Former Burma Forester Remembers:

When Elephants, Snakes, Tigers Shared His Backyard

By MARY DAWSON

Rudyard Kipling wrote a song "On the road to Mandalay, where the flying fishes play", destined to become the favourite concert piece of male soloists for several decades.

But L. H. Baker, a new resident of Richmond Hill who spent 25 years in Burma, notes that although Kipling spent many years in India he did not visit Mandalay in neighbouring Burma.

Exactly 60 years ago, Mr. and was built almost entirely Baker first stood in the palace of teak wood. The king's palace of the last kings of Burma and the monasteries were decorthere. Returning from the Boer ated with highly ornate carving War, where he had served with and in the case of the former the Welsh Mounted Brigade, crimson lacquer and gold leaf he was offered a job in the teak were used freely.

King Mim Doon Min decided forests of Upper Burma. In those days, he explained on this new city and as a resto this reporter, the Union ult decreed that 150,000 people Jack flew over Fort Dufferin should evacuate their homes in and the 89th Punjabis and a the old capital city of Ava, movcompany of British troops help- ing about 10 miles east, still on ed keep Mandalay the pleasant the east bank of the Irrawady, grees in the shade. It was no tribes from different sections of beasts," reported Mr. Baker, bring some of these stories to to Mandalay. place it was. MODERN CITY A point of interest to Canad-

Mr. Baker said that thous- ians is the fact that the Marquis ands have sung Kipling's "Road of Dufferin and Ava, former tal of the Burmese kings until his short stay in Mandalay more Kalewa was overrun by the to Mandalay" but it's surpris- Governor-General took as a part 1885 when King Thebaw and than any occasion of his entire Japanese during World War II. ing how few can say where that of his title the name of a city his Queen Supaya surrendered Indian tour. romantic city lies on the world's once the capital of the kings of to the British and went into Referring again to Kipling's Contrary to one American The city, most beloved by the coast of India.

author, Mandalay is not an an- Burmese, with its tall Arakan cient city and could never com- Pagoda and the huge Hpoongyi pare with the splendid cities of the Mogul emperors, Mr. Baker, memory of Mandalay who knew it well explains.

Pagoda and the huge Hooongyi ROYAL VISIT

For Mr. and Mrs. Baker, the brightest memory of Mandalay was the visit in 1920 of the soldier, come you back to Man-

PAYING BILLS

It was founded in 1857 by the little to commend it. last but one of the Burmese Situated in the dry zone of of Wales. rulers, King Mim Doon Min, Burma, its annual rainfall is Attending a dinner, in his variety, were always rather Richmond Hill High School

who knew it well, explains.

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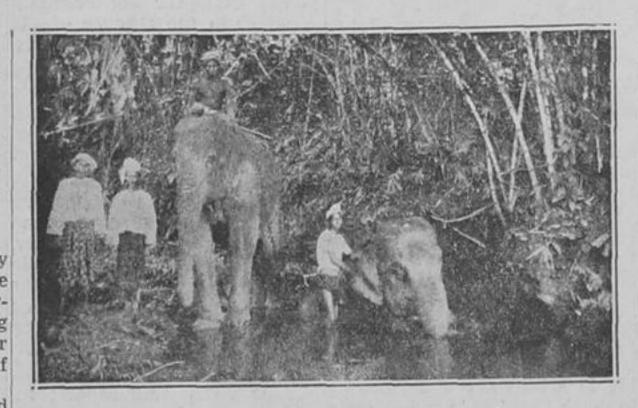
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ROYAL VISIT

Climatically Mandalay has was the visit in 1920 of the of Windsor, then Prince lary behaviour of Mr. Thomas School Courses

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stranger to plague, Mr. Baker the country. They also recall "and we lost three dogs to them. our readers in the future. it was reported at the time the I actually saw the leopard take The city remained the capi- much-harassed prince enjoyed our third dog," he said.

of the language would not be mer.

tween Upper and Lower Bur- here.

other than teak and rice had gested for inclusion in the

Bakers' youth will soon pass uary. out of living memory, for teak wood burns well and the flames which devoured Thebaw's palace, years ago, must have made a wonderful sight for the watchers on the great plateau to the

just a port of call enroute to \$750 for the six weeks and \$800 the forests of Kalewa, where he for the principal; students will supervised the cutting of teak. include those in grades 9.10.11 One hundred and fifty eleph- and 12 and no enrichment ants were the "lumberjacks" of courses will be offered.

