

It's Maple Syrup Making Time in Esquesing Twp.



HOT SYRUP FLOWS from the syrup pans after the proper temperature and thickness has been reached. Here Mr. Enright tilts the valve to allow the syrup to flow into the cooling container at lower right. Around and behind him rises the fragrant steam from the boiling sap and syrup.

The art of maple syrup making—although refined since the days of the Indian who gashed the tree with an axe, leaned up a wooden trough to catch the flow, then boiled the sap down in a great kettle hung between two trees—still remains as Canadian as the tree that mothers the sweet, flavorsome liquid.

Naturally then, Canadians for generations have been the world's most discriminating connoisseurs of maple syrup. And there's little reason to believe their appetite for the juice of the maple will subside in future generations.

Canadians in this area can thank a farmer on the third line of Esquesing for keeping the art locally vigorous and, at the same time, keeping their maple syrup jugs amply supplied. He's W. S. Enright, and last week he took an hour from his busiest hours of the year to explain why there's more to maple syrup than great quantities of sap.

Warm Days, Cool Nights. The run of sap is as unpredictable as the weather itself. Mr. Enright said primarily, then added matter-of-factly that it wasn't unusual since the turns of the weather are responsible for the runs.

Ideal weather to start the sap trickling from the maples is, he agreed, warm days and cool nights. This may be anytime from late February to mid-April, and there may be one, two, three or even more runs.

Standing by the steaming evaporator pans in his boiling shack, Mr. Enright said his first run started February 22. Of the 100 acres of maple and cedar bushland on his 200-acre farm, between 40 and 50 acres were tapped for this year's run. "Next year," he added, "I'll tap the other half—turnabout each year."

Explaining that his first run lasted about two days, Mr. Enright continued that he was now on his second run. "I've taken off about 35 to 40 gallons of syrup so far this year—it's not what you might say a particularly good year because of the cool weather."

He recalled that in 1947—the year

he bought the property formerly known as the Macdonald farm—the yield was between 100 and 200 gallons of syrup.

"I've always tapped every year, hoping each year the yield will be better than the last one," he remarked.

Commenting on the opinion held by some people—that the price of maple syrup is rather high—Mr. Enright observed that few know the amount of labor and time involved in producing maple syrup.

Asked to describe a typical season's work, he noted that you just don't go out into the bush and hang up the pails not when you're producing on a commercial scale.

Long before the sap has started to run there's wood, hard maple and cedar to be cut, drawn and stacked near the boiling shack. Equipment must be sorted over and prepared for use, fire box cleaned and containers fitted to be ready. The actual tapping has to be done with little waste of time when the rain starts, and when this involves the handling of 700 or more spiles and 700 or more pails it's no job to squeeze in between breakfast and lunch.

Fire Under the Paps. Once the pails start to fill with the pungent, water sap the work rises to a more feverish tempo. A horse drawn sleigh or stone-boat carrying a large, covered tank is brought into the bush and the laborious task of sap gathering begins.

Now Mr. Enright and his part-time assistant, Ernie Perryman, are in the thick of their work as larger tanks near the shack and evaporator pans are called into use to store the collected sap before boiling begins.

Then the fire box is opened. Tinder cedar sparks the first fire before maple from the five cords of piled fuel is thrown in to produce flame-heat. The spigot from the gravity feed tank is pulled and into the first evaporator pan flows the sap.

The two, corrugated-bottom evaporator pans provide a boiling surface of 36 feet before the sap is passed into the syrup pans for final heating. In the evaporator pans, as billows of sweet-smelling mist swirl up and around the shack, about 85 per cent of the liquid is boiled away.

Connecting siphons take the furiously churning sap into the last two pans, the smaller syrup pans, where the remaining 15 per cent of liquid necessary to leave syrup is boiled away. As a temperature of 219 degrees is reached, the syrup is run

At that temperature, the syrup has

reached the viscosity, or thickness, required to meet the government standard for commercial syrup: 13 pounds, three ounces per gallon.

"That point is the saturation point," Mr. Enright explained. "Over that it gets thicker and more sugary and ultimately you'll get maple sugar."

The old timers often used to boil the syrup way over the saturation point and the customers got plenty of maple sugar for their money," he said with a smile.

Any given quantity of sap takes about five hours from the time it enters the evaporating pans until it flows as syrup from the syrup pans, Mr. Enright pointed out. "It boils off a rate of about 80 gallons of liquid per hour," he said.

When this run is over, if it's the last one, there'll be days of pail washing and tank and pan cleaning to be done, Mr. Enright added. "Equipment has to be ready to start without unnecessary delay next season," he said, re-emphasizing that all the work is not just during the actual run of the sap.

