

They Fly for Seals off Magdalen Islands

By Merle Gunby

Each spring since the middle of the eighteenth century ships have been congregating along our eastern coasts to participate in the annual seal hunt. More recently, aircraft have joined the hunt.

Douglas Green of R.R. 2 Milton, who is a commercial helicopter pilot, has participated in this hunt for the past three years. In 1962 he operated a helicopter from one of the sealing ships. This year Mr. Green, in partnership with George Paton of Markham, a fixed wing aircraft pilot, conducted a sealing expedition based on the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Hunters Hired

There eleven Ontario men on their crew, and this reporter was lucky enough to be one of them. This expedition, which was based near Fatima on the Magdalen Islands, operated four fixed wing aircraft and four helicopters. Experienced men from the Magdalen were hired to do the actual hunting or "sealing".

The season opened on March 5 and poor weather conditions plagued the expedition from then until the end of the hunt. On the first day, for example, the helicopter was forced down on the ice flow by freezing rain, we

spent a very uncomfortable hour or so trying to clear the bubble (Windshield) and rotor blade of ice. Then we only managed to find our way back to shore, through fog, with some difficulty.

Some Road

Of our four airplanes that took off at daybreak that day, one crew managed to find their way back about one p.m. Another had to land at the north east tip of the island about 30 miles from our base, and arrived home through the kindness of the local minister; who drove them home "The Road". There were snow banks piled up to 10 feet high on both sides of the road one car width apart with two wheel ruts in the middle. Driving was much simplified, however, as all the driver had to do once the car was on the road was to tramp the accelerator... it was impossible for the car to leave the road!

The other two crews spent the day watching the foul weather from an ice pan about thirty miles from shore. Just before nightfall the fog cleared enough for them to make a dash for home. Ten minutes after they landed the fog settled in in earnest.

This is just an example of one



LOADING SEAL PELTS aboard a Cessna 180 aircraft, one of four operated by the Green and Paton crews.

—Photo by W. Merle Gunby

day's flying conditions — I could go on.

Slippery Landing

The aircraft were operating on skis so once they touched down on the ice, the pilot had very little control over what happened until the plane stopped. As a result, accidents were frequent; damaged aircraft were a more or less common sight scattered on the ice. Mr. Green and Mr. Paton only had two planes with minor damages — both managed to arrive back to Markham for repairs.

We used the fixed wing aircraft to move the men out near the seal herds on the ice fields, up to 30 miles off shore; then the helicopter shuttled men and pelts to and from the killing area, among the rough ice and the planes. The planes then carried the pelts to shore where the fur buyer from New York purchased them.

Still a Success

Despite the poor weather conditions, I understand that Mr. Green and Mr. Paton consider the expedition a success. No doubt, come next spring the call of adventure and the chance for profit will lure them back to that wind-swept island.

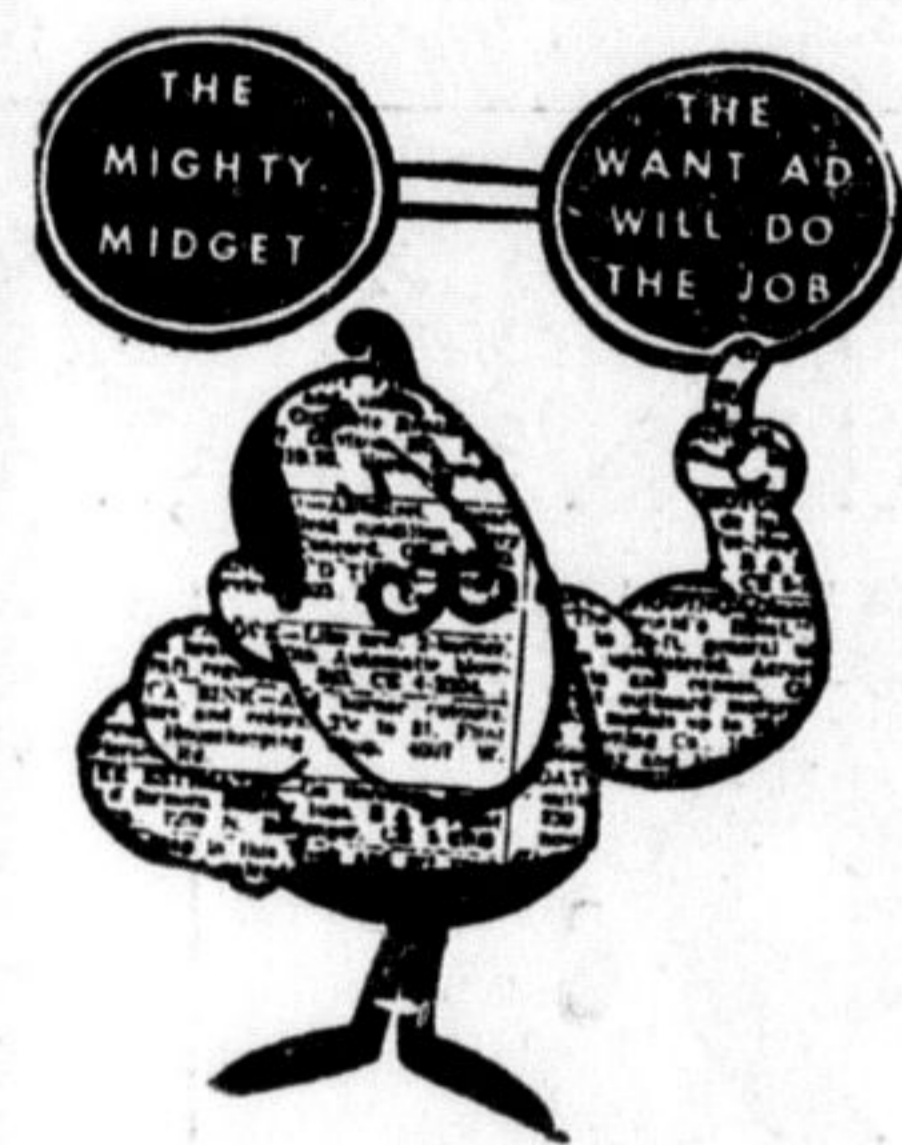
Each year there is a terrific uproar about the cruelties of the seal hunt. These animals are killed instantly by a blow on the head. There is no chance that animals could be skinned and left on the ice not yet dead, as some reports have suggested! The impression that I was left with, rather than cruelty was one of brutality and degradation, something reminiscent of the slaughter house — sirloin anyone?

