

## The Stouffville Tribune

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### NOTES and COMMENTS

#### Bricks per Day

How many bricks is the trade unionist brick-layer permitted by the established custom of the union to lay a day? I see that the mayor of Margate gives the figure at 300. I understood myself that it was 320. I know of a bricklayer who on a straight run regularly lays 1,000. He is not a union member and his employer pays him nearly double the union scale. But he lays much more than double the union scale of bricks. —London Spectator

#### Liquor and Politics

A Liberal government gave Ontario the beer parlors, and a Conservative government brought on the cocktail bars, neither of which accusations have anything to do with the present Dominion election where liquor issues. Yet it's amusing now and then to find persons saying they could not support this or that old party because the one they did not support to favor did something for the booze industry. No one should kid themselves, or be kidded on this liquor issue. It will never be stamped out by any political party, so one can just forget the liquor issue during the Dominion election campaign.

#### Improvement in Cattle

Looking back 40 years we can see again the skinny, poor cattle which predominated on most Canadian farms. That has changed to a wonderful degree and it is a pleasure now to look at and admire the herds as we drive along the highways. Some farmers started the good work by importing pure-bred stock from Britain and elsewhere and that movement has spread to an enormous extent, until the old razorbacks no longer are seen. Now, Canada, instead of importing pure-bred cattle is exporting fine animals all over the world, at high prices.

We were talking to an old farmer the other day and he marvelled at the improvement which has come about in all grades of cattle and the notable increases in milk and butter production which has accompanied it. The sale of such cattle not only brings much-needed foreign money to Canada but also a great deal of prestige throughout the world.

#### Celebration of Dominion Day

Celebration of Dominion Day in another couple of weeks reminds us that while most Canadians are familiar with that famous painting, "The Fathers of Confederation," few know anything about the man who painted it. Robert Harris was born in North Wales in 1849; at the age of seven came with his parents to Charlottetown, P.E.I. He studied art in London, Paris, Madrid, Rome, Munich, Holland and Belgium; painted portraits of many famous men, including Sir John A. Macdonald, Lord Strathcona and Lord Mount Stephen.

Harris painted "The Fathers" in 1883. Incidentally, for the sake of composition he took artistic license and substituted round-topped windows for the square ones actually in the Charlottetown chamber.

The Dominion paid \$4,000 for the picture. Harris' expenses were high and it is doubtful if he netted more than \$1,000 for a year's hard work. He didn't get a penny for the millions of reproductions of the painting made during his lifetime.

The original hung in the Ottawa Parliament Building until it was destroyed in the fire of 1916. Harris died in Montreal in 1919.

#### Why Not Showers For Bridegrooms?

We have read with the keenest interest a news dispatch from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, which describes a "shower" given last week for Mr. Bud Pechey, who is to be married shortly. Apparently Mr. Pechey's shower was well attended and he received a variety of useful gifts, including a lawn-mower.

This seems to us to mark a desirable trend in social life. For years brides have been in the custom of shaking down all their friends for weeks before their weddings, scooping in kitchen ware, linen, china, handkerchiefs and everything that a young woman could possibly need to set up housekeeping. The bridegroom, however, is apparently expected to meet his new expenses entirely out of his own pocket. This is unfair, and is another instance of the discrimination against men which bedevils our society.

The shower custom is a pioneer survival. A century ago, when household goods of all sorts were harder to come by than they are now, it was a neighbourly action to give a girl something useful before she married, as well as a wedding gift on the occasion of the marriage itself. But these gifts to the bride were somewhat balanced by pieces of land (often whole farms), yokes of oxen and other useful gifts which were offered to the bridegroom by his father, his uncles and other friends. Such gifts are uncommon in our day. Women have wisely kept the old custom alive; men have improvidently allowed it to lapse.

Bridegrooms of Canada, awake! Begin well before your marriage, with a Pyjama Shower, a Shirt Shower, a Tool Shower, a Bottle Shower, a Cheque Shower, and a Coal Shower. The lovely creature who will face you at the altar, all innocence and apprehension, has a warehouse full of loot. What are you bringing to your marriage?

#### We All Own Them

Socialist orators are forever talking about the big companies that they will liquidate for the benefit of the common man. They give the impression that these organizations are the sole property and creatures of a handful of unnamed millionaires. As usual, asserts the Financial Post, this sort of talk is all froth.