To a significant query earlier, he replied: "Remember, it takes 50 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup."



STORAGE TANKS HOLD the sap before it is pumped into a feeder tank above the evaporator pans. While full pails near the boiling shack are dumped in the storage tank by hand, as above, when the run is heavier or at its peak a horse-drawn tank on runners circulates the bush collecting sap, then returns to the storage tanks where the sap is poured in.

Maple Syrup Making Methods Have Come a Long Way Since Indian Days

For many years the pioneers followed closely the primitive maple syrup making methods of the Indians, tapping the trees with an axe and using wooden troughs to catch the sap, then boiling it in iron or copper kettles suspended on poles between two trees. Unprotected from rain, snow, ashes, leaves and dirt, the syrup had a strong flavor, was dark in color and variable in density.

It is now recognized that cleanliness is necessary to produce the best grades of syrup and sugar. The best is a light amber and resembles the first grade of clover honey.

One of the first improvements was the use of an auger instead of an axe in tapping the trees. Wooden buckets supplanted the hewn sap troughs. The large kettles were replaced with shallow evaporating pans two to three feet wide and four to six feet in length. These required less fuel and boiled the sap much faster. A shelter was built to protect the pans from dirt and the sugar maker from rain, snow and wind.

Some operators modernized the process to the point where oil is being used instead of wood as fuel for operating evaporators. To facilitate collection of sap from trees in a large sugar bush, one woodlot owner near Toronto has laid 3,000 feet of pipe in his woodlot which carries the sap to a central collection spot.

Has 95 Per Cent Water. The sap contains 95 to 98 per cent water which is evaporated by boiling. The question is sometimes asked whether tapping injures the tree. Certain trees have been tapped each

Highway Extension Into County Urged

Pavement on certain provincial highways should be extended into Wellington County, John Root, P.C. (Wellington North) told the Legislature last week.

Mr. Root, taking part in the budget debate, said that the Liberal government in 1937 built a number of highways to the border of North Wellington and ended them there. Nothing has been done about it since, he said.

"It must be a great source of irritation to tourists and others," he said, "using these highways to come to the end of pavement and realize they must travel on the gravelled country roads."

"Highway provincial traffic using the country roads system places a burden of taxation on the people of North Wellington and Dufferin," that does not seem quite fair," said Mr. Root.

"We realize that this situation was not created by this government, but we hope that this government will find a way to correct this situation at an early date," he added.

Mr. Root named several of these highways which end at the county border, including Number 25 coming north from Burlington to Acton, No. 19 from Stratford to Trafal, No. 87 from the Lake Huron area to Harrison and No. 23 from the London area to Palmerston.



TIDEFALL

by Thomas H. Raddall
Tidefall is a strong and masculine story told by a Nova Scotian who has tramped by water and land. Thomas Raddall writes of men and their work as Conrad did, or Jack London. And he likes to write about the sea.

Smuggling, running bootleg liquor. Captain Sixty Nolan saved his money like a miser. Then he came back to Nova Scotia to find some kind of revenge for his tormented childhood. He bought a shipping business and proceeded to change his way of life. Included was marriage with the daughter of the firm's former owner. She had class which Nolan wanted. "class" and wealth.

Is the determination of an ambitious man enough to make him successful? Tidefall is an exciting addition to the library and a powerful Canadian novel. In fact, one reviewer, more daring than this one, called Tidefall, "the most powerful novel ever written by a Canadian."

Perhaps you've already read The Nymph and the Lamb by Raddall. It was recently published in a pocket edition with a cover which is nothing short of astounding to anyone who has read the book. It, too, is a highly regarded Canadian novel and rewarding reading.

Fuel Big Item On Large Buying List

The complexities and extent of railway purchases were presented to the New England Railroad Club, Boston, recently by E. A. Bromley, Montreal vice-president of purchases and stores for the Canadian National Railways.

Mr. Bromley pointed out that last year the railway bought 75,000 different items from 11,000 companies and that the total bill amounted to \$300-million. Fuel was the biggest item, accounting for \$70-million, he said.

What the railway had to do to earn the money to pay for these purchases was graphically outlined by Mr. Bromley. "To buy a load per cent the railway must haul a ton of freight almost a mile and a half."



On the job: Chief Wilmer F. Young, Brockville police head for the past sixteen years. Brockville youngsters have him on the tender and athletic director of the Police Athletic Association, the trophies behind his desk were won by boys and girls athletic teams and the 50-girl league band sponsored by the Association.

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