



SNOW TURNS A MORASS of mud into a veritable fairyland in the glimpse of the sluggish borders of a swift running stream. And plenty of the white stuff has fallen in this area in the last week to help us achieve that Christmas feeling.—(Photo by Dept. of Agriculture and Food)



### Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

Canada's old-age pensioners may not have a swinging Christmas, but they can warm themselves with the thought of what a whee of a time they're going to have in 1971, when there will occur instant prosperity; the basic old age pension will be raised from \$79.58 a month to a smashing \$80.

Can't you see all those male old-age pensioners when they get their first new cheque at the end of January? Straight to the pub and blow the whole 42 cents on an orgy. Two draught beers and a tip for the waiter.

This will produce a moral degradation never equalled since the days of Dickens, when gin was so cheap you could get high for a penny, stoned for six-pence, and dead drunk for a shilling.

Can't you see all those old-timers lying around in the snowbanks every time their pension cheque arrives?

And what about the women? They'll be worse. You know how women squander money. They're just as apt as not to go out and blow the whole 42 cents on a plastic dolly or a couple of rolls of pink toilet paper. There'll be no holding them.

That's only one of the faults in the white paper introduced by a benevolent

government. Further excesses are in sight. Do you realize that the government is going to retain the cost-of-living escalator formula up to a ceiling of 2 per cent a year for pensioners receiving the supplement (but eliminate it for those who get only the universal old-age benefit.)

This means that even if the annual cost-of-living increase crashes down to a mere 5 per cent, these people will get their 2 per cent increase. It's incredible. The dawning of a new, golden age in Canadian socialism.

If you were 65 and lived to be 75, your standard of living might drop by only 30 per cent, with that magnificent escalator clause built in.

The whole country is going to be lolling in luxury; there's no question about it. Did you know that a single pensioner can get up to \$35 a month in supplement or up to \$135 a month when his basic old age pension is included?

The key word there is "can". But if he or she decides to make a few extra bucks shovelling walks or taking in washing, some eagle-eyed social worker will be Johnny-on-the-spot, and the supplement will be cut, dollar for dollar.

In other words, you are pegged at \$1,620 a

year. That's a lot of money. Too much to be floating around in the hands of luxury-loving, devil-may-care old timers. Why don't we re-institute the work-house, with cabbage the standard fare and meat, boiled horse hocks, every third Saturday?

And what about those widows, wives of the disabled, and the disabled themselves? The white paper suggests that they will suffer an improvement in benefits. Starting in 1973. There goes another round of tremendous inflation. In 1973.

You'd almost think I had some misgivings about the white paper. I don't. It's almost as much fun as reading Alice in Wonderland. You'd almost think there were an election coming up, as one was when Mr. King introduced the baby bonus.

Surely the government isn't trying to distract us from the fact that unemployment is nearing the peak of the great depression. Say it isn't so, Pierre.

And speaking of the baby bonus, I wish I were young again. Babies used to be worth \$8 a month. Now they're worth \$16. Taxable. But it's also worth almost two cases of beer a month, per child. This is going to mean a great deal to the families who always put the baby bonus aside as beer money. Six kids, twelve cases.

However, it is the time of year to wish everybody joy, and I do so. Including all those poor devils who make \$10,000 a year (and take home \$7,300). They can't send their kids to college because the kids can't get a loan because their parents are making so much money.

No points for working your guts out for years. Full points for filling your guts, at someone else's table, for years.

"Of course," came the reply.

"Madam, you have just done away with Beethoven," the lady exclaimed.

But thank goodness, no one did and we have some of the world's greatest music from one of the world's surliest and vainest personalities. And there are around 800 different Beethoven record albums from which to choose.

Oh yes, Beethoven died of a liver ailment on March 26, 1827, a scant 143 years ago — during a thunderstorm.



### and Pepper by hartley coles

If sullen, pouting Ludwig von Beethoven's parents had pinned a label on him like Larry the Bee or some such other monicker we might never have had the world's most prolific musical genius.

