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Chatting . . .
with M. H. B.

● **HOW THE KIDDIES** love St. Valentine's Day . . . First of all comes the selection of the valentines — I'm sure that must drive the poor sales girls to distraction — then the dithering over the list — and lastly the laborious addressing of the colourful little cards. The teachers usually have a big valentine mail box in the school room, and some times they plan a little party in the school hours to add more festivity to the occasion . . .

● **ALL THESE DETAILS** were related to me last Tuesday after the party was over. Our daughter had stayed to help on the "clean-up" committee. But the day had held some disillusionment too. Putting away the debris in the waste basket she noticed quite a number of valentines in it. Curiosity prompted her to look at the name signed — it was hers — and further investigation revealed that a number of the shy little boys had ditched all their valentines signed by girls. Our little miss took it quite philosophically however. "Guess they didn't want to get teased when they got home," said she . . .

● **THAT SAME DAY** WAS a busy one at home during noon-hour for the lady of the household. It being Shrove Tuesday, I undertook to make pancakes. With the prepared mixes on the market, the making of the batter is as easy as wink. But the cooking is another matter. The temperature of the pan must be just right — the correct kind and amount of cooking fat used, and the pancakes must be watched every second and served immediately when done . . . This latter point is the salient one. The family can eat them faster than I can cook them. And the darn things stuck to my pan like glue. By the time they're ready to be turned over the pan is as dry as a chip. More shortening needed right away. I get one pried off the pan in order to make a space to put the shortening in and while one hand is occupied holding the pancake aloft, the other putting in the shortening and swizzling it around the pan into the right places, the pancakes remaining in the pan are getting rapidly beyond the well-done stage. In fact by the time that operation is over what I need is a hammer and chisel to get them off the bottom of the pan . . .

● **SUCCESS FINALLY** CROWNS my efforts, however. Over they go to brown on the other side. They look pretty good, so I take heart and the warm plates, and serve them to the family — best side up. The next batch won't be so difficult I tell myself. So — in goes the shortening and the batter — and the same process starts all over again. And this goes on until each one in the family has three or four — while I thank my lucky stars they are not big pancake eaters — and I debate whether I really want pancakes badly enough myself to go thru it again. You will note that is at least one thing I have learned through experience. I do not attempt to eat my pancakes at the same time as trying to cook them. But I was hungry and they did look delicious when they finally got to the table, with a big lump of butter and good maple syrup to dress them up. So, in goes the batter into the pan again. M-m-m, they were good . . . But all the same, they gave me an inferiority complex. Maybe all I need are a few lessons from those men who find it so easy to cook them for big crowds in lumber camps and places like that. In all the magazine pictures they look so happy and pleased with themselves as they nonchalantly flip the flapjacks way up in the air. And they make them by the stack. Guess I just haven't got the knack. Anyone like to give me a few pointers? . . .

● **I HAVE OFTEN POINTED** out to friend editor that it would be a good idea to keep a sort of daily diary on interesting and amus-

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ing things that happen in a weekly newspaper office in the hope that some day he might have the time and the ambition to sit down and write a book about it. For whatever complaints there might be about running a weekly newspaper, it cannot be said that life is dull. But someone has beaten us to the draw. Mrs. Ern Batkin tipped us off to an excellent story on running a weekly newspaper by Charlotte Paul, called "Minding Our Own Business." The version we read was the book condensation in the Reader's Digest of condensed books. It was thoroughly enjoyable, especially to us, because they had encountered many of our problems, with a few more thrown in for good measure. In short, Mrs. Paul has stolen our thunder. But if you think you'd like a down-to-earth de-glamorized account of what it's like to run a small weekly, you'll enjoy this book . . .

