the following questions: (a) What is being done in your community to discover and develop young people with leadership qualities?

The following list was mentioned: farm forums, folk schools, 4H clubs, young peoples' societies, junior institutes, calf and swine clubs, leadership training schools, short courses at O.A.C., Guelph, night classes and many other organizations present the opportunity to develop leaders in our communities.

As to the question (b) What else could be done? More stress should be put on leadership training in the schools and facilities provided for debates. A subject suggested by one forum for debate, "Resolved leaders are born, not made." Young people need more encouragement from older leaders. Elimination of fault

finding in new officers, but rather the giving of assistance with encouragement, which is of untold value to a young person who lacks confidence, was also suggested.

The second question was: What reasons might keep young people from holding office or taking positions in farm organizations? Answers included lack of confidence, feeling of indifference, lack of time to devote to some groups, with remuneration and we are situated, geographically, that industry with its higher pay and shorter hours are a big attraction, while the cost of establishing on a farm is beyond the reach of most.

Cost of national health insurance scheme is estimated at \$600,000,000 about one fifth more than entire federal government revenue for 1952.

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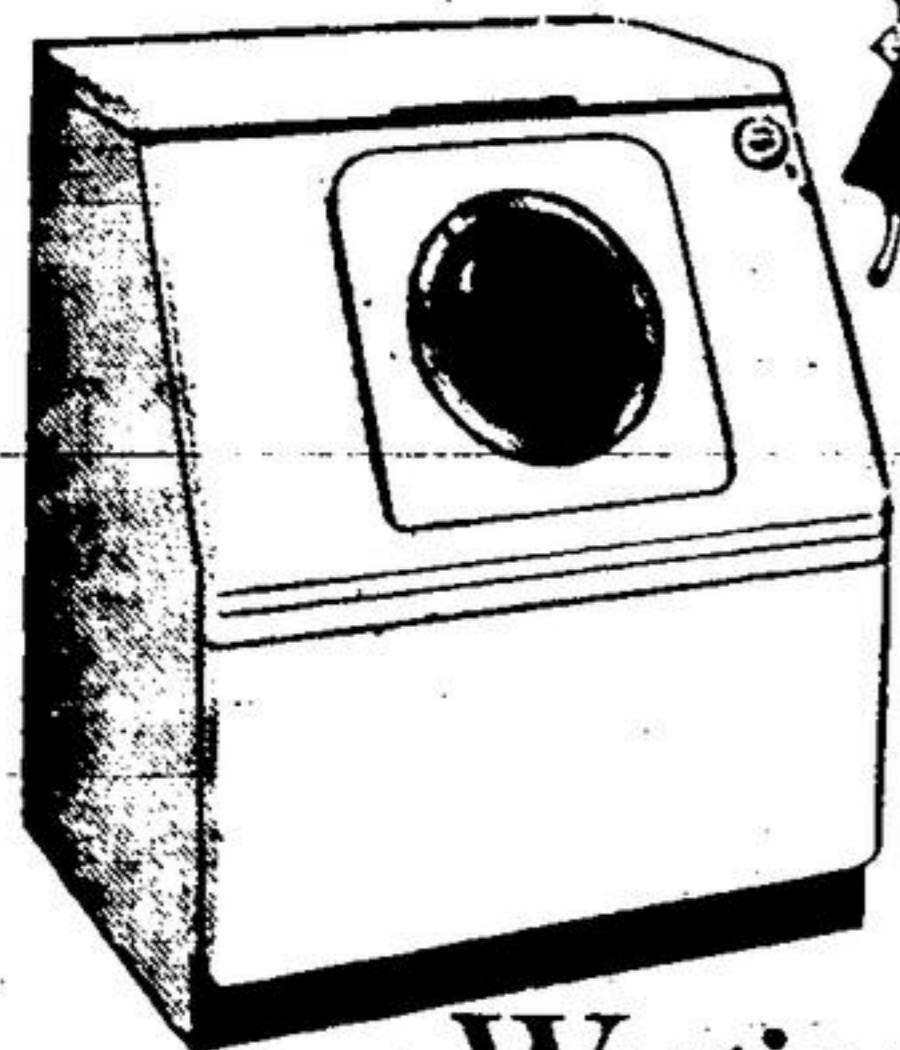
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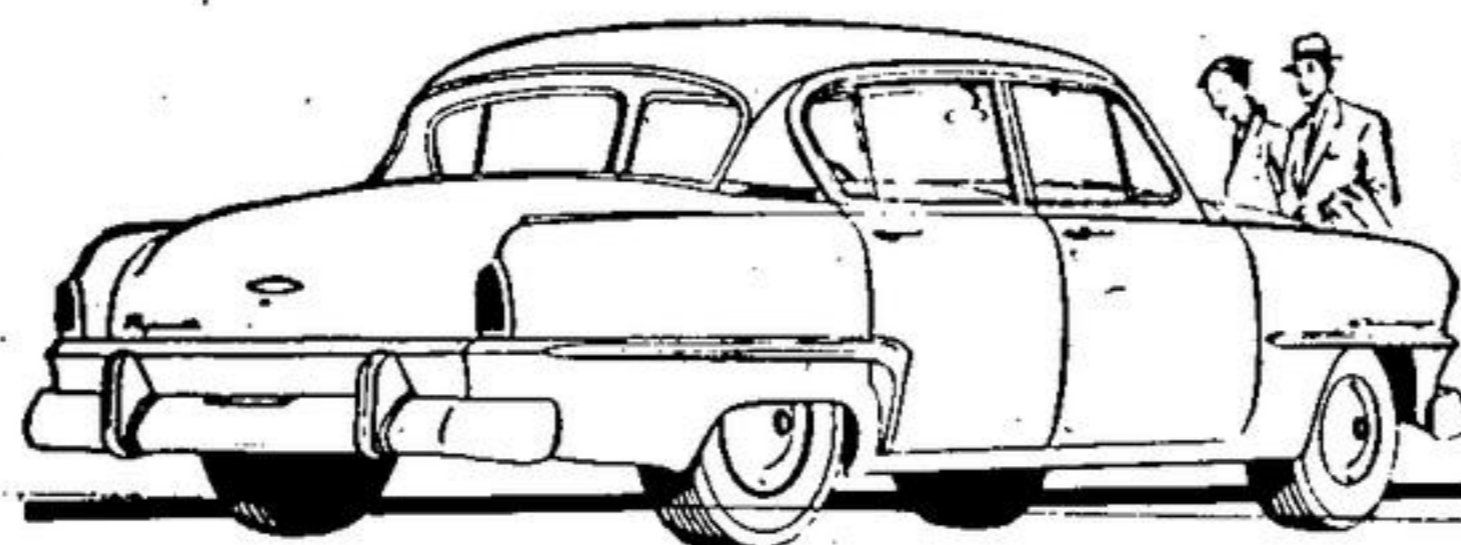
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