Planning For County Meetings, Some Reasons For Rural Poverty

By J. LINCOLN DEWAR

This week the Board of Directors of the three county Federations are meeting to consider plans for their annual meetings which will likely be taking place from the seventh to the fourteenth of December. These meetings are the grass root operation as the county Federation do not represent the views of any particular production but cut across the operation of farming.

Certainly there has been room for better attendance at these meetings. The opinion of a large group of people always carries more weight than that of a few unless they happen to be in some manner on the inside track.

The county meetings provide every member with the opportunity of raising problems which he feels requires attention and of obtaining the support of his neighbours in working towards solutions. Some prior thinking before coming to the meetings is also bound to produce better results.

THE POOR

Someone has said that being poor is no disgrace, that consists in looking that way. The scriptures have said "that the poor you will have with you", but even this hardly justifies not doing something about it.

We have recently been handed a small pamphlet issued by the Canadian Association For Adult Education in connection with two Citizens Forum programs for Nov. 23 and 30 and entitled, "Rural Poverty: What Can ARDA Do?" One set of statistics brought forward by ARDA presumes that a man who grosses less than $2,500 from his farm annually is poor and that a rural non-farmer who earns less than $3,000 is poor.

On this basis who are the rural poor? According to this set of statistics, they include the operators of 177,000 farms, out of the Canadian total of 436,000 ordinary (non-institutional) farms. By these same statistics, the rural poor include some 298,000 heads of families who earn less than $3,000 annually. If these figures are buttressed with the data on Indians—who provide the statistics mill with 26,000 heads of families earning less than $3,000 annually—the grand total is 500,000 families of rural poor.

WHERE ARE RURAL POOR?

They occur in formidable concentrations in the Atlantic Provinces and the Gaspe, but strangely enough their total number is greater west of the Ontario-Quebec boundary than east of it. West of this boundary they are hidden in the back concessions of Ontario—the highlands of Haliburton, Manitoulin Islands, the sylvan retreats of the Scotch Line, in the urban-industrial area between Ottawa and the Seaway.

HOW DO THEY LIVE?

What are the conditions of their existence? These vary, from the snug comfort of a modest, industrious, self-sufficient rural homestead, full of the contentment of modest aspirations adequately achieved, to the ultimate squalor of the rural slum with its ill-health, insecurity, frustration, mental and often physical in-breeding, suspicion, conservatism, apathy, and, in growing consequence, the opportunisms of the professional poor.

WHY ARE THEY POOR?

1. Many failed to see, a generation ago, that the flux of war and technological revolution would destroy the value of their minds and hands unless those assets were buttressed by a reasonable level of education or special skills.

2. Some had bad luck. The breaks of the game are real enough. Some fall on roses: some fall on their faces, and of these some are unable to rise again by their own efforts.

3. Some are satisfied with things as they are. Individualists exist—and not only on the pioneer fringes—who like the freedom and independence which tend to preclude acquisition of wealth, and some of these are willing to assume that their children will be like-minded.

4. One of the handmaidens of poverty is ill-health, and for some ill-health is the major arc of the vicious circle that keeps them poor.

5. Some settled on poor land. This is not in itself necessarily bad, as any extensive grain farmer in southwestern Saskatchewan can testify as he looks at grainaries profitably bulging from yields that are half the regional average. But unfertile land in small parcels consumes a farmer's energy and grudgingly yields a meagre subsistence.

6. Lack of capital is the bane of many farmers in an era which has coined that unpleasing, but quite realistic word, "agri-business" to describe the commercial production of food and fibre. Farming is a business now, at least as much as it is an art and way of life, and this in the modern day means use of credit. Farmers who remain too conservative to use credit, or who haven't the assets to secure adequate loans under present farm loan systems, cannot produce efficiently.

7. Many farmers lack management skills and technical knowledge of scientific farming. Study under skilled instruction is more necessary than many realize. But even if it is desired it is not always available.

HOG CONFERENCE

As a result of Canada's first Hog Conference held last spring in Montreal a co-ordinating sub-committee was set up through the summer and recently held its first meeting in Ottawa.