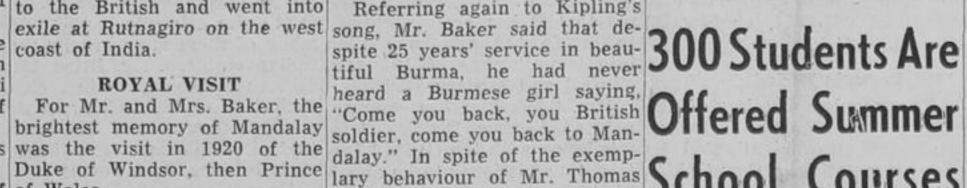
the teak forests. These great The committee said that in beasts, ranging up to five tons, general, the course will be for worked throughout the rainy those who have failed academic season but rested during the subjects in their year but that summer's oppressive heat. They commercial option and possibcarried the logs to the rivers, ly industrial arts may be ofwhich in spate in the rainy fered at grade 9,10 or 11 level. L. R. Ashton, Manager season were used to transport Registration and other details them, and dextrously broke up will be determined by Mr. log jams. "The Lovable One" Chapman.

fearlessly among the elephants were used by the Japanese with impunity. However, Mr. staff. Baker remembers having to The Bakers had left the area shoot a "rogue" elephant, a 20 years before the invasion task he accomplished with one but were most sympathetic to the British troops who fought Fifteen to twenty foot pythons there in all kinds of weather were common but the cobra over rugged terrain.

was rare. Mrs. Baker told a Malaria, leeches and hordes native story that when Buddha of insect life must have made visited Burma he walked around this theatre of war a nightmare a cobra lying in the pathway of suffering for these brave and in gratitude the serpent lads, said Mr. Baker, who had promised not to bother the travelled the same ground in people of that country. Mr. comfort with his four transport Baker interjected that Buddha elephants and servants to tend also never was in Burma. to every need.

Tigers did not cause the The Bakers have a fund o Bakers much concern, although stories of life in Burma, includthey were numerous, but ing tales of a tribe of head about eight inches and its mid- honour, they were delignted by leopards were a different story. hunters who lived not far from summer temperature 120 de- the remarkable dances of many "They are mean and vicious the teak forest. We hope to

The Bakers' forest bungalow



frightened of him and his lack won't close its doors this sum-

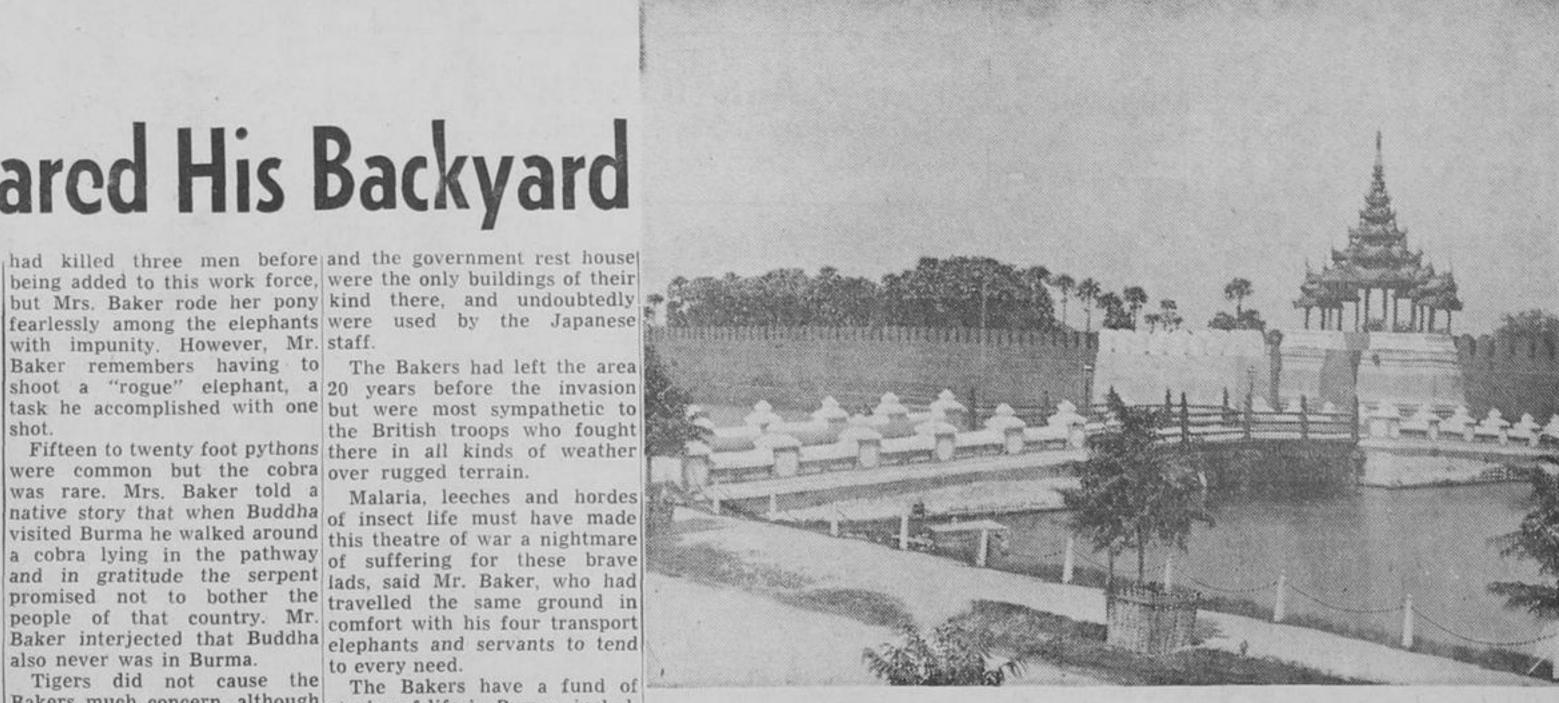
Instead, York Central District Mandalay was described by High School Board will offer Mr. Baker as a sort of Clapham area students a chance to make Junction, situated on the Irra- up for lost grades in a six waddy River about half way be- weeks' summer school course

