

Plant, harvest, process 50,000

# Family farms 130-acre turnip operation

By Bob Burt

When Albert Schouten, his wife and eight children packed their belongings and left their home in South Holland 17 years ago to come to Canada, turnips or "Rutabaga" as they are properly called, were just another vegetable.

Since then he has become the largest turnip producer in a district which encompasses all of Halton, Wellington, Waterloo, Bruce and Huron Counties and part of Wentworth.

Before Mr. Schouten came to Canada he operated a fruit and vegetable business and sold a few bushels of turnips each winter. "But Holland is not much of a country for eating turnips", Mr. Schouten said.

On arrival in Canada Mr. Schouten was employed by Bill Smith, a turnip grower in Millgrove where he learned the ins and outs of the industry. Two years later Mr. Schouten was in business for himself.

Thirty acres belonging to Joseph and Chris on Five Sideroad and 100 acres of his own situated north of Campbellville are all processed at his plant north of Campbellville.

The turnip industry, not unlike many farming operations, has become highly industrialized. The turnips are planted in May, hoed in June and harvested in October. One machine picks the vegetable, lifts it from the ground, tops it and then drops it into a truck. From there they are transported inside by conveyor belt where they are stored in bins to await further processing.

A machine similar to a large water wheel washes the turnips as it rotates. After they are washed they are left to dry. Once dry they are trimmed and sent up to another bin by conveyor belt and later waxed. Waxing involves passing the turnips through wax at 220 degrees for a period of three seconds.

Following the waxing the crop goes to yet another conveyor belt and down to a bin where they are bagged, tied, stacked and ready to be loaded onto a truck.

Mr. Schouten has devised an efficient system whereby the entire process is completed with no fuss or muss and no one has to walk more than a few steps to complete his part of the job. The entire process involves anywhere from six to 10 workers, all relatives.

On an average they process 600 bushels daily.

Turnips are waxed in order to retain the moisture and prevent softening. Storage conditions require high humidity and a temperature of about 48 degrees to further insure hardness.

Ideal growing conditions include summer rains and dry autumns. Government inspectors examine each load to see the crop is free from disease, to make sure they are loaded properly and to enforce proper storage temperatures.

Inspector Bob Armstrong is one of nine officers covering this district. The district office is in Hamilton and a sub office is situated in Guelph.

Mr. Armstrong cited root maggot as the chief varmint but he said turnips were also susceptible to virus and several other diseases. Mr. Schouten sprays his crop weekly to prevent these diseases.

The vegetable popularly known as turnip in Canada is properly termed Rutabaga. Turnips are smaller than Rutabaga and are white in color. The term Rutabaga is used in the United States and Inspector Armstrong suggested it might be prevalent in Canada within the next 25 years. Before they can be certified for export by government inspectors, "Rutabaga" must appear on the bag.

