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Chatting..

with M. H. B.

IT'S HOLIDAY TIME again, and believe it or not, I've been busy getting the family ready to go to Lake Huron for a few weeks. Hope it warms up a bit... I established a new record in my experience today by putting woolen mitts on our four-year-old, at his insistence, when he went out to play this morning...

I'VE BEEN CHATTING with Miss Eva Ellison who is holidaying here with the Sam Penries on Albert St. Miss Ellison comes from Ramsey, the Isle of Man, and was a former neighbour of Mrs. Penrie's family there. Somehow or other the subject of square dancing came up, and Miss Ellison mentioned she was very interested in folk dancing. In fact she is a member of the Manx Folk Dancing Society, and quite a proficient one too I would imagine, be-

cause she was one of six chosen from the Society to represent the Isle of Man in the International Pageant and Folk Dancing held in Albert Hall, London England last June....

Over a thousand players and dancers came from all over the Empire and the world to take part in the Festival. The Pageant itself was called "Throughout the Ages", the theme of which depicted the triumph of good over evil and the dancers in their colourful native costumes, illustrated it.... The Manx dancers did their ancient "Fairies' Reel", one of the many dances steeped in the folklore of the Isle. In fact all their dances originated centuries ago, and all have unique historical backgrounds....

LENDING AUTHENTIC atmosphere to the dances the girls and men wear the old-time national costume. The ladies don ankle-length skirts, very full, white or coloured cotton blouses with white kerchiefs about the neck and white lace caps on their heads. Over the skirts go brightly checked aprons, and they wear white stockings rolled to the knee, so that their knees show when they do their "kick" step. The men dancers sport tightly-fitting breeches to the ankle, white socks, and a long denim tunic with a plaid sash or kilt, as it is properly known, tied around their waists....

The members of the Folk Dancing Society meet once a week in their own home towns and during the winter go to neighbouring towns quite frequently for dancing. Their only musical accompaniment is a fiddler. And judging by Miss Ellison's enthusiasm, they have a really good time.... A most enjoyable way of keeping many of the old traditions alive, I would say....

WHICH BRINGS US back to the brink of a favourite subject of mine... local history... there was just one excerpt from the Conservation Report space wouldn't allow me to include in last week's column that I think you might enjoy. They are quoting from the writings of Mr. W. H. Smith, concerning Caledon, which was published around the year 1851. When he wrote, a change was already beginning. Much of the backwardness was attributable to the lack of good roads through the township, and Mr. Smith says "as soon as the plank

road from Brampton is extended through the township (which is in contemplation) it will improve much more rapidly". However, here is what he had to say about Caledon 100 years ago:

"It was originally peopled by a rough and hardy set, a large number of whom still remain, and retaining their old backwoods, devil-may-care manners, seem to think, when they descend to an older settled or more civilized township, that it is necessary to give themselves airs, to show their independence. It is amusing to see some of these gentry at a tavern... nothing pleases them; nothing is so good as they get in Caledon! There are no potatoes on the table; they can get potatoes for supper in Caledon. They do not like bread; they get hot cakes for supper in Caledon... Even the salt is not as salt, the sugar as sweet, nor is the mustard (even when it brings tears into their eyes) as strong as they get in Caledon! And should anyone at table... attempt good naturedly to check their grumbling they will probably become sulky, and exclaim loudly that they can talk as much as they like in Caledon."

In all fairness, it must also be said that the people of Caledon were not the only ones to whom W. H. Smith gives this kind of character in 1851. The paragraph should, perhaps, be taken with the rest of the special Caledon salt, further adds the Conservation Historian....

CHANGING THE SUBJECT rather abruptly, I must tell you about our visit to the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Mac Alexander, R. R. 1, Norval, last Sunday afternoon. We made it a family outing to see their big herd of Saanen goats — they have nearly 90 altogether, of which 35 are kids... First of all however, to clear up a common misconception, I must tell you also, that Jack Benny was wrong. Remember his story about the man who said he had just seen a goat with no nose? "How did it smell," asked Jack. "Terrible!" It's a terrible joke, too, but it made Jack Benny famous....

