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Pioneer Life In The Month Of May

What was life like in a rural Ontario village 100 years ago? Black Creek Pioneer Village, at Jane Street and Steeles Avenue, answers that question by presenting visitors with the sounds, sights and smells of a living pioneer community. The village is operated by the Metro Conservation Authority.

During weekends in May, staff of the village put on special weekend events such as sheep shearing, wool dyeing, candle dipping, plowing, harrowing and seeding to show how the pioneers carried out these everyday living tasks.

The sheep at Black Creek are a cross-breed of Corriedale and Suffolk animals and have been bred to give an all purpose fleece which is easy to spin into yarn.

The warm weather of May is the best time for shearing sheep and the old-fashioned method of using hand shears is shown at Black Creek. Shearing takes about 20 minutes, and the fleece is removed in one piece by starting to cut around the neck, and then working down the centre of the animal's stomach and back to the top of its back.

The pioneer housewife would sort the wool of the fleece according to quality, as some parts of the fleece would be better suited for spinning fine wool than others.

Wool was dyed by the pioneers either as skeins or as a fleece, but the first step was always to remove as much as

possible of the natural oils present in the wool by washing with lye soap. Then it was treated in a mordant bath — a mixture of alum and cream of tartar in water — to open the scales of the wool to receive the dye.

For the most part, the pioneers used natural dyes which they could obtain from such sources as apple tree bark, leaves of hilly-of-the-valley, and even materials such as onion skins.

The brilliant hues of red and blue which could not be obtained naturally came from other sources. Red came from cochineal, a small beetle-like insect from Mexico, while blue came from indigo.

After being treated in the mordant bath, the fleece was put into the dye bath and heated over a period of time, depending on the color desired. When the proper color was reached, the wool was then washed repeatedly in water until the water remained clear, indicating that the dye was fixed in the wool.

If a new color was being tried, or a new material, the pioneers often dyed a small piece which was then exposed to the elements for a couple of weeks to indicate how well it would stand up to normal usage over a period of time.

Making candles from beef or sheep tallow is another pioneer task which is demonstrated at Black Creek Pioneer Village. The tallow was obtained by rendering it until a clear tallow was obtained. Often housewives would add alum to the tallow at this point to make it harder and thus more suitable for candle making.

Boiling water was poured into the tallow which had been melted over a fire, to keep it liquid, eliminating the need to reheat it as it began to thicken during the candle-making process. About five wicks would be tied to each wooden rod about the thickness of a pencil, and several of these rods would be dipped in turn, into the tallow.

A thin layer of tallow built up on the wicks each time they were dipped into the liquid and the tallow was allowed to cool and harden before being dipped again. It required about 30 dippings to make a candle.

When finished, the candles were allowed to dry thoroughly and then stored in a cool, dry place to harden, which meant they lasted longer when finally used by the pioneer family.



OTTAWA REPORT

By
John Roberts MP
YORK SIMCOE

My Stand On Bill 167

Over the past several weeks I have received a large number of representations from farmers concerning Bill C-176 — legislation to authorize the establishment of national marketing agencies for farm products. I have been asked to outline the issues involved and to indicate where I stand.

If we were back in 1867 and redrafting the Canadian constitution we would undoubtedly make agriculture a federal responsibility. In 1867 agriculture was local or regional in scope. Produce was largely consumed in the area it was produced. The primary jurisdiction for agriculture was therefore placed in the hands of the provincial governments.

Today agriculture is not local in scope — it is an international business oriented towards export markets. But the constitution still gives the predominant role in agriculture to the provinces and in the 1930's the courts struck down as unconstitutional the Conservative government's attempt to implement national marketing agencies.

But agriculture is a national business. What is done in one area can have disastrous results for producers in another area.