This sub-committee is charged with insuring that progress will be made towards the setting up of Provincial Hog Improvement organizations and also a National Hog Producer Organization. The Committee meeting heard reports from the provinces on progress being made provincially.

Considered was the basis of membership, size of the Board of Directors, financing, location of national office and the holding of a 1965 conference in the fall of the year. A further meeting is planned for January when the Elite Herd Committee will get together to plan this phase of hog activities.

MEETING CANCELLED

A meeting planned for Moncton on Tuesday was cancelled due to weather and travelling conditions. This meeting of the Feed Grains Committee was to deal with the proposed Feed Grain Agency and regulations applying to the movement of Western feed.

HAM TV ON AIR

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's first amateur television station has received government permission to begin broadcasting. The 22-member TV club operates a 50-watt transmitter with a range of about three miles. The hobbyists broadcast on a frequency beyond the range of ordinary TV sets.

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SECOND SECTION Charlottetown, Thurs., Dec. 3, 1964. PAGE 13

Current Profit Picture Defended By Bell Co.

OTTAWA (CP) — The Bell Telephone Company of Canada said here it must keep an attractive profit level to obtain the $1,250,000,000 of new capital it will require in the next five years.

It defended its current rising profit picture as "just and reasonable" and suggested that it should be allowed a return of about seven per cent on total capital investment.

Bell's record profit of $68,293,000 last year represented a return of 6.1 per cent on invested capital.

The argument was presented in an 1,800-word brief filed with the board's public hearings into sioners as an outline of the position Bell plans to defend at the board's public hearings into the profit structure of the huge private utility.

A lineup of big municipalities, labor organizations, industrial firms and other organizations is expected to argue against Bell's stand when the hearings open, probably in February.

Bell, which operates only in Ontario and Quebec, stressed in the brief its growing need for capital and the increasing attractiveness of the competing bids in the money market.

ASSETS GROW

Since 1958, Bells assets had increased to $5,500,000,000 from $1,492,000,000, a result of issuing $375,000,000 in bonds and $405,000,000 in common stock.

"The failure of prospective investors to invest in sufficient numbers in an offering of securities by the company would seriously damage the company's financial reputation and its ability to continue to provide the services required by its subscribers," the brief added.

For that reason, Bell was trying to provide a more attractive earnings picture "within the existing basic rate structure."

Bell noted that it now has more than 4,275,000 telephones in service with new demand running about 200,000 a year.

In 1958 the board set $2.43 per share as a reasonable profit level for the company. Last year's profit was equal to $2.58 per share and this year it is running at an annual rate of about $2.62

The brief did not suggest a per-share figure.

French-Canadian Life Described Restricted

NEW YORK (AP)—Life in French Canada is "extremely constricted and tense with frustrations," author-critic Edmund Wilson writes in the current New Yorker magazine.

One outlet for these frustrations has been the "rebellion against the tyranny of the church," and another has been a "vigorous reaction against pressures imposed by the English," he says.

The article is the third in a lengthy three-part series on Canadian culture which will be included in a book to be published next spring.

In it Wilson discusses the Duplessis era in Quebec and the separatist and nationalist movements that followed it.

He describes the last premier Maurice Duplessis as a ruthless, almost feudally reactionary and rather remarkable man, and says the "revolt" in Quebec was an immediate consequence of his death in 1959.

THIRST FOR THRILLS

Wilson says the more juvenile aspects of the Quebec nationalist movement are partly the result of the same thirst for thrills, lack of purpose and desperate insubordination prevalent among young people elsewhere.

But behind the French resistance to English Canada, and English Canada's resistance to absorption by the United States, lies "an instinct for self-preservation against the proddings and encroachments of centralized power that is spurring rebellions all over the world."

Wilson finds there is "a real fear on the part of both Canadas of having their countries taken away from them and being themselves reduced to serial numbers by the so-often still inaccurate computers of Washington. . . ."

THROUGHWAY TO BE MARKED

OTTAWA (CP) — Canada's first throughway, the 3,000-mile cross-country canoe route of the early fur traders and explorers, will be marked with signs, the northern affairs department said here.