NO INDEED, GOATS are among the most fastidious of animals. They insist on the cleanest accommodation, and will not take their food from a soiled container. They are particular about what they eat too — no tin cans for them, as the comic strips would have us believe. They are very tame, affectionate animals. The Alexanders let the children pet a couple of them, and the enjoyment seemed equally shared by both sides. They also told us of a young girl who visited them once, who told them she had one of the little Saanen kids as a pet, and used to take it to bed with her just as you would a beloved puppy.... The Saanen goats look clean too, with their snow-white coats. They really made quite a picture as they filed across the pasture with their little ones. I hadn't realized before that both male and female goats have beards, although the Alexanders have trimmed them off quite short for appearance's sake....

MR. AND MRS. Alexander are the only farmers in the district who have gone in to the raising of goats seriously. Many keep one or two just as a novelty, or because they want the milk for health reasons. But they tell us the interest in raising goats is growing rapidly. Mr. Alexander put it this way "Horses are going out, and goats are coming in" — that is the trend today....

How did they start keeping goats, I wondered. It seems Mrs. Alexander had always heard how beneficial goat's milk was, and she wanted a goat for her birthday years ago. That was the start of the Alexanders' interest in goats. Now they have a champion nanny goat who has taken many prizes at exhibitions, and Mr. Alexander takes great pride in the milk production of his herd.... By the way, did you know that goats' milk is naturally homogenized? The curd in goats' milk is much finer than in cows' milk, and therefore more easily digested. It also has natural fluorine in it and many other qualities that make it sought after by people afflicted with various ailments. When I heard Mrs. Alexander tell me these things, I was reminded of my favourite childhood book "Heidi", and how her invalid cousin was cured by the goat milk and cheese diet, and of course the pure mountain air of Heidi's home in the Swiss alps... A goat should give at least a gallon of milk a day. Mr. Alexander told me that goat's milk is very popular in California, and becoming more so in Ontario every year....

ANOTHER THING which surprised me was that goat meat is in demand by a good many people. The meat from the young bucks is a special delicacy. In fact Mr. Alexander said that around Easter time, if he had had 100 young bucks he could have sold them easily — the young goats were being spoken for even before they were born. How does the meat taste? — It is a cross between venison and beef.... And what does the milk taste like? We asked that too, to which Mrs. Alexander answered by taking the five of us into her living room and treating us to tall cold glasses of fresh goats' milk. It is very white and tasted like

Says Uses of West Gas Will Expand in Canada

Natural gas aims at providing the home with air conditioning as well as fuel for heat and cooking, Dean H. Mitchell of New York, president of the American Gas Association, said yesterday in an address to the Canadian Gas Association at Murray Bay, P.Q.

"The United States market is crying for a complete home air conditioning unit, and it seems likely that the fuel that captures air-conditioning will also capture the heating load," he said.

The American Gas Association was spending \$400,000 this year on air conditioning research and several manufacturers were spending hundreds of thousands of dollars. One manufacturer had installed more than 300 gas air-conditioned units in 41 states and in Canada to test them under all climatic conditions.

Mr. Mitchell's comments were contained in a text issued to the press in advance of delivery.

Natural Gas, Mr. Mitchell predicted, would mark the beginning of a new era for Canada. In the U.S. character in 1851. The paragraph should, perhaps, be taken with the rest of the special Caledon salt, further adds the Conservation Historian....