Declines 60 Per Cent

There is one very real danger to the seal herds though, that of over kill. An article in the spring issue of the Canadian Audubon

Magazine points out that a survey conducted by the Canadian Fisheries Research Board, shows that the seal population has declined over 60 per cent in the last ten years! This, is something to become alarmed about, rather than a lot of sentimental slush about killing baby seals. So called "sport" fishing and hunting seems to me much more cruel. As a naturalist, I believe that to threaten any species of our natural world with extinction is a thoughtless, needless, tragic crime! I also believe that a harvest of pelts can be taken without reducing the seal population needlessly, if international organizations will place controls on the sealing industry to limit the kill and insure that a sufficient number of seals escape to maintain

the overall population of the herds.



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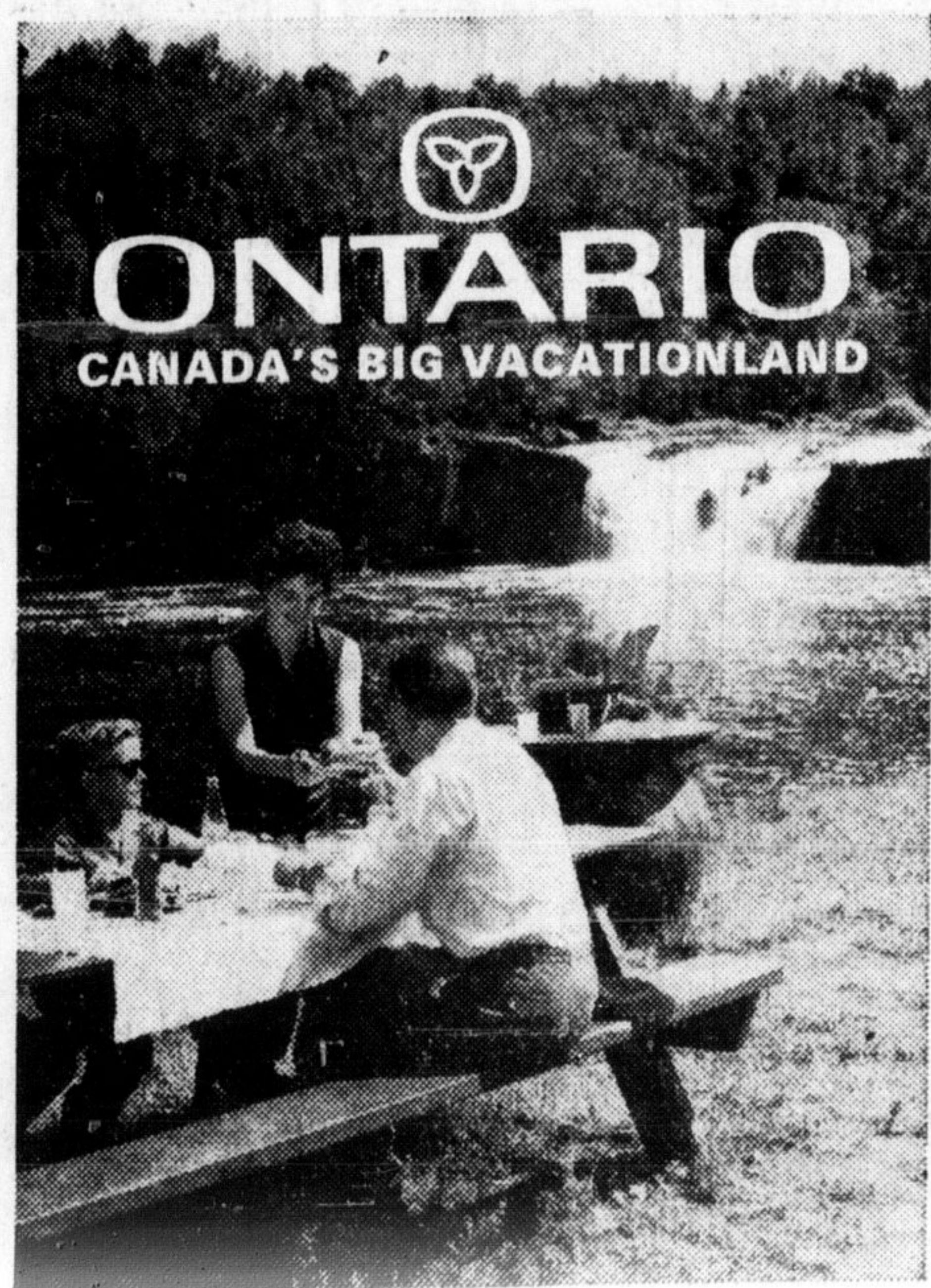
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—Photo by W. Merle Gunby

