

## Acton farm interests visitor from Ireland

Ask most Canadians what they'd show an overseas visitor and the answers would range from Niagara Falls to the CN Tower. When Ben McCartney of Glengormley in Northern Ireland was asked what he wanted to see, his answer was a Canadian farm. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Linham who farmed 100 acres on Lot 25 Concession 5 since 1950, came to this reporter's rescue and Mr. McCartney got to see a dairy farm last week.

Mr. McCartney says he gave up trying to make a living from the 26-acre family farm near Belfast about 10 years ago but still misses it. At one time he milked a dozen head of short-horn cattle by hand, although he had a milking machine before he became a part-time farmer. He now runs a suckling herd of beef cattle and a

few pigs and works as a landscape gardener.

"The Irish farmer spends far too much on farm buildings," he says. "They get a big government grant on them, 40 to 50 per cent I think it is, but they have a machine shed, several pig houses, two or three cattle barns and a calf shed. It's a good set up but it costs them a small fortune."

Since cattle are only kept indoors to prevent them tramping the fields to pieces during the wet winter weather, there is no need for the protective type of structures we have in Canada. Stable cleaner was new to Mr. McCartney since barns were cleaned by hand on his farm. Most cattle are housed in lying courts with slat floors. The droppings fall through into a pit below which is cleaned annually by a man with a tank truck along the lines of our septic tank cleaners, he says.

Irish farmers use grass silage almost exclusively. Mr. McCartney says. The silage is cut and immediately blown into wagons similar to those used in Canada, but there is no system for unloading them as Canadian farmers have. The silos are all pits, roughly 60 feet square by 20 feet deep with sloping sides. The wagons are dumped like a dump truck and the silage is spread around the pit with a backrake. Feeder racks are put along the edge of the pit and the cattle help themselves. As the silage is eaten up the rack is moved into the pit.

Meal such as Mr. Linham mixes with his own grain, is so expensive Irish farmers don't

use it, Mr. McCartney says. He recently paid eight pounds for 100-weight of turkey meal, and cattle feed prices are roughly the same. In Canadian money it would be about \$20.

Trying to compare that price with what Canadian farmers would pay for a similar product proved very confusing since we are now using the metric ton, but Mr. Linham felt it "sounds high" by our prices, considering that his last purchase of 38 per cent concentrate to mix with his own grain cost him \$300 a metric ton.

The price of dairy cattle in Canada came as a surprise to Mr. McCartney because he had not expected it to be so high.

"We pay around 600 pounds for a good dairy cow and Mr. Linham says the Canadian price is \$1,500 to \$1,600," Mr. McCartney said. "That's almost the same. I don't know why I expected them to be cheaper here. Maybe it's because dairy cattle were pretty scarce for a while when they first started testing for brucellosis and so many cattle were destroyed. We still get outbreaks of it every once in a while and a whole herd will have to be destroyed."

Mr. Linham's pipeline milker and system for weighing the amount of milk each cow gives came as no surprise to Mr. McCartney. Even though he didn't have one himself, the system is common to the larger dairy operations in northern Ireland, he says. Bulk cooling tanks are also used by Irish farmers. However, the similarity ends there. While Mr. Linham had to