Before the CPR was built in 1855, this voyageurs' highway carried traffic from Montreal to Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Extensions linked it with Hudson Bay, the Arctic and Pacific oceans.

The historic route in the main parallels the Trans-Canada Highway. It will be marked at roadside points with signs provided by the department's national parks branch.

In Ontario 37 signs will be erected for the department by the Ontario highways department. The signs, measuring 48 inches by 18, show a black north canoe bearing the words "historic trans-Canada canoe route" in white letters.

TAKES FISHERIES POST

OTTAWA (CP)—Appointment of Dr G. Ian Pritchard, 35, of Ottawa as special assistant to the chairman of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada was announced Monday. Dr. Pritchard, native of Alcove, Que., has conducted research on the nutrition and physiology of farm animals with the animal research institute of the agriculture department for the last six years.

CUBANS IN CONGO

MIAMI, Fla. (AP)—About 300 Cuban exiles are fighting rebels in The Congo, informed sources say. "They are training for forthcoming warfare (against Fidel Castro) in Cuba, said one exile.

Residual Powers Are Urged For Quebec In Constitution

QUEBEC (CP)—A University of Montreal economist has objected to a clause in the British North America Act giving the federal government power to legislate in all fields not specifically within provincial jurisdiction.

Philippe Ferland told the Quebec legislature committee on the constitution these "residual" powers should be transferred to the provinces.

In another brief, Cecilien Pelchat, a lawyer from St. Hyacinthe, Que., said Quebec should negotiate with New Brunswick to take over that part of the Maritime province occupied by French - speaking Canadians. ment jurisdiction not only over activities not foreseen in 1867, such as air navigation and the peaceful uses of atomic energy, but also over those not foreseen now, such as the entire field of space discoveries.

Unless Quebec is given the power to annul any federal law it finds incompatible with its autonomy in any new confederation, the economist said, the province will face "desperate solutions" such as separatism which he said would be carried out "on the ruins of the country."

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Early Island Tractor Seen At Alberton So.

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial-Farm Editor

I SAW at Alberton South what must be the oldest tractor in the province that is still in good running order. It was brought to the Island back around 1914 by Josh Henderson of Freeland. I was told by Norman Oliver the present owner.

Named the "Happy Farmer" tractor, it was manufactured by the LaCrosse Tractor Company of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

A huge machine, it has 24 horse power on the pulley and 12 on the draw bar.

The rear wheels are approximately five feet in diameter, and the distance from the rear of the tractor to the one wheel that is out front is about 13 feet. The steering mechanism is a worm-gear that took heavy grease, I believe, to keep it in easy running order.

It has a sprocket drive, and the lugs on the drive wheels are three to four inches deep, which provides good traction.

The Happy Farmer tractor has one forward speed and one speed to the rear. It can handle a three-bottom plow, Mr. Norman told me.

I HAVE been speaking thus far as though the old tractor is still in operation, but it has been laid up in the Oliver barn for the past three or four years. The head was taken off some time ago, and had not been replaced when I saw it almost two months ago. But there is not a spot or rust on the entire machine, and the tractor could be put into operation with a few hours' work, I gathered from my own examination, and from what Mr. Oliver told me about it. It burns gasoline or kerosene, Mr. Oliver said.

The first tractor started on dry cell batteries at first though a storage battery was used later. Pistons are six inches in diameter.

There is no crank, although it is not a self starter. A sort of wrench like device is used to grasp the fly wheel and turn it enough to start the engine.

Mr. Oliver told me he believes that the same type of tractor was purchased by St. Dunstan's College at the same time St. Dunstan's had not become a university at that time.

The clutch on the machine is operated by a fairly large work en lever, instead of by a foot pedal as has been the case for many years ago.

Bull Selection Vindicated

THE PERSON of Edison B. Mutch, North River and his fine Rivernorth herd of Jersey cattle came back to my memory when I saw in the Canadian Jersey Breeder that the get of Edgelea Beacon Jester Standard emerged as the top prize cow of the "Quality Classic" sale by the Oxford and District Cattle breeding association recently in Woodstock, Ontario.