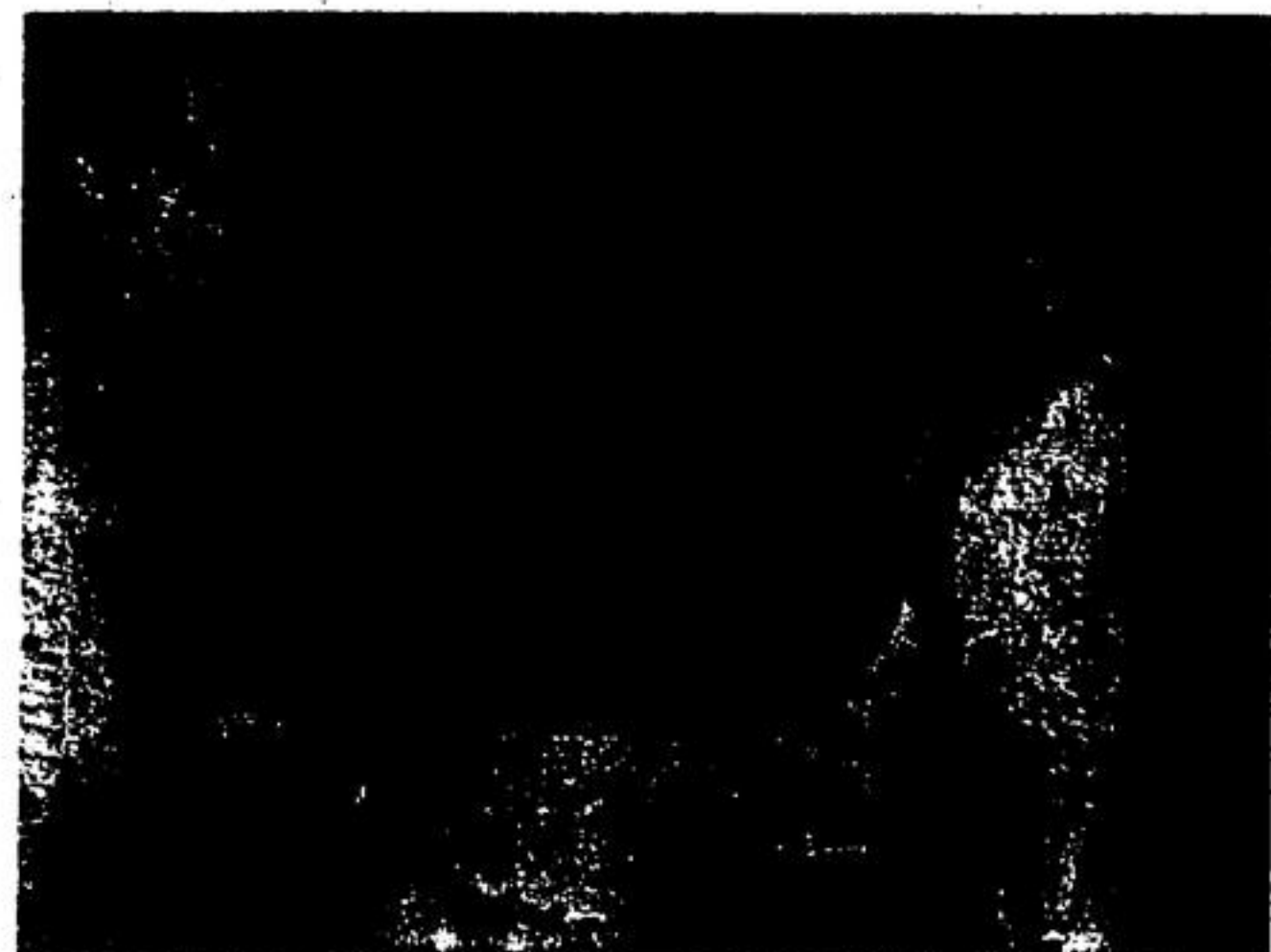
Mr. Armstrong offered 15 per cent as a conservative estimate of the turnip crops still in the fields across the province. "This year there was an over supply, close to 25 per cent over last year's production. Last year many farmers grew turnips on a small scale as a test and collected \$1.25 per bushel. This year with the extra supply, prices dropped as low as 55 cents per bushel."

Both Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Schouten felt those who had gone into the business expecting to collect the gravy won't be back next year. According to a survey conducted by economists from Ottawa, it costs the grower from 51 to 53 cents to produce a bushel of turnips. Mr. Armstrong said the grower would need about \$1 per bushel to make his operation pay.

Mr. Schouten's entire crop is exported to New York State. He explained due to the great number of growers in Canada and the great population of the United States there is a better market in the south. If he sold his produce locally there would be a tendency to flood the market.

Inspector Armstrong said Ontario was Canada's greatest grower of turnips. Prince Edward Island, once a large producer has decreased its production recently. On the other hand, Quebec is becoming a large grower. Nationally we produce 1,500,000 bushels.

Each acre yields approximately 500 bushels. The Schouten farm alone could yield 50,-



BAGS SIMILAR TO POTATO SACKS are hung on hooks and held open while the turnips are guided into the bags. From there they are tied, sent down a conveyor belt and stacked to await loading on the truck. (Staff Photo)



TURNIPS, TURNIPS EVERYWHERE and right in the middle of the man who started it all 15 years ago. (Staff Photo)

(Staff Photo)

# The Acton Free Press

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ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1967

Second Section.

## Providence cemetery Ballinafad W.I. project

## Martin House opens

Several inaccuracies were recorded in a recent article on the restoration of Providence cemetery which appeared in The Free Press Nov. 1.

Ballinafad Women's Institute wished to make it clear that the restoration is their centennial

project. The W.I. called a public meeting on June 17, 1967, at which meeting trustees were appointed with Norman Sinclair as chairman.

The trustees asked the W.I. to appoint a secretary-treasurer for the committee and Mrs. Jesse McEnery took the post.