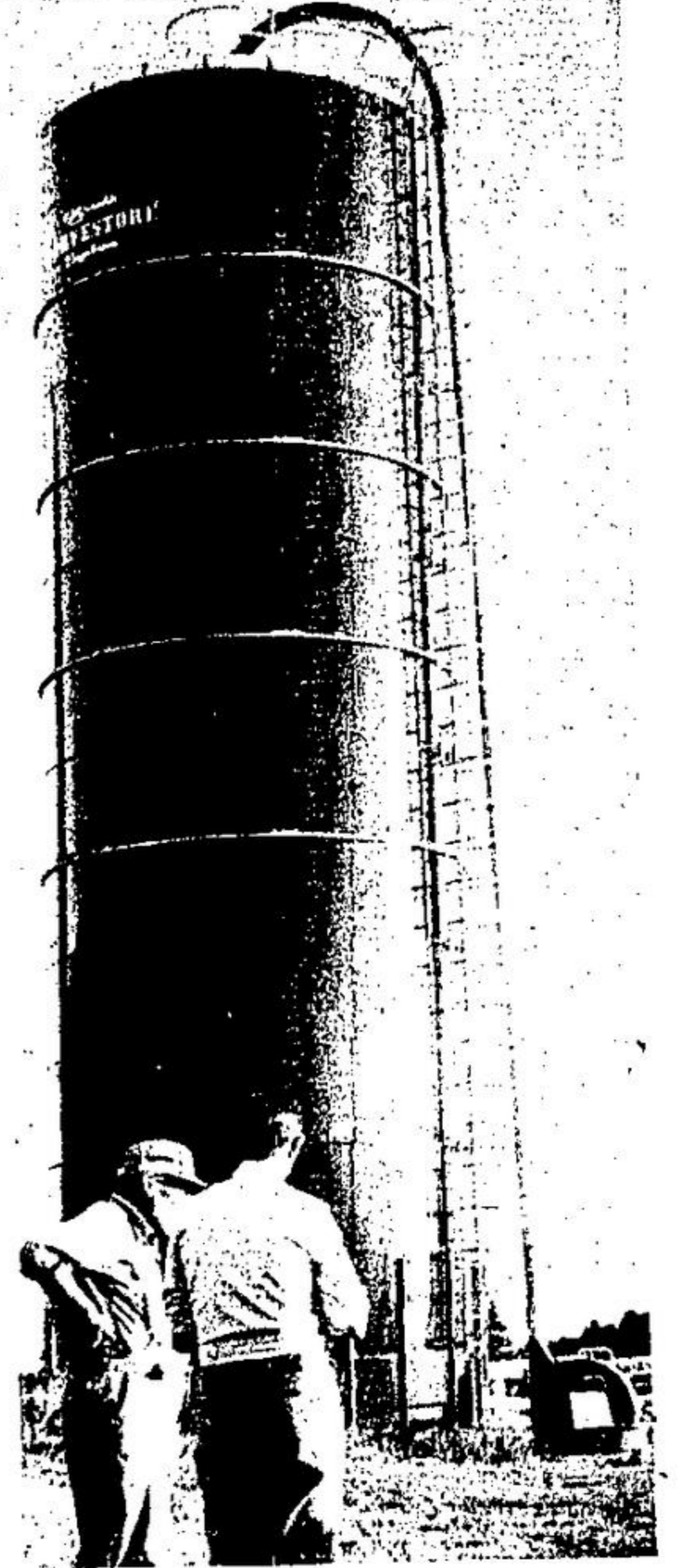


WALTER LINHAM AND BEN MCCARTNEY

buy his own tank, an Irish farmer can rent a portable one from the milk marketing board. The tank truck comes to the Linham farm every other day to pick up the milk. In Ireland the farmer would haul his portable tank to the road and the truck from the dairy will pick the milk up daily. While the Linham's milk will be transported to Toronto, the Irish farmer's milk will only go five or six miles to the dairy. The fact that the distance from farm to dairy is so short is the reason why milk can be collected daily in his country, Mr. McCartney says.

Sweet milk as the Irish refer to whole milk, is the only thing in farming that is paying well at this time, he says. Farmers make in the neighbourhood of \$1 a gallon.

Again the difference between the Canadian and Irish systems made nonsense of efforts to make accurate comparisons. Irish farmers are paid by the gallon while Canadian farmers are paid by the hundred weight. On top of that, Canadians get one price for the milk they sell, up to the limit of their quota set by the Ontario Milk Marketing Board, and a



