

THE GUARDIAN

Authorized as Second Class Mail Post Office Department, Ottawa. The Island Guardian Publishing Co. Editor and Managing Director, Ian A. Burnett, Associate Editor, Frank Walker. CIRCULATION "Covers Prince Edward Island like the dew" "The strongest memory is weaker than the weakest ink". CHARLOTTETOWN MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 1954

Immortal Bard

Burns is honoured neither as a successful farmer nor as a pillar of society. His failures in both fields are indeed well known. It is as a poet and writer of songs that he has captured the hearts of Scotsmen of all ages and of many who without him would know Scotland only as a geographical area.

He sang of that elder Scotland, expressing all that was virile and spirited in the history and character of the nation that was going down in a blaze of glory to the music of his songs. To his countrymen Burns left a priceless heritage of a song-craft unequalled in the lyric history of mankind.

Every emotion from the whisper of love to the clarion call of war has been portrayed by his genius. Combining an almost rustic simplicity with lofty genius he achieved an almost perfect mastery of his medium and showed a swift and penetrating intuition for detecting both the nobility and baseness of mankind.

Much of his work consisted of taking older or traditional songs and legends and creating from them poetic masterpieces but in addition there is much that is new in his works. Nothing apparently, old or new, escaped the searchlight of his poetic vision. He saw in things commonplace a beauty and significance which he was able by the magic of language to convey to young and old, simple and learned.

Scotsmen and Sassenach alike honour the memory of one who gave mankind a finer and greater picture of itself, one who in singing of his country, touches the hearts of people of every nation.

Official Tribute

Official recognition of the work of the Women's Institutes is given in the monthly magazine of the Department of Health and Welfare. It comes in an article by Mr. J. R. Kidd, director of the Canadian Association for Adult Education. Mr. Kidd reminds his readers that doctors and departments of health "have a great many more allies than they sometimes suppose," and he explains:

"The adult education forces have grown in remarkable fashion in the past two decades, even though their budgets have never greatly exceeded the annual bill for bubble-gum. The most famous example, on many counts, is the origin of the Women's Institutes. Here is the case of one institution that has developed in Canada and spread all round the world, in the face of the usual flow of influence by which Canada has borrowed from Britain, France or the United States.

"It all started with a small group of women in one community who were concerned about the health and safety of their children. One can imagine that at the earliest stage an unwise doctor might have chilled and deflated the group by telling them to look after their family and homes, that matters of public health were not for ignorant women but only for well-educated specialists. Instead they received enough encouragement in their early campaigns that their institute was well-established and soon the idea spread and spread.

"Organized farm women continue to be one of the best channels for health education."

This tribute, comments the Ottawa Journal, is no new discovery; but it is good to have it on the departmental record. Members of Women's Institutes will value and appreciate this generous tribute to the importance of their movement here and elsewhere.

An Experiment Which Failed

The report that most of the Provincial Departments of Education have lowered standards for entrance to teacher training schools will not be received with much enthusiasm by anyone who is interested in the Canadian school situation. The reason for the retrograde step is, of course, perfectly clear. For some years there has been a serious shortage of teachers and it was felt that a little less stress on academic attainments might help to lead more young people into the profession. The argument—a plausible one on the surface—was that a poorly-educated and half-trained teacher is better than none at all. It was an experiment born of desperation; it was not intended to establish a permanent normal school policy. Once the many vacant

schools were filled it would be a simple thing to revert to the old standards or even introduce higher ones.

The best test of an experiment of any kind is whether or not it works satisfactorily. This one, apparently, has failed badly. No general increase in the number of normal school applicants has been noted; on the contrary, according to such figures as are available, the over-all picture is less bright than it has been for some time. Only in the few schools where standard was not sacrificed to expediency has there been any noticeable improvement in the enrollment situation.

Evidence that higher standards attract more prospective teachers is apparent in Alberta, where an increased enrolment is reported in a new two-year training course. Similarly, the School for Teachers at Macdonald College is gratified by the results of stiffening its entrance requirements and improving upon its courses. It works closely with McGill University, and staff members are exchanged. Total attendance in all four years of its program has recently doubled, and the rise in the numbers taking a two-year course has been greater than in the numbers of those training for one year only.