DOUGLAS GREEN of R.R. 2 Milton, pilots a helicopter, transferring a load of seal pelts from among the rough ice pans to a larger pan where the fixed wing aircraft picked them up and flew them to shore on the Magdalen Islands.



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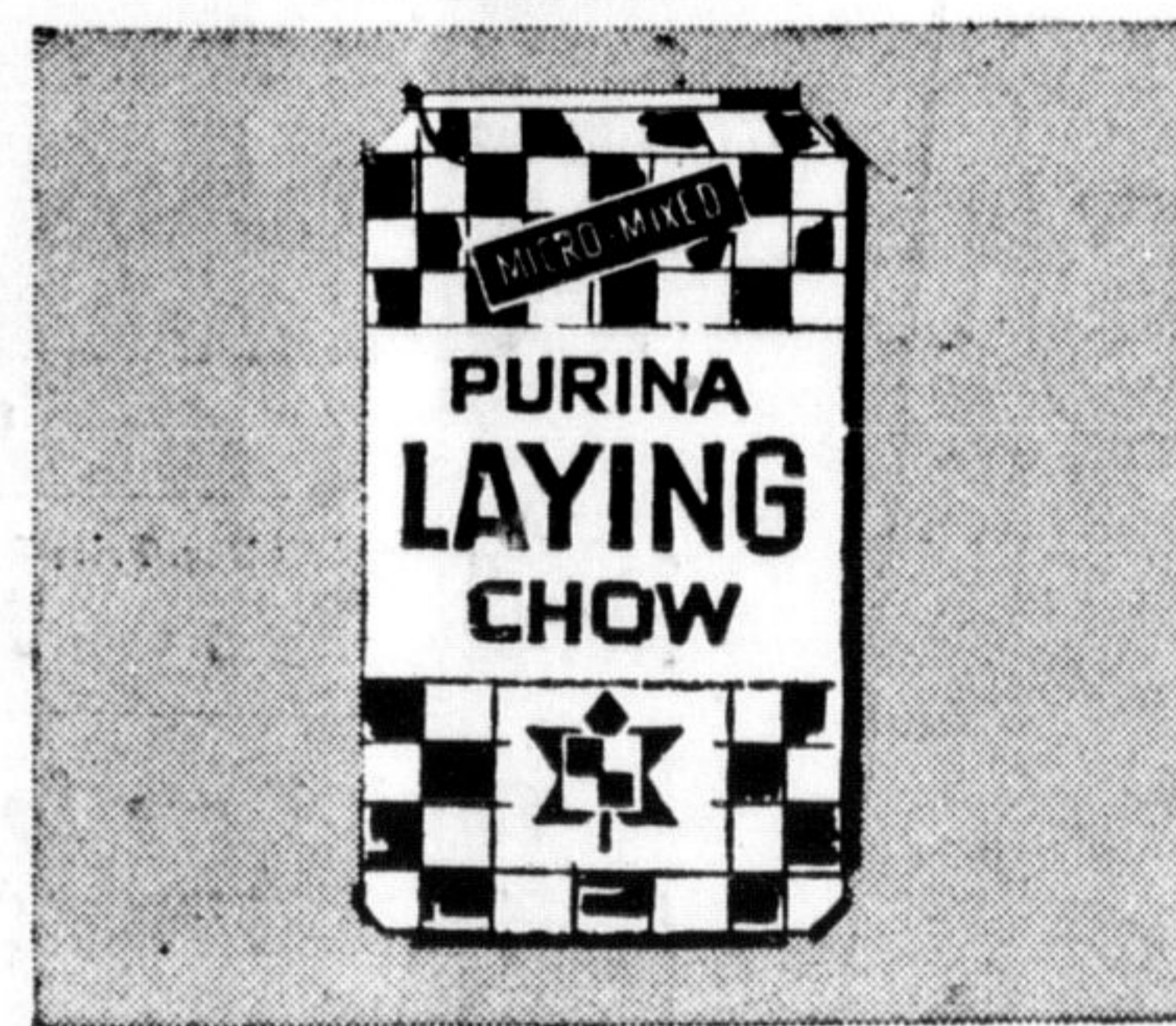
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Library Notes