In the annual report of B.A. Oil Company ownership figures show just how wrong these people can be. Of the 18,597 shareholders of B.A. Oil, 43 per cent hold 25 shares or less or an average investment of under \$600 apiece. Over 18 per cent hold 10 shares or less, or an investment of less than \$250.

B.A. Oil, like every other big company in Canada is owned by thousands of little people, many of them widows and retired people, who depend on the dividends of a few shares in this or that company to provide them with life's necessities. If these companies were taken over and liquidated, as the socialists plan, it is these little people, not some non-existent millionaires, who would be the chief and immediate sufferers.

#### Minister's Alliance Founded Father's Day To Fight Disrespectful Attitude

The approach of Father's Day on Sunday, June 19th, brings to mind a sentimental story behind this day, well established in Canadian tradition as the one day in the year we honour the paternal head of the family.

The idea originated not on the male side but from the sentimental feelings of a mother. This woman, Mrs. Bruce Dodds of Spokane, Washington, had looked back for many years upon the kindness and courage of her own father who raised six motherless children with faultless devotion as well as earning a livelihood for the family. So deeply impressed was Mrs. Dodds with this devotion, that she often wondered if more fortunate families, with mother and father, appreciated both parents equally. She knew that children, who spend more time under mother's wing, fail to see the importance of the paternal head of the family — aside from being a bread winner.

Mrs. Dodds, a spiritual minded woman, took her idea to the religious groups in her city. Backed by her pastor, Rev. Conrad Bluhm, the Y.M.C.A. and a Minister's Alliance, the first Father's Day was observed on the third Sunday in June 1910. Mrs. Dodds' group met in church for song and verbal tribute. At that time, there were many songs and jokes in circulation making Father the butt of jokes. The group attempted to fight this disrespectful attitude shown to Fathers. Press, pulpit and women's groups took up the crusade and in very short order Father's Day was evolved.

This thoughtful woman's attempt to have "Fatherhood revered as greatly as Motherhood" is today a reality in the United States, Canada and many other countries. This year, the Canadian Father's Day Council has adopted as its slogan — "For Better Citizenship — Make Dad Your Pal."

This Council feels that if the younger Canadian citizens paid more attention to Father — and the grown-up citizens gave fatherhood more respect, there would be less juvenile delinquency, family troubles and divorces. They feel that the modern freedom of this enlightened age does not give a license to show disrespect for the paternal head of the family.

### Why Homing Pigeons Come Home?

When Station Agent Magnus Mowat gave a couple of pigeons their freedom a couple of weeks ago, as they arrived by C.N.R. express, he nor anybody else could explain by what power those "Homing" pigeons would be able to fly back to home loft in London, Ont., when they had been shut up in a baggage car and did not even have the opportunity of retracing the homeward journey by the aid of any landmarks. They returned to their home loft with unerring accuracy however, in short time covering the 150 miles at the rate of 45 miles per hour.

The incident concerning the flight from Stouffville to London causes this paper to dwell on "Why Homing Pigeons Come Home," and the story we gather is highly interesting on a flight from Stroud to Toronto.

"Jeturbo," upon being released from his basket, soared high up into the clear April sky. For a few brief moments the sun flashed on his beating wings and he gained altitude rapidly like the aircraft he was named after. Then something went wrong.

The two University of Toronto biology students shaded their eyes with cupped hands and followed his flight with great interest. They had brought this pigeon ten miles in a south-westerly direction from its home in Toronto to a place called Clarkson. They selected this particular location for their experiment because here, less than one hundred yards from where they had released the bird, rose the giant antennae towers of C.F.R.B., the most powerful independent radio station in the British Commonwealth.

Their experiment was a success. For the bird circled around the towers twice and then began to lose altitude. At times it dived and careened crazily like a wounded plane in a dogfight. Finally it landed in the spring mud—bewildered, befuddled, lost. In this particular area, it was no more a homing pigeon than the harpy little sparrow that strutted boldly around it.