If a good academic grounding is necessary to training in law, medicine, engineering, and all the other useful professions, it is hard to believe that it can be dispensed with in the work of teaching which certainly is as important as any of the others. There are many ways in which the teaching profession might be made more attractive to young people of promise, but, surely, beckoning prospective teachers in by the back door is not one of them.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The increase in membership of the Income Tax Appeal Board from three to four results from "a major increase in income tax appeal cases." The larger number of appeals presumably reflects both higher incomes and, to a greater extent, the numerous tax changes which require clarification.

The number of Orders-in-Council passed in 1953 was less than half that of the previous year, Prime Minister St. Laurent informed the House in reply to a question. It is to be hoped that this represents the beginning of a new trend but considering the ever-widening field of government activity the probabilities are against it.

William Somerset Maugham, English novelist and playwright, was born this date 1874. Born in Paris, he was educated in England and Germany. He studied medicine but in 1897 published his first novel, "Liza of Lambeth" and its success and that of its successor won him to literature.

The Navy's magazine "Crowsnest" notes that when H. M. C. S. Gaspe was commissioned recently the White Ensign used for the ceremony was that of H.M.S. Sidmouth, the Bangor class minesweeper which was lead ship in the historic raid on Dieppe in August, 1942. It was loaned for the occasion by the Maritime Museum at Halifax.

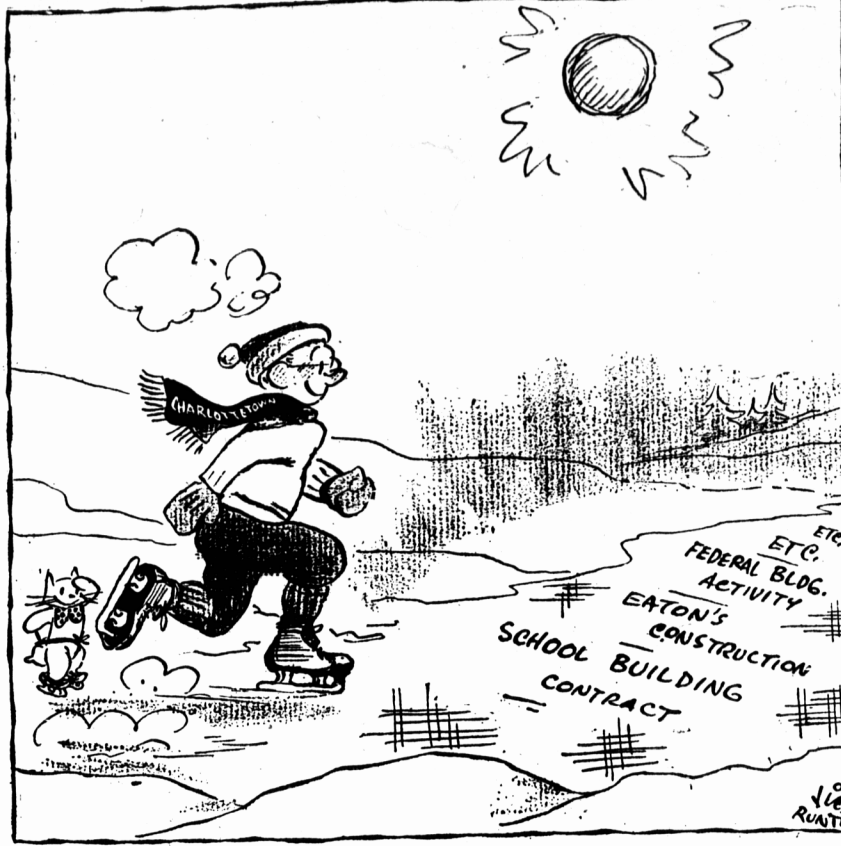
There have always been titled families who have fallen on evil days. At various periods their number was increased by the vagaries of political success. For several generations in Britain the tax structure has been designed to eliminate the financial basis of class distinctions. In such circumstances a title is a burden rather than an asset.

The president of the Canadian Shipowners Association considers it a strange anomaly that Canada should spend heavily in rebuilding the Navy "for the sole purpose of defending foreign shipping." The point seems well taken. If it is worth protecting shipping against an enemy in wartime it is presumably worth taking steps to assure its existence in case of war.