What is the alternative to national agricultural policies? It is that each province will develop protective policies to the interests of the farmers in their area. Often these policies will involve regulations and restrictions against products coming from beyond their provincial boundaries. In effect Canada would cease to be a free market and would be crossed by trade barriers designed to protect provincial agricultural interests regardless of the cost to other Canadian producers.

Such a forecast is no remote theoretical possibility. It has already happened in what is called the chicken-egg war. And our union farmers in the Holland Marsh have seen the activities of their Ontario Marketing Board undermined by the absence of co-operative and coordinated policies on the part of Quebec onion farmers.

I am against the "balkanization" of Canadian agriculture. I am, therefore, in favor of

legislation which permits farmers to organize national marketing agencies on two conditions — 1) that no national plan or agency be operative unless a majority of the producers clearly want the agency, and 2) that the producers themselves control the agency.

This in my view, is what Bill C-176 provides. This seems to be the view of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture for they have both supported the proposal.

No doubt some farm groups will want to use the option opened to them. There are others — like the beef producers — who will want to "opt out."

The beef producers believe they were assured by Agriculture Minister Bud Olson that they would be excluded from the legislation. Mr. Olson says that while he is prepared to accept exclusion of the beef producers the agricultural committee on a free vote — with Conservatives and Liberals on both sides of the question — recommended the legislation give the same opportunities for beef producers to opt in as for other agricultural producers.

Mr. Olson feels he should follow the committee's direction. Some farmers fear that the government will not observe the majority support requirement. The legislation says that the government, or national council, must assure itself that a majority of producers are favorable. The federal government cannot force a province to hold a ballot, but the legislation provides for the federal government to ask a province to have such a vote made. I am confident that these democratic provisions will be observed and the legislation will only be invoked when the majority of producers believe it is in their interest.

The legislation explicitly provides that a majority of the members of the agency must be active primary producers of the product which is to be covered by the agency.

I do not believe that this legislation will harm the farmer's interest. To some of them it will provide a reserve instrument for protection if they wish to take advantage of it.

I am anxious to hear from farmers on this issue and would ask them to write to me with their views — send to John Roberts, House of Commons, Ottawa. I would be happy to send a copy of the legislation to those who would like to receive it.

Appeal Court Reduces Life Prison Sentence In Richvale Incident

The life sentence handed out in 1962 for a Richvale attack on a six-year-old girl has been reduced to 12 years or less by the Appeal Court.

Peter Colin Jones was convicted of attacking the girl with intent to rape her. According to Mr. Justice John Arnup life imprisonment was too severe. Until 1962, Jones' criminal activity involved breaking and entering, he said.

"We do know that the offense for which he has now been convicted was carried out with violence and cruelty, and was probably accompanied by rape. Indeed, counsel on the appeal submitted it was rape, in support of the argument that corroboration should be required."

"In several recent cases of rape accompanied by violence and viciousness, this court has approved or imposed sentences ranging from six to 10 years" Mr. Justice Arnup said. The six-year-old girl who laid the complaint identified Jones in a lineup as the man who dragged her to his car on Weldrick Road. She had been walking along when the car stopped, the man forced her in, banged her head on the door until she was stunned. When she gained consciousness she was thrown into a ditch. She said "I am almost positive that the attacker had sexual intercourse with me".

Jones' defence was that he was home, but he was convicted for assault with intent to rape and sentenced to life, by Judge Walter Martin. The appeal reduced the charge and the Parole Board has ample powers to release him on parole according to Mr. Justice Mackay.

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Town of Richmond Hill

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Richmond Hill proposes to enact a By-law under the authority of Section 459 of The Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1960, C. 249, to stop up and close up a portion of Muirhead Crescent, being the westerly 1 foot (1') thereof as shown on Registered Plan 349 registered in the Registry Office for the Registry Division of York North.

The Council will hear on the 7th day of June, 1971 in person or by his counsel, solicitor or agent any person who claims that his land will be prejudicially affected by the By-law and who applies to be heard.

William C. Lazenby, MAYOR
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