But being products of their time when stiffness was the "in" thing, this typical German couple put real starch into their son's name with Ludwig, adding the Beethoven collar to complete the picture.

Anyone else would have smothered under that appellation but Beethoven kicked over the old traces and churned out music like some Bonn butchers turned out sausages.

You may wonder what this column is doing reaching into the classics when you are no doubt aware my musical education runs the gamut from the Boston Pops to the Coldstream Guards on Parade.

Well, it's this way — I've been exposed to Beethoven for the first time on my own initiative. And even with my tin ear for the classics I can see the genius of the man who turned out the Ninth Symphony.

A few months ago someone at our abode, with more culture in their little finger than I've got in my lengthy sacroiliac, brought home the Ninth.

I ignored the first few bars although there was some stirring music that shook up the blood. My interest increased as the record spun. By the time we had reached that glorious piece of music I call the Song of Joy, I was a Beethoven rooster.

A little late, I admit. They are celebrating the 200th anniversary of Ludwig's birth today (Wednesday) Dec. 16.

Unlike some of his famous contemporaries, Beethoven was recognized early as having extraordinary talent. He

received encouragement from two of the most famous composers of the day Mozart and Haydn, two other geniuses I always figured were stuffed shirts until I heard them in their proper setting by great artists.

Old Beethoven got to be a pretty surly piece of business so it is hard to understand how he could turn out such master-pieces as the Ninth — and the Fifth, his next most important symphony. It would be much like the town grouch turning out a score of music like the Happy Wanderer.

It has been said that trying to measure Beethoven's musical influence is like trying to assess the influence of Willy Shakespeare on English literature. Both men towered above their times.

You've seen those forbidding wood cuts of Beethoven hanging on walls, and staring out from books. They are enough to steer anyone away from a Beethoven fan club. But you'll remember even the Beatles were impressed with old Ludwig's music and they churned out Roll Over Beethoven in a sort of left handed salute to the world's greatest composer.

It is a good thing Beethoven came along when he did. He might never have made it in this day and age. He was deaf when he wrote his greatest works, suffered from ill health most of his life. Which might account for his personality.

We heard a story not too long ago concerning an abortion meeting where the pros and cons of doing away with the unborn was being discussed. One lady got up to say she thought all those with handicaps should be snuffed out before they had to face the harshness of the world.

The story goes on that another lady in the audience arose to ask if the lady would favor doing away with someone who was born deaf, syphilitic, diseased liver and so on.

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## Free Press Editorial Page

### Beginning of the end . . .

As the small turnout attests, voters did not get too enthused over the recent municipal elections. And for those who did take the time and the bother to use their ballot, there was no inclination to change the existing administration.

The Acton election saw the entire council of the last two years returned with the exception of the deputy-reveve who engaged in a two way race with Councillor McKenzie for the post and was defeated.

We congratulate the winners in all contests and offer losers in the contest a salute for making an election necessary. Although the margins of victory were substantial, figures also conveyed the impression there was a large body of support for those who went down to defeat.

Most voters decided they did not want to throw away many years of valuable experience by changing the make-up of the present council. Only Councillor-elect Norman Elliott will be

a new face around the council table over the next two years.

There will be many important issues to face over the next term, not the least of which could turn out to be the final phasing out of local autonomy, with the introduction of regional government.

However, we suspect the imminence of regional government in this area will hinge more on happenings at Queens Park in the next few months than on the aspirations of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The resignation of Premier John Robarts this month could postpone the entire program of regionalization until the results of an upcoming provincial election are ground out in the voting mills.

We'd be willing to bet the government will hesitate to impose regional government controls if there is the remotest chance it might be an unpopular decision. They'll need everything they've got going for them

in the next election.

Bulk of the present government's support in the province has come from the rural ridings where the formation of county school boards is still highly suspect, misunderstood and downgraded. Another unpopular decision coming on the heels of the school boards could swing traditional Tory support to one of the opposition parties.