More office employees than farmers is the state of affairs today, laments the St. Thomas Times-Journal. "These 'paper handlers' are members of the ever-increasing tribe of office employees whose gods are carbon paper and the duplicating machine, and whose altar is the typewriter. . . . An expert on office practices and habits in the U. S. points out that 95% of carbon paper work turned out by industry is never referred to again."

Bacteria are being put to work for the farmer, according to "News from Britain." "Fertosan", a bacteria whose formula is still on the secret list, has been produced by Mr. George Dawson, a school teacher. Harmless to human beings, animals, and everything except dead plant life, it is being marketed by a Wolverhampton firm at a rate of 500,000 packets yearly, 35 per cent of which is going to Canada and the United States. A pinch of the preparation added to water is capable of turning a ton of waste vegetable matter into a first class compost within a matter of weeks.

Good Clear Stretch Ahead



PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open to the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinion of correspondents.

A TRIBUTE

Mr.—The guests of Sunset Lodge were saddened on hearing of the death at the P. E. I. Hospital on Jan. 20, 1954, of Mrs. (Rev.) H. A. Brown, whom to know was to love. With her late husband she served many years first in the Methodist and later in the United Church, ably assisting him with her outstanding musical talents and her loving kindness toward all with whom she came in contact. We who were privileged to have her as a guest with us for the last few weeks of her sojourn in this life, will carry her memory in our hearts until "by His Grace" we will meet her in "the place of Many Mansions" as a ray of sunshine in our lives. I am, Sir, etc., CHRISTINA CARRIER "Sunset Lodge", Charlottetown.

WINTER ROADS

Sir,—It has been proposed by two of your readers, that cars and trucks be laid up during the winter months, and that government snow ploughs discontinue attempts to keep the country highways open during the winter months. Aside from the considerable amount of business which is conducted via our main highways, and which gives considerable employment during the winter, it is essential that highways be kept open if at all possible so that the sick and emergency hospital cases can be looked after. Our country doctors have much to contend with during the winter months, and if snow clearance on the country roads was entirely abandoned their difficulties would be even greater than at present. However, the day will come when our main highways and our improved secondary roads will be made passable throughout the winter. Perhaps the two gentlemen who object to government snow ploughs have a plan, whereby the large amount of produce which is moved during the winter months by truck, could be handled as quickly as it is at present because our main country roads are ploughed. Snow clearing equipment is improving, and will improve far beyond that in use today. Those who hanker after the good old horse and buggy days, can live in the past if they wish, but the Island sooner or later will keep pace with the rest of the world and go forward not backward. I am, Sir, etc., 1954.

The Poet's Corner

TO ROBERT BURNS Had we two met, blithe-hearted Burns, Though water is my daily drink, May God forgive me, but I think We should have roared our toasts by turns. Inquisitive low whispering cares Had found no room in either pale, Until I asked thee, rather late, Is there a hand-rail to the stairs? —Walter Savage Landor.

The Age Old Story

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

Robert Burns

By Rev. J. E. Heathwood, M.A. St. John's Presbyterian Church, Belfast

"Our monarch's hindmost year Was five and twenty days begun, Twas then a blast o' Januar' win' Blew hansen in on Robin."

The monarch referred to here is of course, George the Second, who died in the year 1760, the year after the birth of Scotland's national bard, Robert Burns. His place of birth was tiny thatched cottage in Alloway, about two miles from the town of Ayr, and now an international shrine. His works have been translated into many languages, and on the 25th day of each January, Scots all over the world foregather to toast the "Immortal Memory."

Voltaire has been written on the poet and his work, but the man himself remains something of an enigma, yet all unite in praising his literary efforts. Burns the man has been exalted and cast down, praised and blamed, excused and accused, but the truth doubtless lies betwixt the two. Burns was not the perfect poet, but he never claimed to be. Neither was he completely profane.

Therefore, while he cannot be held up as an example of moral excellence it is well to bear in mind that very few of us could bear the spotlight of public inquiry. So let him who is perfect cast the first stone.

