

# Provincial Drama Festival Launched Three Years Ago

## Much Increased Interest Is Noted In Movement

Marking another forward step in the Provincial Drama Festival movement which was inaugurated here three years ago, York Women's Institute Players presenting their drama "From 5 to 5.30" and representing Queen's County meet Cape Traverse Young People's Union players at the Empire Theatre tomorrow night in finals of this year's festival to decide the winners of the Women's Institute Trophy. The Cape Traverse group present their play "All Cars to the Rescue", a drama that was good enough and acted well enough to win the Prince County title.

The Queen's County winners proved to be the best of five entries winning over Graham's Road W.I. in the finals while Cape Traverse were defeated by the Kelvin Grove representatives in the Prince County finals. Altogether fourteen groups entered in the festival with eight participating, others being forced to withdraw due to illness in the areas. In King's County Kilmuir Institute was the only entry. However, due to the fact it was their first venture into the drama festival field it was decided not to participate in the finals this year, but providing they can win out next year, hope to enter into the race for top honors.

Mr. Donald Whetmore of Halifax, N. S., has been named Adjudicator. Mr. Whetmore, who is Government organizer for Dramatics in Nova Scotia will arrive in the city on Tuesday. In January last Mr. Whetmore was in the Province supervising the short course in Dramatics. During the summer he conducts classes in Dramatics at Dalhousie University and in the winter months is engaged in a full program of theatrical activity backed by a library in Halifax of more than 3,000 plays.

Adjudicators during the season's elimination contests were Mrs. Ruby Houle, C.D.A., Mrs. Roy Smallman, Mrs. Wallace Scantlebury, Mr. Morton Dew, Hon. F. A. Laize, Attorney General, Mr. Barry Bugden, Mr. Bramwell Chandler, all of Charlottetown and Rev. S. J. Davies, Kensington, Mr. Norman MacDonald, Summerside.

**First Festival in 1945**

The first Drama Festival was held in the Spring of 1945 being brought about after Mrs. Frances

has issued a catalogue of one-act plays, free on request, suitable for Festival work, while the Little Theatre consented to send local directors to interested communities who wished to discuss dramatics.

Festivals such as this one should not be regarded as a competition only. Rather think of it as a Festival in which all strive for quality in play production and development in cultural appreciation. The reward will be worthwhile. First of all there is fun—for Dramatics is fun. Everyone is interested, not in one hobby but in several: stagecraft, lighting, costuming, make-up, directing, each in itself is fascinating. New Friends will be made, dictation, team-work and self-confidence will be acquired together with a just pride in doing something well.

In January of this year a Short Course of Dramatics, supervised by Mr. Whetmore was held from January 19th to 24th. It was well attended and proved helpful to all taking advantage of it.

The Little Theatre Movements, Summer Theatres, Dramatic Courses in schools and the Dominion Drama Festivals have played their part in making this Canada of ours "play" conscious.

Aside from the Anglican Drama Festival, and participation in the Dominion Drama Festival prior to the war, there is little organized drama work on the Island. Nevertheless, if we scan the daily newspapers in the spring of the year, we cannot but be conscious of the fact that Prince Edward Island, too, is in some measure "play" conscious.

But plays and players are widely scattered throughout the Province. We have had no organized effort or incentive to improve and broaden our dramatics from year to year. Our Women's Institutes have sensed this need and this Province-wide Women's Institute Drama Festival will, we hope, do much to stimulate our interest and further our progress in drama.

Rural young people as well as the older, welcome the opportunity to share in one of the cultural arts. We learn an art by working at it. When we study drama we learn poise, manners, good diction—qualities which combine to make charm or personality. We learn through the constructive criticism of the Adjudicators that our enunciation can be improved; that "g" is sounded in such words as "walking", "singing", "laughing", that "you" is never "yuh"; that carriage depicts character; a crook sinks, a discouraged person sags, a soldier treads; we learn that team work counts.

Drama quickens community interest and social contact. It will, through Festival work, widen our

interest and knit our communities more closely together.

**A Social Activity**

Many of us are interested in drama. It is one way in which people have sought to express life and its meaning since the old mystery plays of the medieval age were enacted.

It is a social activity. The flourishing dramatic society of a certain High School had its beginning when a fifteen year old sent around a written notice from desk to desk in history class, "I'm going to put on a play. If you'd like to try for a part, be in the lunch room behind the Gym at five after four this afternoon." In less than four months there were 50 members and they were preparing ambitious scenes from Shakespeare to be produced in the Auditorium of a neighboring High School by special request.