Probably the biggest chore for the Acton councillors over the next two years, however, will be writing decisions from Queens Park over mundane municipal affairs like roads and housing projects, not the mechanics of the Halton-Peel region.

In any event, the new but more experienced council will have their work cut out for them guiding the destiny of the town over the next term of office, which could still very well be the end of municipal government as we know it today.

### Census to show mobility . . .

Are Canadians really as mobile as has been suggested? How many times have they moved from one municipality to another?

Next year's census of the country is clearly being designed to show exactly how mobile—and affluent—Canadians have become, says The Financial Post.

Market planners can count on substantial quantities of new information. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics also plans to make market-oriented area detail more quickly and widely available.

The questionnaire that goes into every third Canadian household will ask if you have color as well as black and white television in your home. It will also ask whether you have an automatic clothes dryer. On the other hand, you won't be asked if you have a radio or a washing machine, assuming just about everyone in Canada has.

Standard forms go to the other homes. They are shorter and less time consuming to answer.

For the first time you will be asked how many times you have moved from one Canadian municipality to another since June 1, 1966. This question is designed to give the first really accurate picture of how often Canadians move.

We suspect this is motivated by the picture in the United States. Statistics there show large numbers of Americans tend to look on the other side of the fence for greener grass. This is partly explained by the tremendous appeal of the southern U.S. — California, for instance — to those who live in the north.

There is a similar pull to British Columbia for Canadians but we doubt that it will ever reach the percentage figures it has in the United States.

Canadians seem more settled and less apt to pull up stakes than their itchy-footed American brethren. And perhaps this is a handicap for a country which is only creeping towards development of vast tracts of territory which contain tremendous wealth.

On the other hand this conservative outlook tends to stabilize the country and slow down the pace of living. People on the move, with no strong roots, can become like the itinerant fruit pickers — people without a strong voice in their own affairs. They are the new nomads of the 20th Century desert.

Statistics from next year's census should be enlightening for the Dominion Bureau of Statistics as well as those interested in the social and economic welfare of the Canadian people but we feel they will show the Canadian mosaic is unusual with no comparable antecedents to judge it by.

### Beginning to look like Christmas

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

All over Canada, Christmas lights are shining. What could be a more appropriate symbol of the season?

Christmas can be a mere escape—for some an event entirely without meaning—but for most of us the season helps to restore some of our faith in our fellow man.

Machines may be everywhere but Christmas reminds us that it is man who makes and operates them. Laws may rule us but it is man who makes the laws.

Every new thrust forward, or old values renewed, every dream that lifts us even briefly from our ruts, began in the hearts of men and women like ourselves. They have visions of a better life and the courage to promulgate them.

It takes the small things of the world to confuse the large ones. It took a small Babe in a cradle at Bethlehem to turn the world upside down.

We dare to believe that better and better tomorrows may even now be lying in the cradles of Canadian homes

as they once lay in a Bethlehem manger.

So the lights around town, the brilliant strands of bulbs which light up the countryside in a snowy oasis of color are symbols of the joy we can hold in our hearts at the most joyous season of the year.

### Off the cuff . . .

Adolescence is the age when the boys discover the girls, and the girls discover they've been discovered.

Drunk drivers bring families together! Sure — in hospital rooms and at funerals. Because that's where the drunk drivers' victims end up. Drunk drivers are involved in at least 25,000 deaths and 800,000 crashes every year, according to the Ontario Safety League.

Success is when you have your name in everything but the telephone directory.

Business prophets attempt to tell us what is going to happen. Business profits tell us what has happened.

Some wag has suggested that retirement is when you stop lying about your age, and start lying about the house.

## Free Press back issues

#### 20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, December 14, 1950.

#### 50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, December 16, 1920.

#### 75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, December 5, 1895.

For the first time in Halton's history the annual Warden's Dinner was held in Nassagaweya township in Brookville hall where Warden H. VanSickle, reeve of Nassagaweya, was host to about 200 guests.

Swimming classes at the Guelph Y got off to a good start on Tuesday last with 29 boys attending the first excursion. It is expected as many girls will be present for their turn. The project, featuring one trip each week, is organized by the Y's Men's club.