By LIBRARIAN MISS E. BRAUN

This is farewell to the old home of Milton Public Library and greetings to the new site — in Adams Store. It is a time for retrospect and also for a forward look.

Goodby, old home for the library. You had, like everything else in this old world — faults, and good points too. You housed many good books. That was most important. With an unattractive entrance, one that served as a catchall for debris on a windy day, and 15 cement steps leading to your door below street level, you were still able to entice readers within your hold, to mine the treasures you housed.

On bitter cold wintry days you were snug and warm — too warm often 90 degrees in sub-zero weather. And on hot, sultry summer days, you were always cool, in the basement of the town hall. And there never was danger of the floor collapsing with the weight of the books. Depending on the direction of the wind, you could be drafty for the windows might blow open with a bang. There never was danger of the roof leaking, but there was danger of floods.

And greetings to the newly renovated Adams Store. The library board has done its utmost to make this a pleasant, attractive

home for the library — the best they could do in lieu of a new library. And your library is now on street level, and is no longer hidden (signs and all) as it formerly was. And it houses many good books, both old and new, for your information and pleasure.

Visit your new library in its new premises. There must be many unanswered questions in everyone's life. Books can supply the answer to most of these, if you read them. Now every question ends with a question mark — ? which has a hook on

4-H Lassies

The sixth meeting of the 4-H Lassies was held at Boston Church, with 19 girls present. Mrs. French showed the girls a fitted blouse. Mrs. Cossom, Home Economist, talked about the Achievement Day plans.

The seventh meeting of the Scotch Block Lassies was held at the home of Mrs. Irving. There were 19 girls present and they discussed problems they had with their blouses. The girls worked on their samples for their record books.

it, if you put out enough hooks, you will gather valuable information in Your Library.

E. Braun, Librarian

sew your own fashions



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Fashion is going soft — with the gentlest, most feminine look we've seen in years. Abetting the return to this happy state of affairs is the gentle cling of silk and the pretty details that go with it: pliant bows and rippling ruffles, a softly curving cowl. All subtle indications of new romance in fashion.

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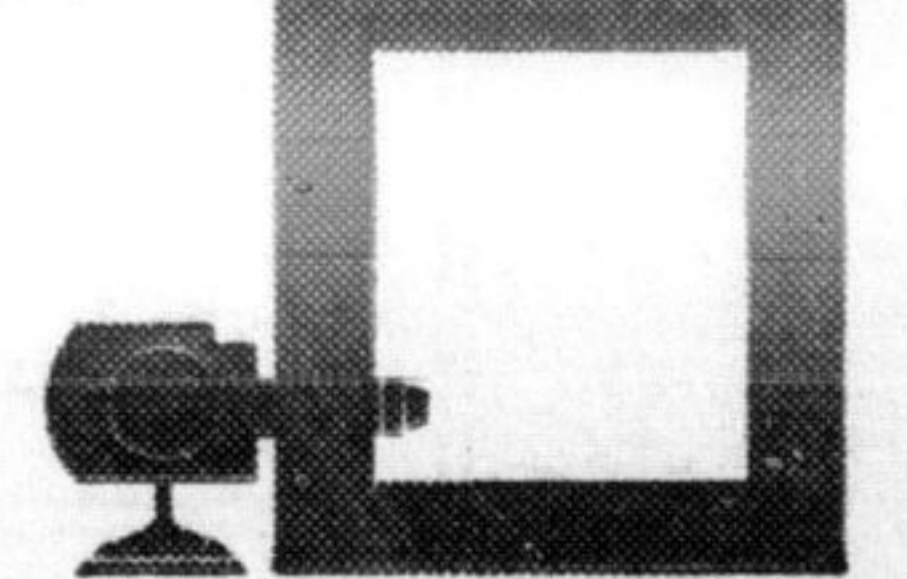
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