Mr. Mutch did not breed the Edgelea bull; as the name implies the animal was bred by Alfred Bagg and Sons, Thornhill, Ontario. But Edison selected him in a shed where calves were kept at the time that, apparently, were not deemed suitable for sale as sires. At least that was Edison's understanding

HE SELECTED the calf for the Jersey Breeders Club of this province, kept him when they were not enthusiastic about the calf's possibilities, and had the satisfaction of taking him to the grand championship spot at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto several years afterwards.

It was the second year in succession he had hit that spot, for he had won the grand with Jester's Standard Dreamer on the previous occasion, and this bull was bred by Mr. Mutch himself.

Many were the enjoyable talks we had at the old Maritime Winter Fair when we would meet in his stable late at night, after both of us had completed our tasks for the day.

Rory Mor Was Strongman

RALPH CAMERON has drawn my attention to a strong man story told by the late Malcolm A. MacQueen the gifted writer from Belfast.

"The strength of some of the Highlanders was podigous", noted MacQueen who told about one "Rory MacLean of Pinette who was recognized as one of the strongest men in Canada.

"While yet a boy he gave an exhibition of strength that won him a prize. In a grocery store in Charlottetown he was challenged to exhibit his prowess. He was finally offered a bedtick full of oatmeal as a gift if he could lift it.

One of the home made linen bedticks—a tick was the covering for mattress stuffed with straw, or chaff, or sometimes with feathers—manufactured in the hand looms on the farm from native flax, was produced "This was filled with oatmeal, and, thus filled, weighed about 1200 pounds," reports MacQueen.

"Rory Mor (big) without hesitation got under this huge, unsainly mass and with it over his shoulders walked to the docks, from whence he took it by boat to his Belfast home," MacQueen relates.

It would be most difficult for a man to lift such an awkward mass that would be at all but impossible to get a proper grip on, much less carry it to a wharf some distance away. But Malcolm A MacQueen was a man who was not given to putting statements on paper without checking them most carefully. So his statement is accepted as part of the stories that have become the most interesting and colorful folk lore of the Belfast district.

RORY, MR. MACQUEEN relates, was often compared with Angus MacAskill, the Cape Breton giant who was seven feet nine inches in height and was three feet, eight inches across the shoulder.

So powerful was this man that he once shouldered a 2200-pound anchor which he handled so easily that he threw it from him. But a fluke of the anchor caught him behind the shoulder and injured him so seriously he later died from the effects.

BUT THE Island has other strong man stories too. Here's one that's just a bit different. Roland MacDonald, Southport tells me that his grandfather, William Acorn, Pownal used to hold a 56-pound weight on his little finger.

Old Forerunner Recalled

Recalling his boyhood days at Naufrage in this province Daniel McLean who writes often from his adopted British Columbia province recalls the days he spent as a small boy tramping knee-deep in the kelp and other rich sea plants.

"Above me on Neal's Cape", he recalls, were five graves with the bodies of unknown seamen that washed ashore a hundred years before. Among us then (and I am sure it is now), there was that odd one, one of those born with a veil, who could see beyond the boundaries of the senses.

"ANGUS OWEN was one of those. He could tell when death was near because a Ghost funeral would appear. Angus never missed on the color of the horse. Well I remember one night after a card party on geese, talking and walking back home in a glazed runner track. Suddenly he had me waist deep in snow by the road. 'Dan', he said, 'We must wait here a minute and let the funeral pass.'".

"Angus, I asked, who is driving the hearse?" "That's not for me to see, Dan, but the horse is Joe Hanning's Black Frank, and there are twelve buggies. The snow will be gone before this death will take place."

"It all came to pass as he described it to me over sixty years ago," Mr. MacLean tells me.

A BAND from a Canada Goose, banded at Marshfield by Albert Boswell, in the spring of 1963 has been returned to him, as the goose was shot on Oct. 26th '64 at Etanddu Nord, Magdalen Island P.Q.

Agnew-Surpass Slippers say Merry Christmas in the warmest way

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