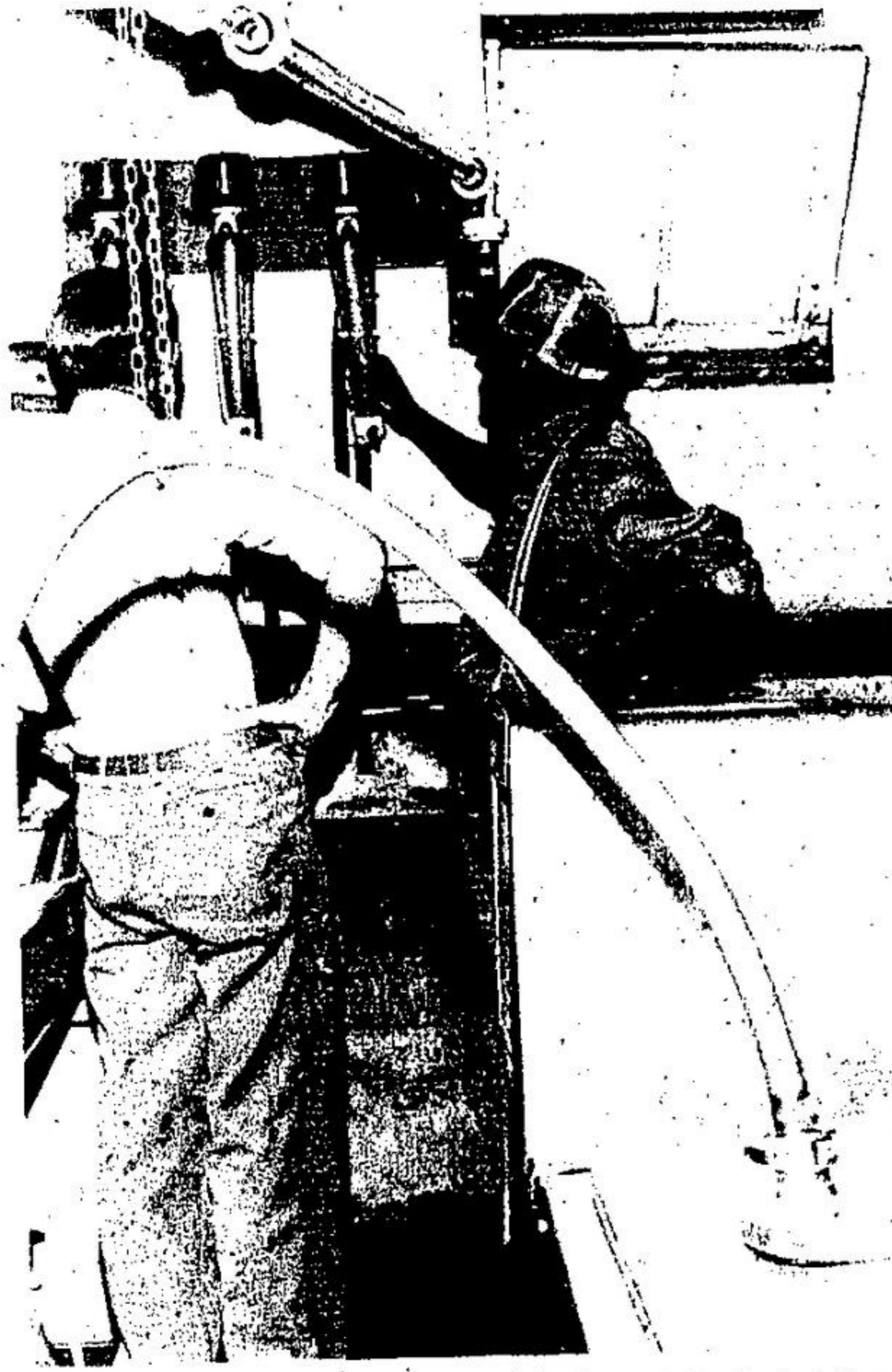
Silos such as the Linhams use to store their corn silage are unknown in Ireland. Mr. Linham explains how the silage is blown into the silo from the wagon.



