

Ireland's Changing Face

Writes of Agriculture in Ireland

On a recent holiday visit to beautiful Ireland, Catherine Graham of R. R. 1, Limehouse, gathered some vivid impressions of the country's housing, agriculture, sights and scenery. She has written the following resume of the trip for this newspaper.

THE CHANGING FACE OF IRELAND

After 27 years' absence from Ireland, the change, in the manner of living and working conditions are very pronounced. The homes are to a large extent modernized, but not cold water is commonplace in most of the older buildings, while the number of new houses exceeds expectations.

Local authorities have been busy in the Co. Down area on housing projects. The result of this endeavor is that working class families can rent a three-bedroom house with all conveniences for \$4 weekly. Private owners are encouraged to improve old properties, to bring them up to approved standards. In addition to a target of 10,000 new homes yearly for the coming decade. This, for a population of one and a half million, would be the equivalent of 1,300,000 houses for Canada in the same period.

Farming is mechanized and with ample rainfall, the land is highly productive, responding well to fertilizer dressings. The main crop is, of course, grass, of which there is an abundance in almost every field. The cattle are mostly Shorthorn with red the predominant color. This breed, if well nourished, will produce a beast of 10 cwt. in two years, which is about the average rate of growth. The dairy herds contain many Friesians that are broad and well proportioned. There is also a considerable number of Aberdeen Angus but Ayrshire, Jersey and Hereford are not so common.

Barley is the chief cereal, having almost replaced oats and wheat. This is principally due to its superior feeding value. The

farmers roll the grain and feed liberally to cow and to calves from five months on.

It is especially valuable for out-wintered cattle and even the straw, which is coarse in texture, is also used. The Irish potato is still tops in fine flavor and floury (as they say in the Old Country). The average sown to this crop has declined because of the high labor costs but Irish seed potatoes find a ready market in places as far away as Cyprus and Egypt.

Government grants are available for farm improvement schemes, draining, fencing and new buildings. Farms under 20 acres are now classed as non-viable and only limited help is given. Small farmers are encouraged to sell their holdings, greater social benefits being more readily accessible to landless people.

It is somewhat unfortunate for a people with a strong agricultural tradition, that assistance is not given to would-be purchasers of land whereby holdings could be increased to an economic level. In spite of all efforts to help the farming community, 1,000 small farmers are leaving the land annually for other occupations.

On the other hand, a farmer with 40 to 60 acres can live quite comfortably. This is partly due to the fact that the Irish are great consumers of dairy foods. It would be hard to convince them that the so-called spreads are better than good country butter.

At Killeel, the fishing fleet puts out to sea to range the waters of the Irish and Scottish coasts, bringing home rich harvests of herring, cod, plaice, turbot, sole and prawns (shrimp). In addition, in-shore fishing of lobster and shellfish is a lucrative occupation.

The shore there is a very interesting place to spend an early morning or afternoon. We often watched these fishermen putting out their little boats and skimming over the calm waters to keep an eye on their creels. It is true old places revisited have a special charm, but even making

allowances for this tendency, the Irish scenery is almost in a class by itself. One can taste the beauties of mountain, stream, lake, shore and plain, unfolding in never ending variety.

We visited many places of interest, old castles (too numerous to describe), old monasteries, roundtowers and Celtic crosses. I was sorry to see so many of these ancient landmarks with only the walls standing. We spent a week touring Ireland. Cities visited were Dublin (went to the Abbey Theatre, Cork, Limerick, Galway (saw the sun go down on Galway Bay and the new cathedral built there), Kiljarney Rock of Cashel, Blarney Castle (kissed - the Blarney Stone), Bunratty Castle, Irlifree and W. B. Yeates' grave. Spent two days touring Donegal, that wild and lovely country, passed through Tyrone and bought some eels of the Lough Neagh fishermen (they were better for tasting than I expected).

Previous to our trip around Ireland, we spent a few weeks touring "The Mourne's", the Ards Peninsula, Belfast and the ancient city of Derry. All the cities looked thriving and very busy. It is amazing the number of bicycles one sees on the city streets, along with all kinds of vehicles, even the horse and cart are still in use.

The above is just a glimpse of the changing face of Ireland. It is no longer possible for the Irish to escape the effects of world wide trends, which have such profound social implications. From what one can see in an all too short holiday, the Irish as a people have managed to preserve a sane and sensible way of life. On the whole, they remain a happy people. The old characteristics of fun, gaiety, good humor and generosity remain much in evidence. They loaded me down with gifts, which almost proved a problem, travelling by plane, but I solved it by sending my personal effects by parcel post.

For an enjoyable holiday, go to Ireland!

Catherine Graham

Coast-to-Coast Sketching Tour Centennial Project for B. of M.

The Bank of Montreal has commissioned the well-known Montreal artist, Richard B. Wilson, to undertake a coast-to-coast sketching tour of Canada, to mark the country's centennial and the bank's 150th anniversary in 1967. The project - the Bank of Montreal Canada Centennial Tableaux - was announced by G. Arnold Hart, chairman and president of the bank.

Mr. Hart said Mr. Wilson will begin his assignment immediately starting with field trips to Alberta and Saskatchewan, provinces which are now observing their 60th anniversaries.

Mr. Wilson's objective will be to produce a tableau of contemporary Canadian scenes during the period leading up to 1967 and will be a full-time undertaking. Mr. Hart said.

Visits will be made to communities in all parts of the country, irrespective of size and population, so that some hundreds of black and white drawings can be sketched on location.

Mr. Hart said: "This program will provide for generations to come an indication of some of the atmosphere and color around the time of Canada's first birthday celebration. I am looking forward to seeing the results of Mr. Wilson's work and I am sure that an impressive and important record of Canada will emerge."

