

# Robert Service

continued from page 1  
great mining country- "The country was opened up by mining," Beith said.

He continued that back in the Klondike days, thousands of men flocked to the Yukon seeking fortune because of the huge quantities of gold there.

## Robert Service

Beith told the children that Robert Service came from England and went to the Yukon at that time- not as miner, he was a banker.

Service eventually began writing stories about the people he met there, and these stories were so well-liked, and regarded as so good, that people told Service he should send them to publishers in Toronto.

He did, and the publishers like them so much that they were published.

Beith then recited different ballads like "The Ballad of the Blasphemous Bill McKie".

McKie was a foul-mouthed prospector and there was nothing he hated more than the cold.

McKie asked a friend to promise that he would bury him in a proper grave in a proper narrow coffin if he ever happened to pass on somewhere in the bush, explained Beith.

He recited the entire ballad that eventually become a slightly gruesome tale.

McKie's friend found him frozen stiff with his arms and legs outstretched. The problem was that the friend could not put McKie into the coffin in that state of stretchiness.

The friend took McKie into a cabin where the fire was burning hot. This attempt to thaw McKie was to no avail- McKie wouldn't thaw. The friend had no choice. He proceeded to saw off poor old McKie's arms and legs. The friend did have to keep his promise didn't he?

The older people listening to Beith chuckled but the younger

ones I believe failed to see the humour.

Another queasy tale Beith recounted was "The Cremation of Sam McGee".

Sam McGee hated being cold and just like the preceding tale, he made a friend promise to do something.

You see, Sam McGee's last request was to be cremated when he passed away. When McGee finally did pass away, the friend cleared a spot in the coals of the fireplace for him and proceeded to stuff him into the fire.

The friend left the cabin because of the intense heat. He left McGee to cremate but returned a little while later to check on him.

He opened the door of the fireplace and there was old Sam McGee, in a horizontal position, enjoying to the fullest the warmth of the heat. McGee said to the friend to close the door because this was the first time he had been warm since he arrived in the area.

Beith continued to entertain the children with a harmonica and the dancing dolls. He then invited students from the audience to make the dolls dance as he played the mouth organ.

Not even the teachers were left out of the fun as Grades 6, 7 and 8 teacher Sharon MacKenzie and Grades 4 and 5 teacher Sonja Brend also made the dolls dance as Beith piped out a few more tunes.

## Robert Service

Beith's Northwestern Ontario tour is focussing on the works of Robert Service, whose work needs little introduction to most audiences as his amusing and dramatic ballads have entertained audiences throughout the English-speaking world for over 60 years.

Service, who lived and worked in the Klondike soon after the infamous Gold Rush, is best known for popular ballads like "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" and "The Prospector".

His most lengthy work, "The Ballad of the Northern Lights",



## Dancing dolls

The students above, William Wheeler and Jennifer Reynolds, are shown with Robert Service buff George Beith as he pipes a tune from the mouth organ.

weaves an intriguing tale of adventure, tragedy and suspense involving the characters of the Gold Rush and the origin of the Northern Lights.

## George Beith

The performer's (George Beith's) best talent lies in his unique and convincing portrayal of Services' work which he performs from memory in a dramatically original style.

Beith has worked at many camps in the North and has earned his living in several countries in dozens of contrasting occupations.

He has been a lifetime Robert Service buff and has performed in public all over North America and Europe.

Although approaching 60, Beith is still an active prospector and he enjoys life with his family on his horse ranch in Ontario.

His appearance and presentation combine to bring Services' tales of the Klondike almost to life.

## OPEN HOUSE

### TOWNSHIP OF SCHREIBER FLOOD RISK AND HAZARD LAND MAPS

The Township of Schreiber will be hosting an open house, at which the proposed identification of flood risk areas under the Flood Damage Reduction Program and the Implications of the Hazard Boundary will be explained. In essence, identification under the Flood Damage Reduction Program means that Federal and Provincial Governments will not engage in, promote or finance any new development vulnerable to flood damage.

All interested residents and property owners in Township of Schreiber are invited to review the Flood Risk and Hazard Land Maps prepared under the Canada/Ontario Flood Damage Reduction Program. Representatives of Environment Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs will be present to discuss the policies and implications of the proposed identification.

The Open House will be held as follows.

**DATE: March 23, 1987**

**PLACE: Schreiber Recreation Complex  
Langworthy Street  
Schreiber, Ontario**

**TIME: 2:00 P.M. - 4:00 p.m.  
AND  
7:00 p.m - 9:00 p.m.**



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