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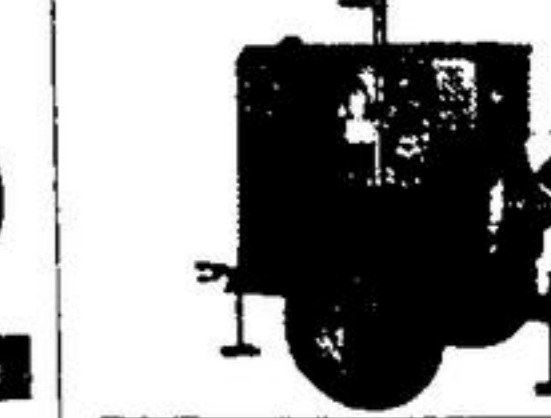
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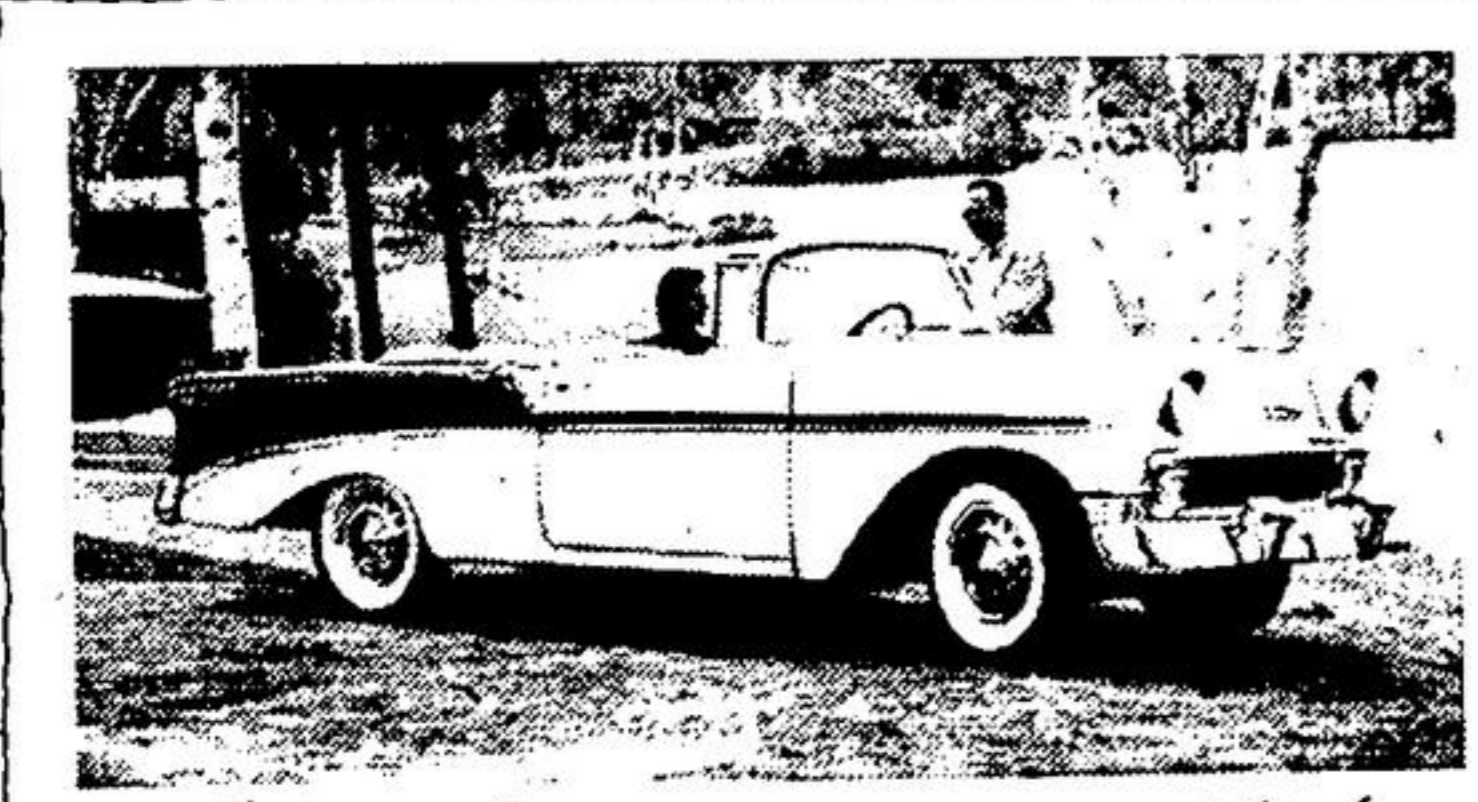


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