Mr. Wilson is well known through publication of the best selling book, "Living Past of Montreal", and a portfolio of quality prints of his drawings, both by the McGill University Press. He specializes in sketching buildings and scenes with historical interest, and all drawings are completed on the spot. The speed with which he completes his work is a remarkable feature of his technique.

For the past five or six years, he has sketched extensively throughout the province of Quebec - and in Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia and the United States - paying particular attention to completion of a record of now demolished structures in Montreal.

The Centennial Tableaux project is the Bank of Montreal's second undertaking to be announced to mark the centennial and the bank's 150th anniversary. The bank's Canada Centennial Scholarship program was the first centennial project to be announced by any Canadian business when it began in 1960, with awards to 48 high school graduates of that year. Subsequent awards of increasing value have been made to a reducing number of students and will culminate with two top awards each of \$5,000 in 1967. In all, the project provides scholarships numbering 126, for a total value of more than \$200,000.

Const. Hardy recently passed examinations qualifying him for a promotion to the rank of Corporal, and will appear before the promotion board later this month. He has been with the O.P.P. 14 years, about nine of these years in the Milton detachment.

Two O.P.P. Constables Wear Plain Clothes

Constables Dave Hardy and Bill Bennett of Milton O.P.P. have been named to full-time criminal investigation in the North Halton area, and will work in plain clothes instead of the familiar blue O.P.P. uniform in future.

Sgt. C. Wilkinson, head of the Milton O.P.P. detachment, announced the promotions this week. He explained that a third man from the detachment would be assigned to assist Constables Hardy and Bennett with the criminal end of the work, and each man on the staff would be given the chance to take the work on for a three month period of time.

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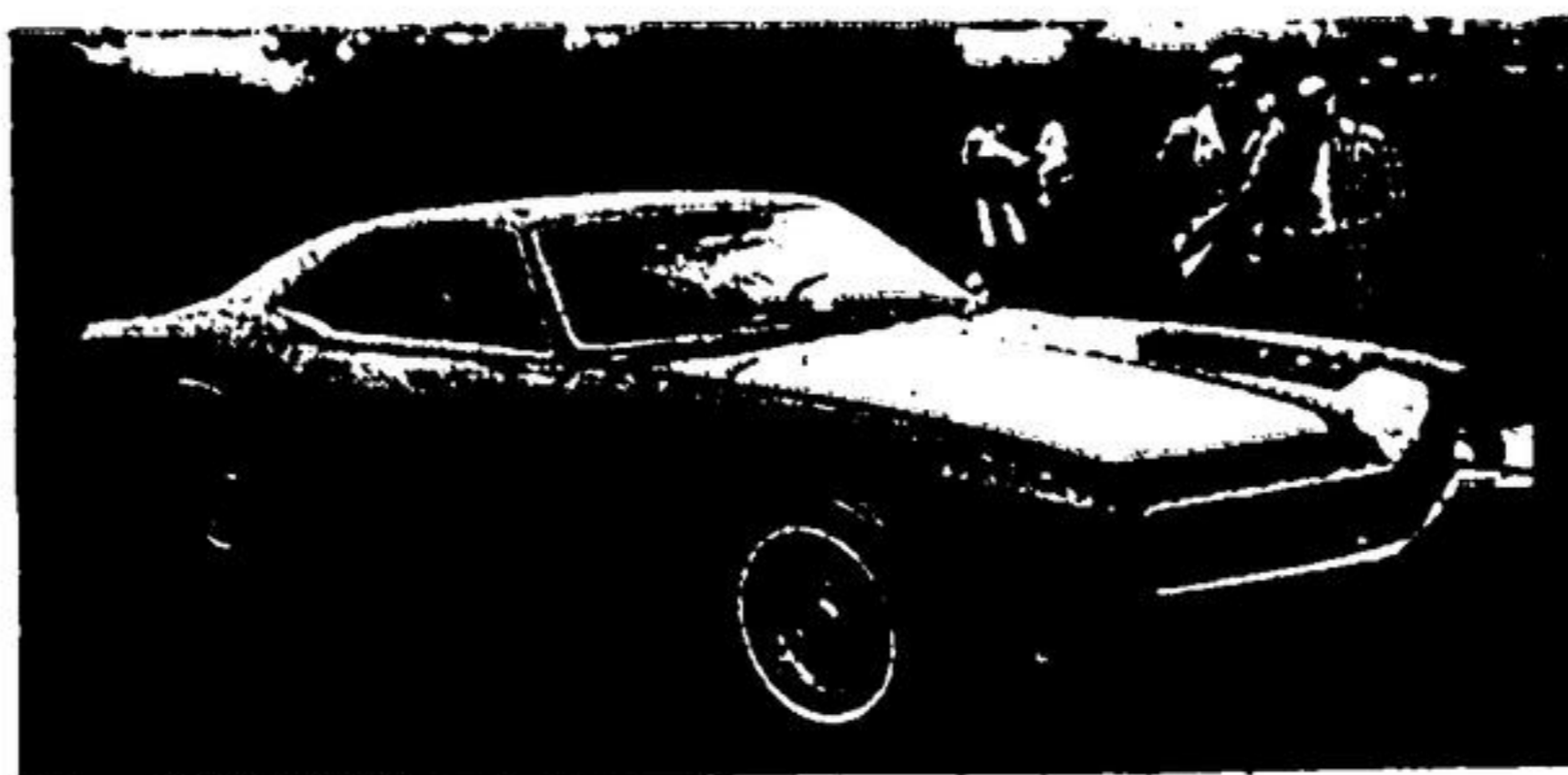
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