The Quints: the compelling drama of Canada's international stars

by Shirley Whittington Pierre Berton has another winner in The Dionne Years, a well researched and superbly organized account of the early life and hoopla surrounding the Dionne Quintuplets-the five little girls that put Callander, Ontario on the

Berton estimates that the Dionne sisters were a \$500 million asset to the Province of Ontario in the middle thirties. The Quints, at the height of their popularity were international stars of the first magnitude-and the stars came to Callander to see them. Bette Davis made the trip, and so did Alexander Woollcott. Amelia Earhart made the

trip too, five weeks before

her ill fated round-the-

The very survival of the

little girls was a miracle.

At birth they were so tiny

that all five were kept in a

butcher's basket, covered

with heated blankets in

front of the wood stove.

Dr. Dafoe, insisted that

they not be handled for

the first few days after their birth, and that the

temperature inside their

padded basket be kept constant and high. This

very sensible advice

probably saved their

world flight.

their playground. Affects of isolation How did this isolation the famous babies.

affect the children?

Berton's book details the guardianship and financial arrangements that were made after the Quints' birth. He also tells of the intrigues that went on behind the nursery walls, and the growing reft between Dr. Dafoe and the children's

Dafoe, who caught the imagination of the world as an overworked, unpretentious and omniscient country doctor who cared little for money is revealed as racist, demanding, publicity-seeking and certainly not penniless.

were brought up very much as royal children and in 1936, everybody thought they would live like royal some day they would have to go out into the world, unprotected and unescorted. They were never taught the simplest of household skills. They had no idea of money Dry skin is an awf il liar! It moisture level and lubricate its management. Their makes any woman look much social skills were non- older than her real age. When existent since they played you rid your face of skin dryness

only with each other.

unable to relate to a alone in her Montreal totally foreign en- apartment of a blood clot The Dionne Quintuplets vironment. When the five on the brain. fared no better.

Annette still live in the Emilie suffocated to Montreal suburb of St. death during an epileptic Bruno. Cecile works in a seizure in a convent near supermarket to support Ste. Agathe. Marie, after her children. Her a disastrous attempt to marriage has failed, as run a flower shop, has that of her sister separated from her Annette, who lives a

He made a small fortune they were nine years old, husband. She began to meagre life, supporting from his association with but found themselves drink heavily, and died her four children on the monthly interest from her

Yvonne never married, finally left home, they Cecile, Yvonne and and lives a hermit-like existence with her only outings consisting of trips to the local library where she does volunteer work.

book, which is full of the flavour of those depression times. For those who are too young to have experienced

"Quint fever," the book will provide a glimpse

Pierre Berton's The into the unsophisticated famous babies, or who the Dionne Years will Dionne Years is an thirties. And for those were encouraged to keep make fascinating enormously readable who drove miles to see the scrap books of the Quints, reading

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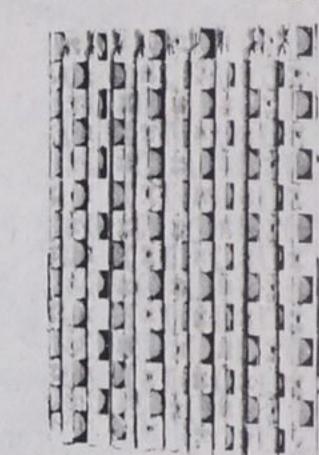
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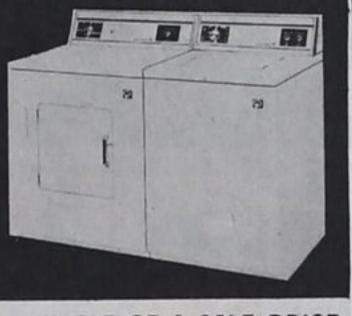
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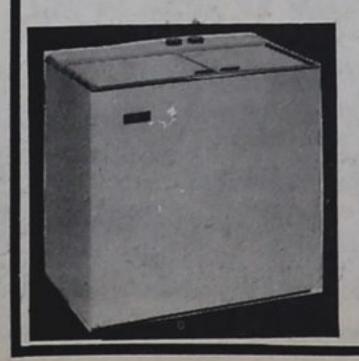
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