In order to form an opinion, let alone a judgment on Burns, it is necessary that we should take a glimpse at the man himself, his family, and his environment in eighteenth century Scotland. His Father was William Burnes (the name), farmer, gardener and nurseryman, who came from the North-East of Scotland, and his ancestors had fought and suffered for the ill-fated Stuart cause. He was a man of outstanding ability, and wrote a "Manual of Religious Belief" for his seven children. Like many of his compatriots, he was intensely keen on education, and was instrumental in securing the services of a competent teacher for both his neighbours and his own children. He taught his boys the three R's, geography, ancient history and natural history. In his day, it was common for a father to take such an active interest in the schooling of his children, for one ambition was that of having at least one son enter the ministry.

The educational standard required of the Scots clergy was, and still remains high, and thus it is not surprising that the rudiments were laid at an early age. Incidentally, this popular ambition was one outstanding reason why Scotland contributed so many intellectuals to the world, and from its humble homes a steady stream of ministers, doctors and professors has been poured into the professional classes of Britain and other countries. Gilbert Burns, the second son testified that "our father conversed familiarly on all subjects as if we had been men."

The man who the poet was Agnes Burn, an industrious housewife in common with the women of her day, had received little education, but it is popularly held that it was from her that Burns received his lyrical gift. She came from a line of staunch Covenanters, men and women who had lived and died their faith on the Scottish hillsides.

All these influences combined to form an important part during the most formative years of Burns' life. The lad himself was a keen student, familiar with the Bible, a critic in substantives, verbs and participles at ten or eleven years of age, was engaged in the study of French at the age of fourteen and a little later took up the onerous task of learning Latin. It must be borne in mind that all the while the young poet was working very hard on his father's farm, and by the age of fifteen, he was the principal labourer. Thus it is hardly surprising that he overtaxed his growing strength, and for the remainder of his life was afflicted with a nervous disorder which on occasions plunged him into moods of deepest melancholy.

In the 1777, the Burns' family moved to the farm of Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, and circumstances became a little easier. Robert Burns now dressed with care, became a Freemason, originated a debating club and became champion of the 'New Lights' or liberal theologians as opposed to the 'Auld Lights' or ultra-Calvinists. In those days, theology was the queen of the sciences, and a matter to be taken seriously by all attendees at the kirk, and after divine worship, many and varied were the arguments in the kirkyard. We bethink any young clergyman who misquoted the Bible, or strayed from the accepted dogma of the day.

Burns' father died in 1784, so Robert and Gilbert took over the farm of Mossiel in the parish of Mauchline. Gilbert has testified that the Bard lived a most industrious and temperate life while living there. It was here in Mossiel that Burns wrote the bulk of his poetry, including "The Two Herds", "Holy Willie's Prayer", "To a Mouse", "The Cottar's Saturday Night", "Address to the Deil" and many more. He was earning an average of about thirty-five dollars per annum at this time. In spite of the arduous nature of the farm work, and his prolific outpourings of verse, Burns found time to indulge in amorous adventures with the local girls, and first enjoyed the worthy appellation of "father" when Elizabeth Paton bore him a daughter. Shortly afterwards he again strayed from the paths of righteousness and Jean Armour presented him with twins. To his credit he desired to marry Jean, but her parents would have nothing to do with him.

Also about this time the mysterious episode of Highland Mary occurred. She was a Highland servant girl by name of Mary Campbell, who was working in the locality, and Burns had evidently proposed marriage to her. She went home to prepare for the wedding, and died, apparently forgotten for the moment by Burns, but later to live for ever in his beautiful "To Mary in Heaven."

By the year 1786, Robert Burns was established as a poet of some note, and had the now famous "Kilmarnock Edition" of his poems published. Although this only put a few dollars in his pocket, (A single edition now sells for about three thousand dollars), but it was sufficient to convince him to remain in Scotland, rather than emigrate to the West Indies. A new edition was published by Mr. Creech, which gave the poet about fifteen hundred dollars, and he was lionized by the society of fashionable Edinburgh. With each new financial freedom, he made a tour of the Southern countries, then made a short return to Mauchline and Jean Armour, whom he had never ceased to love. He then made a tour of the Highlands, where he was entertained by the Dukes of Athole and Gordon. He then returned to Mauchline just in time to marry Jean Armour, who had been turned out of her father's home as a result of a second indiscretion with the Bard, which re-

Notes By The Way

A slave to fashion is the man who has a few grown-up daughters.—(St. Thomas Times-Journal.)