When a homing pigeon crosses the magnetic field created by a broadcasting station, something happens. Whatever mechanism it is that guides the pigeon home ceases to function, at least temporarily. From such intriguing experiments carried out close to radio transmitters, biologists have conjectured that the radio waves interfere in some way with the tiny, delicate semicircular canals of the pigeon's inner ear. The result is confusion, loss of balance, and loss of that vital, powerful homing instinct.

**Animals Come Home**  
But this homing instinct or sense of direction does not belong exclusively to the pigeon. There are dozens of other animals which, in a sense, might also be called homers, whose ability to return home is in no way interfered with by radio waves.

The lowly toad, for instance, has been known to find its way back to its regular habitation after making journeys of hundreds of miles. Every spring, the salmon, leaping and vaulting over falls and rapids, ascend the rivers of the north to spawn. Bees find their way back to the hive; ants to the hill. Robins, starlings, nightingales and scores of other migratory birds travel thousands of miles back to their old familiar nesting places annually. Everyone is familiar with the classic example of the return of the swallows to Capistrano.

The homing pigeon, however, is the only one in which man has been able to place any degree of faith. Man can trust the pigeon and train him to do exactly what he wants, done.

**Small Head, Big Brain**  
Probably the simplest way to identify the homer is by his red legs and red feet. His head is small, but his brain is larger than that of the ordinary pigeon in the park

who eats corn-meal out of your hand. Comparing the homer with the latter is like comparing a greyhound with a mongrel. The family tree of the homer has branches in over 200 varieties of birds with its roots down deep in the wild Rock Pigeon. They originally came from Asia and made their debut in Belgium over 130 years ago.

The homing pigeon's uncanny ability to find its way to the home loft over as great a distance as 7,200 miles, and its stubborn flights through deadly machine-gun fire, the ever-present menace of the hawk, and adverse weather conditions have made this species, noted for its speed, graceful form and perseverance, useful to man as a carrier of news very early in the history of the world.

The old patriarch, Noah, sent out a dove to see if the flood-waters had abated; but the bird flew back home to the ark after a futile search for dry land. The Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans made use of pigeons to carry messages in times of peace and war. In 1146, the first regular pigeon postal service was set up by the Sultan of Bagdad. In 1815, a homer, winging its way across the English Channel with news of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo—three days before it became known elsewhere enabled Nathan Rothschild, the London banker, to capitalize on the stock exchange and make himself into one of the richest men in the world. In World Wars I and II, homing pigeons were used extensively, carrying important despatches in aluminium and plastic message holders attached to their legs. On different occasions, with automatic cameras strapped to their breasts, they flew far over the enemy lines to take a host of invaluable snapshots. One homer, "Colonel Fear-

less," was given a full military funeral by the British Army for saving an artillery troop at The Somme.

But still, the question that laymen and scientists have been asking for hundreds of years remains unanswered before us: Why does a homing pigeon go home after it is tossed into the air miles away? And far more baffling than that... how does he find his way home? What mysterious impulse drives him to walk home, if he is unable to fly?

In bird-lore, pigeon fanciers have expounded almost as many theories explaining why the homer goes home as there are theories of evolution—a thousand and one. And every one of their conclusions rests only on probabilities.

A great many men who own racing homers claim that it is the sun which guides their birds home. It is true that most pigeons dislike night flying. When sent on a journey in the dark, or in fog, or snow, they will generally roost till the first few streaks of dawn appear. But they can and do fly home in darkness, fog and snow. Many an airman, forced down in the North Sea or the Mediterranean with his radio out of commission, will gladly testify to this fact.

Still a Question.  
A few years ago, a curious American fancier plugged his racers' nostrils with cotton batting before releasing them on their homeward flight. The birds did not return.

Here, then, was a theory proving beyond a doubt that pigeons "smell" their way home in much the same manner as dogs do. But a short while later, the American scientists, Watson and Lashley, had birds return home to them—even though their nostrils were studded with wax and coated with asphalt. In all birds, the eyes are well developed, with three eyelids. One of these swabs the eye clean of dust particles in much the same manner as the windshield wiper on your car works. The homer's exceptionally keen sight (although it is not known whether he can see at night or not) has led many to believe that he "sees".

The first commercial jet airplane built in North America is Canadian, and will be test flown in June. It will carry 36 to 40 passengers at a cruising speed of 400 miles an hour, flying nearly six miles up.

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