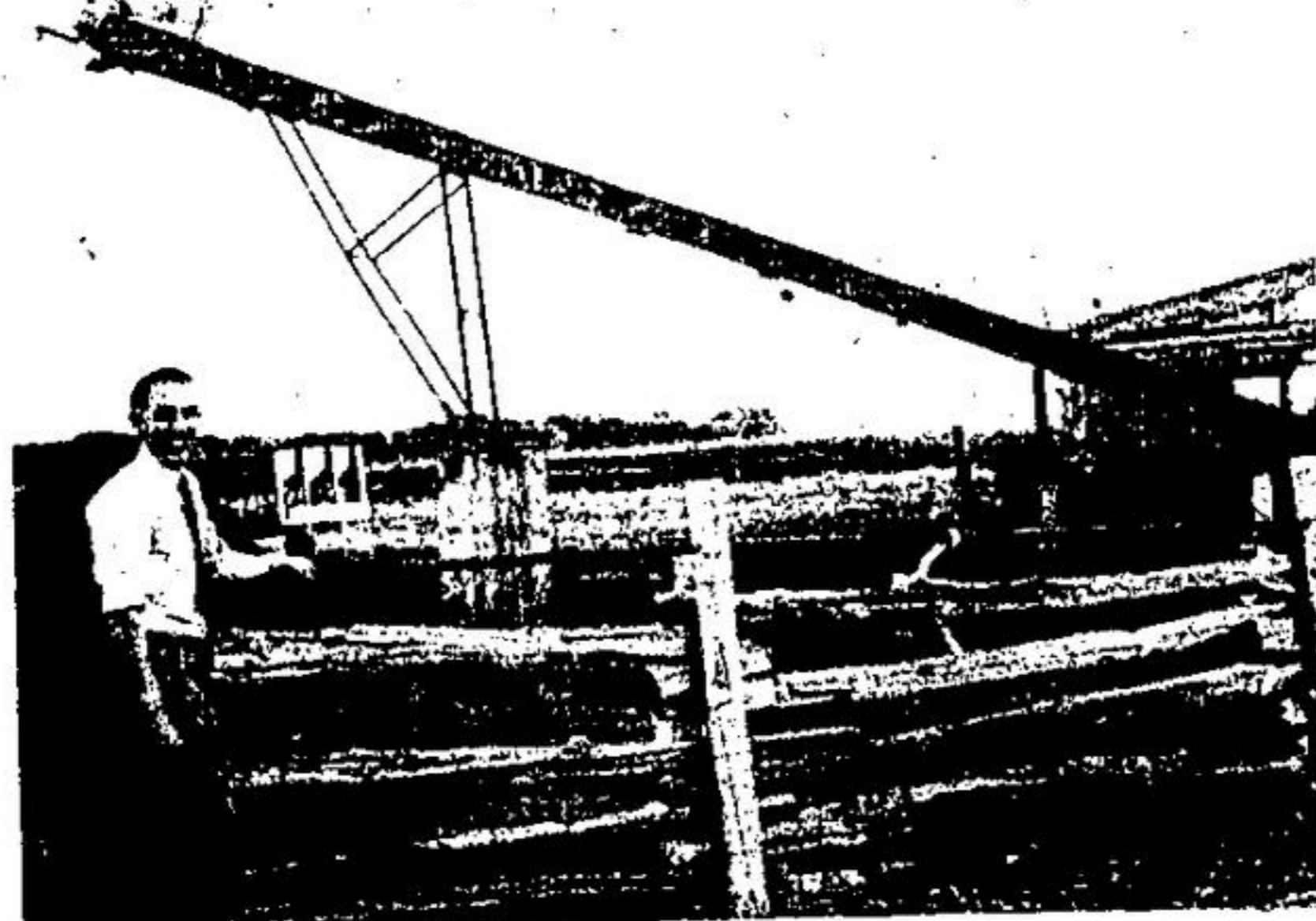
Mr. McCartney examines Linham's corn.

# the HERALD

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Mr. Linham shows Mr. McCartney how the milk is weighed for each cow during milking. The hose in the foreground takes the milk from the pipeline into the bulk cooler. Milk goes from the cow to the dairy without human handling in the Linham's operation.