Last Sunday at Acton United church the service of communion was combined with a dedication service. The new communion service was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Wansborough in memory of their parents. A bible rest was the gift of the McNabb family in memory of their son Neil who was killed overseas. The Boyd family, now of Acton, presented a pulpit drape in memory of Mrs. Charles Mason. A new lecture hymnary was gift of Mr. and Mrs. Rae West while Miss Fern Brown presented to the church a pulpit hymnary and a set of communion table linen. The choir was wearing their new collars of cream satin for the first time.

Dublin Women's Institute celebrated its 25th anniversary at the home of Mrs. Watkins.

At the Sock Hop in the Y the spot dances were won by Donna Anderson and Alfred Spence, Pat Duval and Betty Kirkness. Helen Somerville and Caroline Galkes looked after the door. Donna Anderson, Betty Kirkness and Pat Duval did a spotless job of the dishes.

The concert in the Rockwood Town Hall under the auspices of St. John's Girls' Auxiliary was fairly well attended. Dr. Waller was M.C.

In order to facilitate the handling of Christmas mail Postmaster Matthews has arranged to keep the Post Office open until nine o'clock each day next week. The staff will deserve a Christmas box themselves.

More defective water mains have burst during the week.

At the last regular meeting of L.O.L. 467 officers elected were W.M., C.O. Plank; D.M., Herb L. Ritchie; Chaplain E. T. Theford; sec. sec. E. F. Kennedy; finance sec. H. Smethurst; treas. Wm. Cooper; D. of C. W. H. Walker; I. T., George Anderson; 1st L. E. Gamble; 2nd L. Robt. Scott; C. W. H. Smith, William Evans, Benj. Bayliss.

The order of service at the Methodist Sunday School next Sunday will be both unusual and interesting. A series of beautiful lantern slides will be shown by Mr. A. T. Brown and explained by a former member of the school, now resident in Toronto, Rev. Dr. Moore. The primary school graduates will receive their diplomas and the Christmas offering of White Gifts for the King in aid of the starving children of China will be received. The orchestra will render musical selections.

Don't forget the mistletoe. Romance still lives.

The water from the Flynn spring has been pronounced very satisfactory.

Christmas entertainments are the order of the day at the schools now.

A mysterious explosion on the front verandah of a newly-wed Italian couple in Guelph on Saturday blew to pieces every window.

Nearly three months has passed since there was a funeral in Acton, but last week the unusual experience of three in as many days was ours.

It is reported that steorage rates on Atlantic ships will be raised from \$15 to \$25 or \$28.

Acton Hockey Club officers were elected: Hon. Pres. Ed Guthrie; pres. Harry Jeans; secretary-treasurer J. C. Matthews; executive Fred Storey, Fred Smith and Fred Ryder.

The county council has not yet arrived at the conclusion that a House of Industry (or poor house) should be established in the county.

The early riser on Monday morning was rewarded with a beautiful sight. Branches which previously shivered in their wintry nakedness were clothed in the Frost King's feathery drapery. The scene resembled the old-fashioned winters our fathers talked about.

The Fire Brigade is now complete: Chief: John Cameron; 1st Lieut. J. J. Lawson; 2nd Lieut. R. B. Johnson; secretary-treasurer C. C. Henderson; engineer George McLennan; W. H. Walker, J. J. Pearson, W. L. Worden, L. Williams, C. Matthews, Robert Statham, John Warwick, Murray McDonald, Henry Bauer, Richard Cook, A. Ramshaw, T. Gibbons, Hos. Anderson, John Harvey, W. Anderson, A. Lawson, Jas. McLann, J. A. Speight, Geo. Soper, J. Agnew, W. Forbes, D. McDonald, J. Wilson, J. H. Matthews, Jno. Evans, A. E. Gurney, Fred Ryder.

Paderewski was paid \$5,500 for his last recital. Who wouldn't braid and frizzle his hair for that?