

Angus McEachern is real "old-time" farmer

by Jennifer Barr
Are there any real old-time farmers left in this most progressive semi-suburb of Canada's largest metropolis? Not the food factory farmer or the hard working producer

with a half-million dollars invested in machinery and real estate. But the small farmer who has time to smell the flowers.
Fortunately, there are more than you may think.

Most of them are older men and women, nearing retirement, without massive mortgages. People who have seen a lifetime of changes and who have gained a wisdom from it.

Just such a farmer is Angus McEachern whose family has lived on their RR 2 farm since the 1840's. The hundred acre farm situated on the Fifth Line of Erin north of Highway 7 doesn't look like a food factory. The small farm house sports a new white siding coat and an old summer kitchen. The barn is a weathered compact cattle byre with more alleyways than stalls. The garage probably used to shelter a Model T and the wee house out back lists to the right.
And it doesn't feel like a food factory. The animals are friendly with licks and the McEacherns invite you in to have tea by the wood stove.

had a string of colts nobody got around to selling. Mrs. McEachern recalls many a time the neighbours would be treated to the sight of old Polly ambling down the road for a visit trailing her family of colts - the weanling, the yearling, the two-year-old and so-on.
"If I was younger, I wouldn't be feeding cattle, I'd love to have a good mare," muses Mr. McEachern.

travel the same route cutting wood for stoves and furnaces. "Sometimes I sawed wood for six weeks at a time."
With all this, Mr. McEachern still had his own chores to do, feeding stock and milking the Holsteins for his cream contract.
During the summer, he made hay until threshing time rolled around in late July.

With members of the Steam Club, Mr. McEachern travels quite a bit and visits steam shows. He's been to the 'old country' (Scotland) twice, to the States and Manitoba.

and their eagerness to have a head rubbing.
Is there a future?
And McEachern doesn't know what's to become of farmers.

The shed and basement are lined with neatly stacked split logs, but Mr. McEachern can't hire a man to help him cut it.
"Things are terrible out of balance when you have your own heat and can't afford to use it."
But things aren't all bad when three farms in a row are still owned by the families who settled them in the 1840's.
Next door to the McEacherns are the century farms of Robert Kerr and Bruce Leitch.
"It's wonderful how three families could stay so long neighbours," says Angus McEachern the man who has been a "real farmer" all his life and always will be.



"THE ALLEN COW," a special friend of Angus McEachern, has produced calves for many years. A Holstein-Hereford cross, the cow is the best stock cow he's ever had, claims Mr. McEachern. The Acton farmer has farmed his century farm all his life.

Cows are pets
Angus McEachern sits in his overalls and favourite chair letting the conversation flow over him until the subject of his cattle is broached.
"Oh, they're all pets," he grins, his face lighting up and with a glow belying his 70-odd years. "There's too many of them."

He talks of the "Allen cow", a Holstein he bought at a sale some seven years ago.

"I had her home a week and she gave me the prettiest little Hereford heifer you ever saw. She looked straight Hereford, never had a black calf, best stock cow I ever had."

Mr. McEachern still has that cow and most of her offspring. He now has 33 head of mixed Hereford cattle, 12 of which will have to go to market by spring so Mr. McEachern can keep the herd within limits.

Cattle are the only livestock on the farm these days but Mary McEachern, Angus' sister-in-law who keeps house for him, remembers days when the farm boasted some fine Percheron horses, 12 to 14 milk cows, pigs and chickens.

Every one of those animals was a pet. The McEachern children were always tucking chickens under their arms for cuddles. Mr. McEachern's favorite dog rode the tractor with him in all weather. Polly, the Percheron mare,

Custom thresher
Not only was Mr. McEachern a full time farmer but he was also a custom thresher for 50 years, travelling the local countryside threshing the grain farmers had cut, stooked, harvested and stored in their barns. McEachern, his old steam thresher and separator, threshed grain for a radius of six or seven miles every year, taking five or six months to do it.

"Some times we were still threshing at Christmas," he remembers.