Recommendation for the It was a great meeting place course was contained in a refor officials on leave or trans- port to the board Monday night fer. There was not a single by its management committee. hotel in the city and business A budget of \$5.000 was sug-

1964 board budget expected to The delightful city of the be struck by the end of Febr-

> Superintendent S. L. G. Chapman said possibly up to 300 students might be attracted. Conditions for the course

are that registrations be \$25 per student if in York Central FORESTS OF KALEWA area and \$35 if outside the sy-For Mr. Baker, Mandalay was stem; salaries for staff will be



Mandalay's Gate, Bridge, Moat



Public Speaking Contest Winners

Finalists in the Catholic Women's League-sponsored public speaking contest for Our Lady Queen of the World parish schools are shown above with their trophies.

Four finalists were chosen from each school in the parish. Back row (left to right), all from St. Joseph's Separate School, are: Wayne Cornack, Sheila O'Brien, Marilyn Webb, Guy Deslauriers. Front row (left to right), all from Our Lady Help of Christians, are: Alistair Reswick, Ross Tierney, Eleanor Stelling, Lauretta Atkins.

Ross Tierney was judged the best boy orator, and Eleanor Stelling the best of the girls. They hold the trophies won. They also hold the special trophy donated last year by the C.W.L. for the school from which the winners come. Since both winners are from the same school this year the trophy will remain for the full year at Our Lady Help of Christians School.

Judges were Mrs. Sam Cook, Mrs. William Henderson, past president of the Region C.W.L. and Mr. James McArthur, president of the parish Holy Name Society.

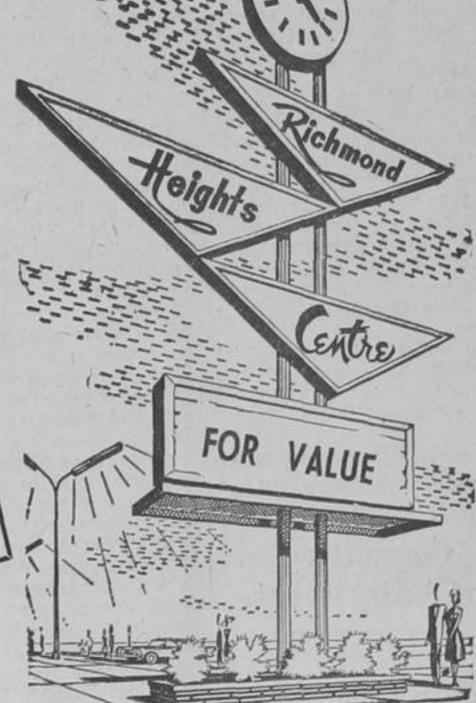
The two winners will go on to compete in the regional finals to be held February 23 in St. Mary Immaculate on Trayborn Road.

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