It is one of the cultural arts which will teach us poise, manners, good diction. It is broader than that. Historical plays and adaptations from the classics can further our love for history and literature. "Elizabeth Refuses", based on "Pride and Prejudice", shows us the delightful mannerisms of Jane Austen's time. "The Bishop's Candelsticks" (a play in the Annapolis Valley Drama Festival this year) should intrigue us into reading more of the life of the unfortunate Jean Val Jean. "The Room in the Tower" inspires us to dip more deeply into the oft-time tragic lives of our English kings and queens.

All over the world people are finding out the importance of the dramatic arts in all fields—education, cultural, social and artistic—and the United Nations, realizing the great role the drama can play in bringing about an understanding between nations, are organizing a drama group.

What is Canada doing about drama?

There is a resurgence of the arts in every Province. The Dominion Drama Festival which was dropped during the war has been revived. British Columbia is being acclaimed across Canada and in the United States as the Province leading in the field of drama. Their Provincial Government is fostering this interest in drama in rural communities by forming the School and Community Drama Branch of the Dramatic Arts at the University of British Columbia.

Miss Marjorie Jarvis of the Ontario Provincial Dramatic Library reports that Drama Festivals are being re-organized in that Province after having been dropped during the war.

Actually, the movement is sweeping across Canada.



May Day means fishing time to thousands of rod and reel specialists throughout Ontario as the lid is lifted off the trout season. At dawn they trek to favorite streams with their flies and also the lowly worm. These girls are proving that the sport is not just for the men and that any kind of equipment serves the purpose.

What are we doing in Prince Edward Island?

The Little Theatre Guild in Charlottetown has been revived. There is the Anglican Drama Festival. And now, the Women's Institute Drama Festival.

We have always had the talent and ability to prepare and present plays; we have the desire to participate in a social activity, and the ambition to practice a cultural art. Nevertheless, we have for the most part, gone on year after year preparing and presenting plays, and all the while unconscious of the mistakes we were making. This is where a Drama Festival justifies its organization. Through it, the Adjudicators analyze each play they are called on to adjudicate in the Festival. They commend our good points and give constructive criticism on our bad ones. If we are receptive to what they say, if we have the sportsmanship and the wisdom to take criticism in the spirit in which it is given, drama in rural Prince Edward Island is going to improve immeasurably. Let us, then, when we take part in a Drama Festival, be prepared to take our Adjudicator's criticism as a very necessary training in the art of drama.

Our Women's Institutes can give leadership in their communities to this movement. Get your young people interested, your church group. Any group formed to present a play can enter. Not everyone in a community may be able to act, but they can help with lighting, make-up, stage-setting, casting and directing. Read and study and learn; get all the information you can, and your original interest in acting and drama will develop into an accomplishment.

Incidentally, drama is a lot of fun, and let us work so hard at it, that not British Columbia, not Ontario, not Nova Scotia, but Prince Edward Island will be acclaimed across Canada for her interest and leadership and ability in the field of drama.

**THRIVED ON LIQUIDS**

KNUTSFORD, Cheshire, England — (CP) — To "prove" that even on today's rations Britons are over-eating, Bernard St. John Doherty, 55, and osteopath, lived 32 days on two glasses of orange juice and one cup of tea a day. He weighed 210 pounds before the test, lost 20 pounds during it, and felt "as fit as a fiddle" afterwards.

**ABETTING CUPID**

LONDON — (CP) — They are trying out a new idea in London parks to aid cupid — two-seater benches for couples. Mrs. Strauss, supply minister's wife, who suggested it, said: "It must be very awkward when a young couple want a private talk or gossip if others are sitting on the same seat."

**FOOD SHIPMENTS INCREASE**

AUCKLAND, N.Z. — (CP) — For the first five months of the present export season official figures revealed that New Zealand's food ships to Britain are higher than the corresponding period last year. All classes of frozen meats, butter, cheese, tallow and apples are up.

# DRAMA FESTIVAL FINALS

## EMPIRE THEATRE, Tuesday, June 1st -- 8.15 P.M.

### Queen's County Winners YORK WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

### Prince County Winners CAPE TRAVERSE Y.P.U.

— IN —  
"FROM 5 TO 5.30"

— IN —  
"ALL CARS TO THE RESCUE"

ADJUDICATOR — Mr. Donald Whetmore, Halifax, N. S.

Presented under the patronage of His Honour, Lt.-Governor J. A. Bernard and Mrs. Bernard; Premier the Hon. J. Walter Jones and Mrs. Jones; His Worship Mayor B. Earle MacDonald and Mrs. MacDonald.

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