Gloom and optimism are both contagious. We ought to be careful about what we are spreading around.—(Farmer's Advocate.)

Chess is undoubtedly a noble game, and its international appeal is fittingly represented in the polyglot nature both of its terms and its bibliography. But for our money it would be easier and less painful to take up the study of Chinese ideographs, or to concentrate on the less excited but not less enjoyable game of cribbage.—(Halifax Chronicle-Herald.)

We know a little girl who once broke into tears after making a few errors in a piano solo. We hope she learns what happened to Jascha Heifetz in Dallas, Tex., recently. Heifetz, for the second time in his career, "just forgot" a portion of a Sibelius concerto and had to signal the conductor to stop the orchestra and start the movement over again. If Heifetz can err at the violin, we think little girls are entitled to at least a few mistakes at the piano.—(Buffalo Evening News.)

Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, one of the makers of modern Canada, found the spot which gave the province of Manitoba its name. While exploring Lake Manitoba, he landed on Manitoba Island and found on its north end a ridge about 600 feet long and twelve feet high. It was composed of hard limestone, cream and pink in color, which broke into irregular flattened fragments. When the wind blew from the north, the waves rolled up on the limestone pieces and the resonant pebbles were dashed against each other, creating a roaring sound like the beating of a huge drum. Indian superstition attributed the noise to their spirit Manitou beating a drum, and they called that part of the lake Narrows of the Spirit, or Manitobaw. This name was afterwards applied to the whole lake, then to

the province. With usage, the "w" on the end of the name was gradually dropped.—(From Winnipeg Free Press.)

Being locked up for drunkenness is the wrong way to achieve security.—Sault Ste. Marie Star.)

We note that the city of Edmonton is buying a sand-spreader which, it is claimed, will spread sand over icy streets to a width of four lanes at a speed up to 40 miles an hour.—(Lethbridge Herald.)

Canada first won fame as a source of wealth in the fur industry and in the centuries that have passed since the fur trade from the Canadian wilds made the Hudson's Bay Company famous in Britain, greater sources of wealth have seen development in grain, livestock, mining, the manufacture of paper and much else. But fur annually has continued to play an important part in the Canadian economy. As was apparent in Montreal the other day when the season's first fur auction by the Hudson's Bay Company, opened with buyers present from many countries and a bid on about 500,000 pelts worth more than \$2 millions. The entire lot will have been sold by the time these lines are published.—(Sydney Post-Record.)

The Canadian trucking industry had the best year in its history in 1953, a record which it enjoyed in common with many other businesses. Even so, human demands for goods and services are far from satisfied, and in fact many families in Canada still live on marginal existence. There is need for more production records to be broken.—Ottawa Citizen.

Old Charlottetown

(And P. E. I.)

BURNS ANNIVERSARY

"The recent anniversary of Robert Burns was celebrated by a number of admirers of the bard, who assembled for the purpose in Mrs. Miller's Hotel, and partook of a dinner prepared and served up in her best style. The chair was filled by Donald Macdonald of Glenaladale, Esq., assisted by Dr. Cummings, as croupier, and a Highland piper who was in attendance occasionally favoured the company with a pibroch or a lament.

"After the cloth was removed, the following toasts were given from the chair: The King; the Queen and the Royal Family; the Army and Navy; His Honour the Administrator of the Government; the memory of Robert Burns; the late poet of England, Scotland and Ireland; the memory of Sir Walter Scott; the memory of Byron; the memory of Wallace and Bruce; the memory of our late lamented Lieutenant Governor, Sir Artes Williams Young; the members of both Houses of the Colonial Legislature; the Chief Justice of the Island; the Bar of Prince Edward Island; the Ladies.

"Among the volunteer toasts of the evening were the following: the Earl of Godolphin, Governor-in-Chief, and the cause of Reform in Canada; Prince Edward Island; the memory of Burns' Highland Mary; Paymaster R. C. Macdonald, of the 30th Regiment, for his exertions to establish a benevolent society in this Island for the benefit of his poorer fellow-countrymen; Our Sister Colonies, and several others we have not space to mention.

"The party broke up about one o'clock, after enjoying themselves with great hilarity." —Royal Gazette, Jan. 26, 1836.

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