

SATURDAY'S DOWNPOUR OF RAIN WILL CORRECT MUCH OF THIS TROUBLE



Record drought which has hit Ontario is discussed by Frank Chapman (left) and Will Westney, who is warden of Pickering where he is a farmer.



Corn, which in normal years would be close to three feet high by now, is stunted by drought as Mr. Chapman ruefully demonstrates. Many of the stalks have not yet made their appearance above ground.

The average age of top-ranking Hollywood male movie stars is 40 years; the women average 32. They say.

"Casey Jones," the railroad engineer celebrated in the song, was a real person—John Luther Jones—and was killed in the well-sung accident on April 30, 1900.

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Drought Disastrous For Pickering Twp. Pasture

Frank Chapman, who owns a 240-acre dairy farm at Audley, about three miles north and east of Pickering Village, placed a foot on a slat of a rail fence and cast a speculative eye over a stunted field of hay. Frank has 80 head of fine Jersey cattle and already he is worrying about how he is going to feed them next winter. "I've been farming here since 1922," he said, "and I've never seen the drought so bad so early in the year."

He swept his arm out over the yellowing field. "There are 12 acres there," he said. "Usually, I get about three tons of hay an acre off that land. This year, I don't think I could have taken three-quarters of a ton off it and I've had to turn it into pasture."

"As you can see, I've divided the field up into three-acre sections with

electrically-charged fences. The cattle are allowed in one section at a time. Ordinarily, a section would last about a week. But in this kind of weather it lasts only four or five days and by the time the cattle have reached the last section, the first hasn't had a chance to grow.

Winter Feeding Already

"Right now, my cows are getting grain mixes equivalent to winter feeding. Ordinarily, we cut that down to half in the summertime, but this year, we just can't do it."

The lovely rolling farm lands that usually make Pickering Township a shimmering patchwork of green from Lake Ontario to the blue Uxbridge ridges in the north are yellow and wilted now. Since last May, there have been only three showers in the area and the drought is now going into its fortieth day.

The sun has laid its searing fingers on farms along Lake Ontario as far east as Durham and Prince Edward counties and as far west as Oxford in the Woodstock area. The damage extends as far north as the Simcoe counties and into Peel and Halton. Crop loss estimates run into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

But to dairy farmers like Frank Chapman, the continuing drought is creeping close to disaster, for dairy farmers depend upon the cheap summer feeding to offset the more expensive feeding programs of the winter months. Like Frank, many of them are now stable feeding their cows and, because there are no corn and hay crops to tide them over the winter, they see their expenses rising like the mercury in the big thermometers outside their barns.

Water is becoming a problem to the dairymen in the Pickering area. The streams are drying up and the level of water in the wells is falling. In some of the pastures, water is being carried in milk cans and dumped into large tubes so that the cattle can drink.

Buying Water

And just the other day, Frank Chapman paid \$3.75 for 600 gallons of water to replenish the 37-foot well he had dug last fall. "I've been able to hold off buying water," he said, "because last fall I had my nephew dam up a gully with a bull-dozer. There was a regular little lake there, but it has fallen to about a foot and a half now. If it would rain now, it would be replenished."

But farmers throughout Pickering and Whitchy townships who hadn't Frank Chapman's foresight, are paying from \$3 to \$4.25 to have their water hauled from Whitchy.

Yesterday an interested little group of men stood at the barn on Will Westney's farm, which borders Frank Chapman's, and watched his new forage harvester at work. The forage harvester chops the hay up and blows it back into the hay wagon which is in tow, and it gets most out of the runt hay crops which are prevalent this year.

George Dick and Fred Squire, who operate a big beef cattle ranch, and Harry Bayes, the president of the Ontario Ayrshire Breeders' Association, watched while Henry Westney, Will's son, operated the harvester. All were worried about winter feed and the harvester was at least a part answer to that problem and a big reply to the labor shortage.

Never So Bad

"I've been here since 1892," said Will Westney, who is the warden of Ontario County and the Reeve of Pickering Township, "and I've never seen such a bad drought so early in the year. I've travelled through this country a lot and the only good corn crop I've seen is west of Uxbridge town. The rest is all stunted."

"Last year, as an experiment, I put hay in my silo for winter feed and was pleased at the result. This year, I'm not putting anything in the silo at all. What I can get, I'm putting

straight into the barn. And hay right now is being quoted at \$35 a ton.

"The farmer is the greatest gambler in the world. He takes a chance on the weather all the time. But this year, the odds are really against us."

And down in Pickering, big, burly, friendly Arthur Mitchell, who has a coal, wood and lumber business; has his hands full hauling water to parched farms. "I've been hauling water since 1934," he said, "and I've never seen anything like this. In the past two months, we've delivered 700 tanks of water and each tank holds 600 gallons. We dump it into cisterns, wells, and, in a good many cases, right into the water troughs for the cattle."

"I had three trucks going steadily until midnight Monday night and we are still getting requests for water. This is the worst drought I have ever seen down here."