There have been 43 plots sold plus vacant plots on the 25 mentioned in the article.

The cemetery is situated on the ninth line of Erin township at the town line between Erin and Esqueping townships, which is the Ballinafad sideroad.

### Laurence Doby to be ordained

Laurence Doby will be ordained to the priesthood on the afternoon of December 3 at St. Columba's church, St. Catharines. He is the son of Mayor and Mrs. Les Doby. Many from his home parish expect to attend the ordination.

Martin House, the latest addition to the Halton Centennial Manor, received praise as "a tangible example of one generation helping another" from Noble Drew, Ontario Director of Homes for the Aged, at its official opening.

Heads of governments from the various county municipalities as well as government representatives, members of the clergy and local dignitaries attended to declare the Martin House officially open and tour the \$1,500,000 building.

"The construction of this home is certainly a fitting way to honor Canada's Centennial and it is appropriate to have it named after the Martin family which has done so much for the town," Mr. Drew said.

The guest speaker reviewed the history of the homes and accommodations for the aged from a time early in the 19th century when institutions for the old were

known as "houses of refuge", up to present time. Now they are no longer considered a place of refuge but a place where the aged can enjoy a stimulating day to day program.

Mr. Drew cited the early 1900's as "a sudden dramatic awakening to the social need". He referred to the Martin House as a shining example of the new awareness to the social need and an indication of Halton's generosity.

Mr. Drew offered congratulations to the Manor staff and a special tribute to County Council, the Manor Committee of Management and all who helped to make the Martin House a reality.

A brief history of the Manor traces its inception to 1949 when County Council appointed a committee to formulate plans for a new home in Halton County. In July of 1952 the \$530,000 Halton Centennial Manor was officially

opened. In March of 1956 a staff house valued at \$98,500 was constructed and this construction allowed 12 more patient beds in the original Manor.

By 1958 the demand had increased again and plans for a 92 bed addition were drawn up. In September of 1961 the \$902,250 addition and remodeling project saw its official opening.

By 1963 it was time, once again, to consider expansion and by 1965 work had begun on the 150 bed, \$1,500,000 home.

Chairman of the program, Manor board chairman Reeve H.H. Hinton of Acton introduced the platform guests.

Guests included, Warden of Halton County, W. J. Coulter; Reeve of Milton A.L. Ledwith; general contractor J. Richards of Lynch-Richards; Donald E. Skinner; Reeve of Burlington and member of the committee of management, Gordon Gallagher; M.L.A. for Halton West George Kerr; Reeve of Oakville H.C. Merry; Director of Homes for the Aged Branch of the Department of Social and Family Services, Noble Drew; President of the Ontario Homes for the Aged, Mr. Gillies; son of Mary Pettit, Murray, (representing the Pettit family). The first part of the Manor is referred to as the Pettit house; Doctor C.A. Martin (the new addition was named after the Martin family), Georgetown Reeve J. Elliott; Esqueping Reeve G. Leslie; Milton Mayor S. Childs; Oakville Mayor McLean Anderson; and Georgetown Mayor Joe Gibbons.

Rev. James Terry of Oakville offered benediction and Rev. Father Murphy of Holy Rosary Church in Milton offered a prayer of invocation.

Each guest made a brief speech. Manor administrator Stan Allan said they had moved into the new building before they officially took over from the contractors. "It was kind of a crash program and it has just been a series of crash programs ever since," he said. The proud administrator offered thanks and congratulations to his staff, County Council and the Committee of Management for their part in making the Centennial Manor the finest home in the province.

Doctor Martin spoke briefly, expressing his appreciation of the honor bestowed on him and his family. "This is a wonderful building and now that we have the foundation, we should be just about ready for an addition. Similar facilities should be available to all of the aged," Dr. Martin said.

Mr. Drew, Warden Coulter and Mrs. Edith Greene, a 98-year-old resident of the Manor took part in the ribbon cutting and declared the Martin House officially open. Mrs. Green is the second oldest resident in the Manor and was filling in for the oldest, S.H. Baverstock who is 101.

The Burlington boys and girls band played several numbers.



THE RIBBON IS CUT and the \$1,500,000 Martin House is officially open. Warden of Halton County William Coulter, Director of Homes for the Aged Noble Drew and Mrs. Edith

Green took part in the ribbon cutting. Mrs. Green, 98, is the second oldest resident at the Manor and replaced S. H. Baverstock in the ceremony. (Staff Photo)



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