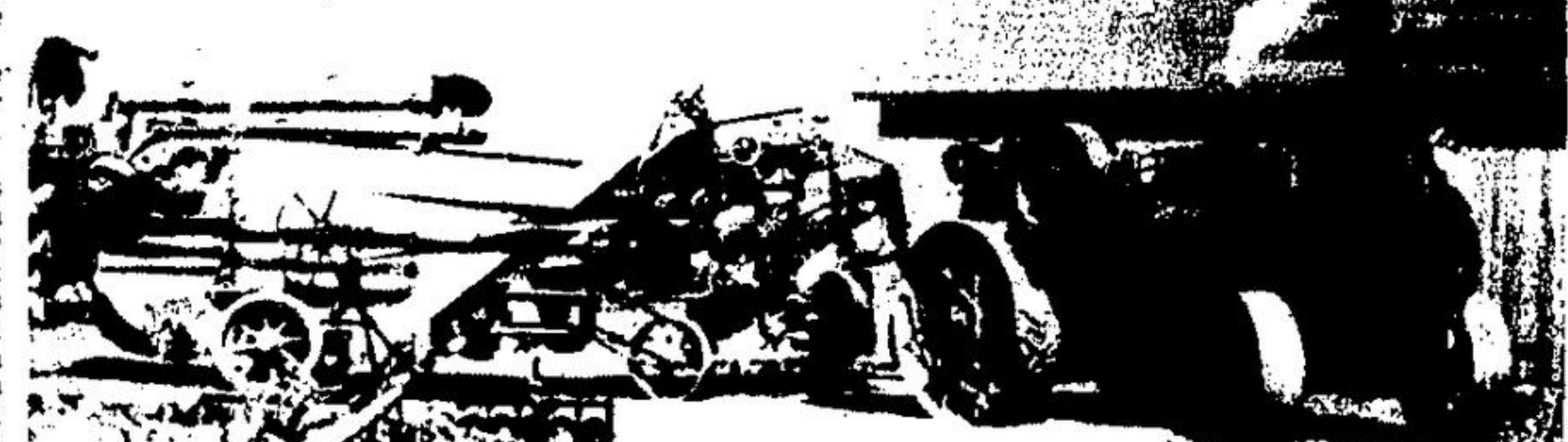
"There's hardly a house (locally) he hasn't slept in or eaten at," adds Mrs. McEachern.

For a half a day or perhaps three days Mr. McEachern stayed with each family eating the huge meals laid out on plank tables. He loved his George White outfit of a 1921 engine and separator ten years younger. He still has the separator but the big old steam engine has been sold "probably for scrap," says McEachern.

Change to gas
He changed to gas powered thresher in 1938 but likes the steam much better. He had to go to gasoline. He says too many barns burned down and farmers blamed the sparks from the wood fired steam engine.

Fuel didn't cost McEachern anything in those days because the farmer always had a pile of wood for him to use.

When threshing was done, Angus McEachern would pick up his old circular saw and



BACK TO THE GOOD old days when threshing was done by steam engine. Angus McEachern used this George White thresher and separator for custom threshing in 1935 when his picture was taken at Crewsons Corners on the farm of Alec MacDonald. Angus and his brother John ran the 14 year old engine until 1938 when a gasoline machine took over.

MP Frank Philbrook

Key issues in '77

Greed could lead to the end of some of our democratic ways according to Liberal MP Frank Philbrook. In a recent interview Philbrook said that wage and price controls are expected to come off in April but could be implemented once again if business and organized labor do not act responsibly.

Office, it could remain a branch of government. It could become a crown corporation or the whole works could be turned over to private enterprise.

Asked what effect his stand against the government cuts on public transit would have on a possible promotion, Philbrook said he really didn't know.

Philbrook noted the danger of turning it to private enterprise would be facing a lower level of service or no service at all in some areas of the country.

Referring to the recent scandal involving the Mounties, Philbrook noted the general public reaction seems to be that individuals who stepped out of line should be dealt with but the Mounties as a force should be encouraged to do their job.

Philbrook noted unemployment will continue to be a problem during this year. "The government has just about reached a point where it can't spend any more to provide jobs but rather depend on private enterprise to provide the jobs."

The MP said the economy is now and is likely to be the main issue for the federal government during 1978. He explained the unity issue has taken a second place to the economy but at some point the unity issue will be brought to the forefront.
Looking at the economic situation on a world wide basis Philbrook explained Canada will have to take an active role in assuring the gap between the have and have not countries in the world doesn't spread too far apart. Just as the country will have to provide aid for poorer parts of Canada similar aid will have to be found for poorer nations.

According to Philbrook by making the Post Office a crown corporation it would tidy up the operation.

Philbrook indicated that the predictions of some experts would see the number of jobs outstrip the number of people able to work by the early 1980s.

At the riding level Philbrook sees public transit and Unemployment Insurance Commission problems as being key problems for Halton people.

Philbrook balked at the government stand on urban transit last year and after a number of Liberal backbenchers supported his stand some funds were released.

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