"And remember, what we normally call 'dry weather' is still to come."

PINE ORCHARD

Mr. Wilbert Widdifield spent a few days with his sisters here. Miss L. Smith visited Mr. and Mrs. W. Johnston a few days last week.

Our community was cast in gloom Thursday evening when it was learned Bert Dike fell off a load of hay and was instantly killed. Mr. Dike was a friend of the whole community, the children expecting his smile and fun, the older ones knowing his help was always there when needed without being asked. Our sincere sympathy is extended to his wife and two sons, Delbert and Bill. The funeral was held from Wesley Church on Saturday with a large crowd pay-

ing their last respects to their friend and neighbour.

Mrs. Orville Brillinger entertained Mr. and Mrs. Randall Spofford on Sunday.

Betty Shropshire is visiting her sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Haines.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Murray McClure on their recent marriage. Mrs. McClure is the former Carolina Bruni.

Sunday visitors with Mr. and Mrs. Chapman were Mrs. Spofford and Miss Muriel of Stouffville, also Mr. and Mrs. W. Johnston and Earl.

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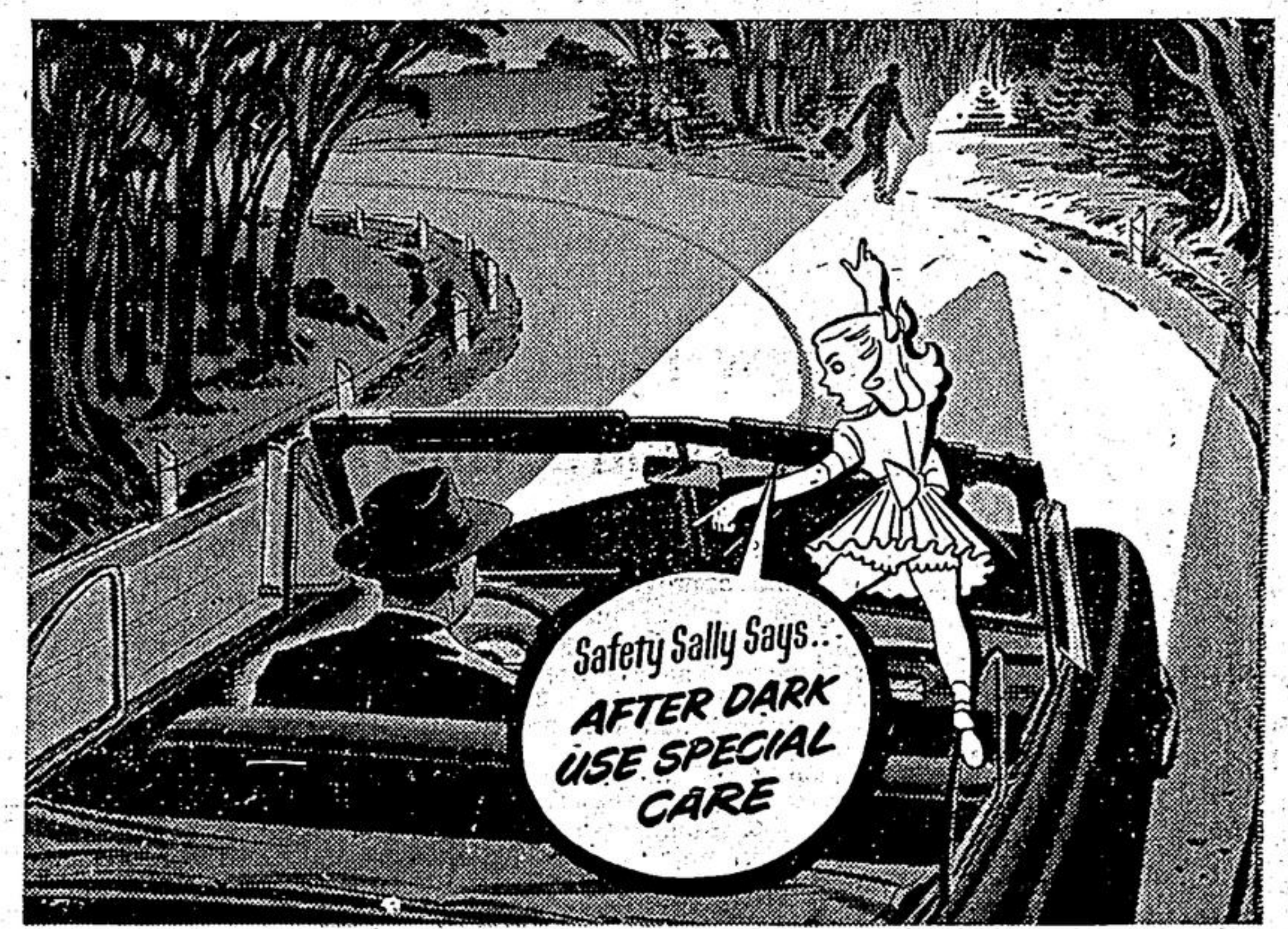
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