● **THE EDITOR OF** the Fergus-News-Record, Dr. Hugh Templin, notes the large flocks of evening grosbeaks in the area around Fergus. Many people here have remarked on the lovely birds too. They are a pretty sight when you see a flock of about 75 yellow birds flying low to congregate together and cluster in the branches of one tree . . . Editor Templin noticed a particularly large flock when he was out with his camera recently. He said: "we were able to approach to within ten feet or so. The birds are definitely Evening Grosbeaks. They are a dullish yellow about seven or eight inches long. Their wings are black with a wide white band near the body. The beak is heavy and conical and nearly white in colour. The female is much duller in colour, almost a grey. There is quite a flock of them. . . . What was most unusual about this flock of birds was their apparent unconcern about human beings. They were sitting in a spruce tree eating what looked like buds. We took a picture but we were probably too far away. Anyway, the birds weren't camera shy. It's not often that a person can get so close to any of our native birds. It is interesting to get a close look."

Manitoba Club Member Wins National Essay Competition

Miss Margaret Jeffs, Manitoba and John Hickie, Saskatchewan, stood first and second in the annual national 4-H essay competition sponsored by the Canadian Council on 4-H Clubs and open to the 118 provincial winners who attended the 1955 National 4-H Club Week. The contestants wrote about their impressions of the trip. Books will be awarded by the council as prizes. Miss Jeffs is 18 and lives on a 320 acre farm. She has completed seven years in 4H and plans to become a teacher. John Hickie, 20, has been in 4-H for six years and is presently enrolled in the Diploma Course at the University of Saskatchewan. His home farm consists of 1,340 acres, 600 of which are under cultivation. The competition judges were three members of the staff of the Canada Dept. of Agriculture in Ottawa, E. F. Pineau, Production Service, C. H. Hodge, Information Service and L. H. McMillan, Marketing Service. The prize winning essay follows:

A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE
National 4-H Club Week, 1955, will remain in my memory as one of the most exciting and educational weeks ever spent in my life! What a thrill and sense of responsibility I felt when told that my partner and I were to be among the one hundred and eighteen fortunate club members to attend National 4-H Club Week. We had not achieved success in our first attempt but how much more experienced and more prepared we now were. For the first time I fully realized how worthwhile my seven years of club work, and my three years of demonstrating and studying had been. Without the constant support of the Dept. of Agriculture, the business members and the associate members which constitute the Canadian Council on 4-H Clubs, this adventure in citizenship would not have been possible. To all council members I express my heartfelt appreciation. May they, in the future, witness even greater youth interest in agriculture because of the enthusiasm aroused at Club Week. During Club Week I felt a new interest in Canada and a desire to know my country better. This feeling was induced while touring and while talking with fellow club members from across Canada. All our tours, planned to the best advantage, gave us a broader knowledge of Eastern Canada. What a thrill, while in Toronto, to view the mediaeval-styled Casa Loma Castle, to see the largest university in Canada, to watch a hockey game in the famous Maple Leaf Gardens and to actually attend the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair with its champions and its glamour! How exciting it was to view Niagara Falls the wonder of which we had heard so much! I saw, for the first time, a large industrial city as I looked down on Hamilton from the Niagara Escarpment. While touring Ottawa I recalled many of the important historic events which had taken place in that beautiful old city. Viewing the historic Rideau Canal, the home of our prime minister, the national war memorial and touring the parliament buildings made me more familiar with our capital city. How pleased the Fathers of Confederation, who had worked so diligently to bind our nation together, would have been to see our national group

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touring our nation's capital! It was a thrill to visit our French friends in the province of Quebec and as we toured the prosperous city of Hull felt proud that Canada was a bilingual country. The highlight of the trip for me was meeting with fellow 4-H'ers from coast to coast across Canada! Such an interesting geography lesson to hear about the varied livelihoods, from fishing in Newfoundland, on the east coast to lumbering in British Columbia on the west coast. Everyone became acquainted quickly and these friendly relations made the week that much more enjoyable. We had left home as individuals from different provinces but in Toronto we were one group — bound by a common interest. Club Week would not have been complete without the competitions. It was here that club members proved their knowledge of their homemaking and agricultural projects and illustrated the responsibility gained through "Learning to do by Doing". Keen interest and a desire to do the best was shown throughout the competitions. Good sportsmanship prevailed. Attending National Club Week has brought me a greater knowledge of Canada and her people. As I learned of others across Canada, I gained a better understanding of their problems. I believe it is this understand-

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