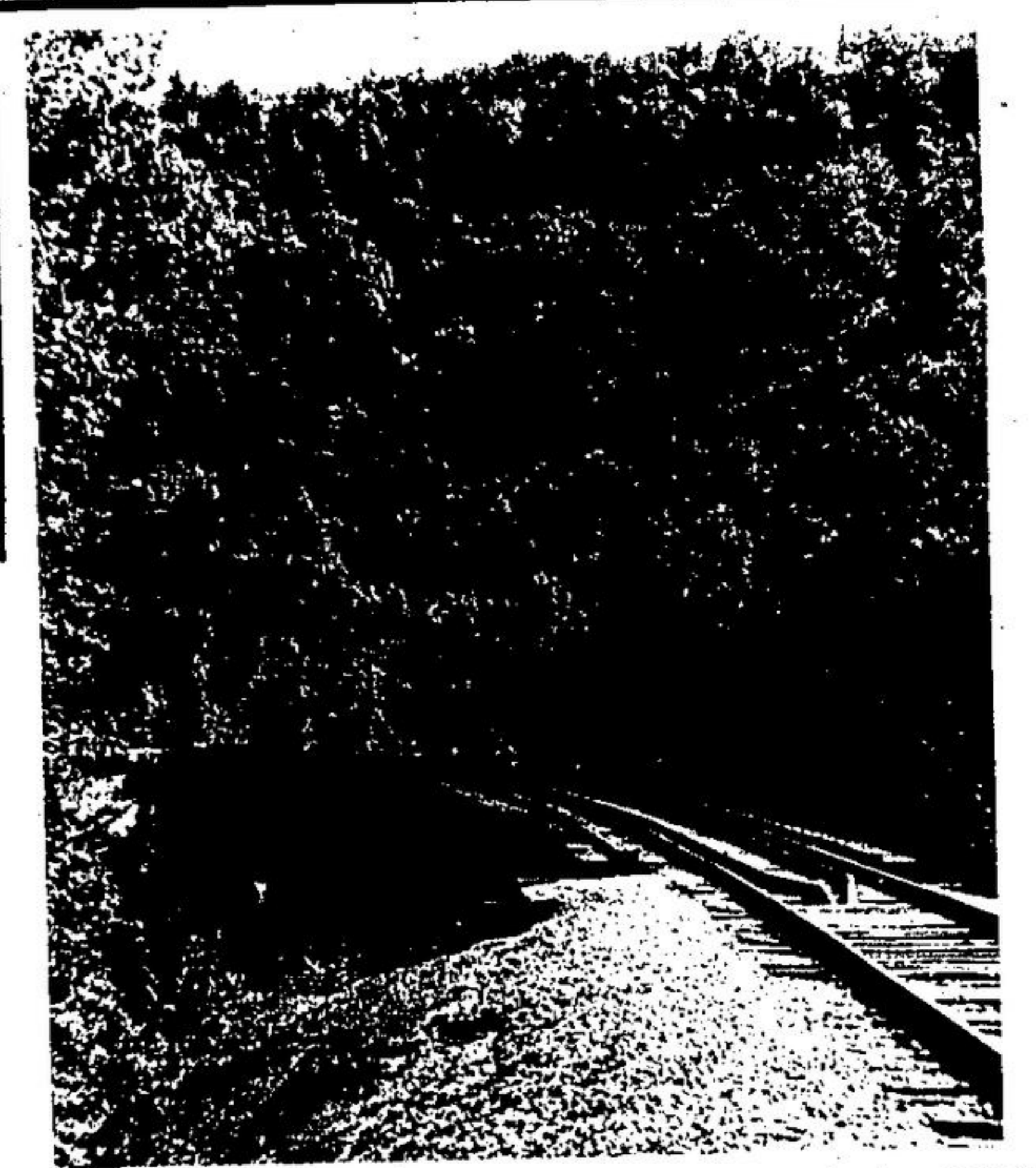


Stable cleaners are another piece of equipment unknown to Irish farmers. Mr. McCartney admits the invention which is such an improvement over the shovel and wheelbarrow with which he cleaned his barns.

## Credit River attracts tourists year-round



The Niagara Escarpment, with its rocks and rivers, flora and fauna, is a photographer's dream, with something for everybody's taste. The area is particularly popular in the fall, when people from miles around come to capture the fall colors on film.



This trestle at the Forks of the Credit in Caledon is one of the few trestles where you won't meet a train halfway.



The view from the trestle at the Forks of the Credit includes this three-storey house at the water's edge, almost hidden by the trees which line the river bank. The neutral coloring and the older style of architecture enable the building to fit in well with its surroundings.



Every fisherman has his favorite spot, where the fish are so plentiful, they almost jump out of the water in their anxiety to be hooked. So how do you account for the fact that your fishing trips always end with a steak dinner?

Story and photos  
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