

Larry Grey

NAME
NOM

No.

Larry Grey

1979 7 DOUGLAS ROAD S4H ON3

NORMAN:

I MAY, OR MAY NOT, HAVE TOLD YOU, I
ENDEAVOUR, IN "LARRYETTES", TO DEVELOP A
REASONABLE BLEND OF SENSE, AND NONSENSE.

I'VE BEEN ACCUSED OF OVER EMPHASIS ON
THE LATTER.

AFTER SCANNING THE ENCLOSURES, IF YOU DO,
MAY I HAVE YOUR ASSESSMENT?

Larry

Dec 17/80

Larryettes

Remember when?

By LARRY GRAY



I'm one of those persons who will often say: "Remember when?"

Remember when we walked 2½ miles to school, without a sponsor? No one had thought of walkathons, at that time.

Remember when farmers went to town only on Saturday nights?

Remember when water was clean, sex was dirty, and the town square was a place, not a person?

Remember when milk, if you had to buy it, cost five cents per quart? I don't know what our milk cost. A fact is, there was a belief it cost us virtually nothing — only 50 acres of pasture, to feed the cows in summer, 50 acres of oats, to feed them in winter, an hour spent in milking them

only twice each day, only seven days each week, and turning a hand-operated cream separator, only twice a day. That was all we had to do, to obtain our supply of milk.

But on our farm we had a refrigeration system, not to be seen on every farm. During winter months, we cut blocks of ice from the river, packed it in an underground storage space, where the cream, milk, and butter, were kept, to prevent the milk and cream turning sour, and the butter turning to oil.

For city residents, at that time, their standard of refrigeration was a 25-pound block of ice, delivered once each week, or twice each week, if the ice man was a friend. That ice was placed in the top

compartment of a piece of kitchen furniture somewhat resembling a modern refrigerator, though no light would come on when the door was opened. Perishable food was placed in a lower compart-

ment. As the ice melted, water found its way through a pipe, to a shallow pan underneath, where it invariably overflowed onto the kitchen floor.

That era of the kitchen ice-box ended with electric refrigerators, capable of making ice cubes, keeping ice cream solid, and making daily delivery of milk unnecessary.

Now, we're entering another new era, with sterilized milk, having a shelf life of six months without refrigeration.

The sterilization process is heating the milk for three seconds, at a temperature of 285 degrees of Fahrenheit. (If you want that converted to the other system, you'll have to do it yourself.)

Sterilized milk is packaged in air-tight sealed containers, and can be stored with almost any other type of foods.

Sterilized milk has untold potential benefits — savings in refrigerated storage costs, savings in reduced frequency of delivery, a boon to isolated areas where transportation, on a regular basis, is difficult to maintain, and milk produced in periods of high production, can be processed and stored, for use in periods of low production.

Remember that song we sang, 60 years ago: "Have we gone about as far as we kin go?"

I'm sure I don't know. I won't be surprised to hear

someone has devised a process of converting grass to milk, without using a cow.

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Larryettes

Sense and nonsense

By LARRY GRAY



Three weeks ago, a bit of confusion developed for a lady of our acquaintance, when her nine-year-old son, Marvin, asked: "Hey Mom! How come they put Massey Ferguson in jail?" "Now where did you hear that?" asked Mom. "I heard on the radio that the government had to bail out Massey Ferguson," he replied.

Trained, through long experience, in having ready answers to questions asked by youngsters, Mom said: "One doesn't need to be in jail, to be bailed out. Sometimes, people who are in debt can be bailed out." "Oh yeah!" said Marvin. "Then how come Massey Ferguson is in debt after all those things Dad bought from him, like the baler, and the tractor, and all that other stuff?" Mom is still pondering that one.

You're right. Marvin is a Saskatchewan farm lad.

The latest story coming from the recent Nova Scotia by-election tells of a candidate conducting his campaign by that common practise of knocking on doors. One evening, as darkness was approaching, and a heavy rain falling, he was considering calling it a day, but decided to

make one more call. There was some delay until the last door was opened by an elderly lady. She didn't invite him in, so there he stood, thoroughly soaked. She waited until he had made his "pitch", then with a "wrong side of the tracks" accent, said: "Don't know as I'd vote for anybody who ain't got enough sense to stay home when it's rainin'."

I hadn't realized how many situations will confront one campaigning for election.

Now one last story. A chap who had rented a car from one of those "Rent A Car" places, returned it with the odometer (speedometer) registering 430 kilometres over the no-charge limit. Reminding him there was a 10-cent charge for each kilometre over the no-charge limit, the young lady at the check-in counter said: "Let's see now, that'll be, ah, let's see, ah." Finally, she dropped her pencil, picked up a calculator, and proceeded to multiply 430 by 10.

"God knows," said the motorist, "what she would have done, under the old system, without a calculator, if it had been 387.6 miles at 12½ cents per mile."

Now, one more last story. Did I tell you what our

neighbors did, last summer? Maybe I did, but I thought it such a good idea, I'll mention it again. They sent their dog to camp, and their kids to obedience school.

Next week, if my stuff continues to be published, maybe a bit more sense, and a bit less nonsense.

People who say just what they think have lots of explaining to do.

Those who command the most respect respect the rights of others.

People who didn't take time to vote don't have the right to kick.

Today, as always, high living lays many a family low.

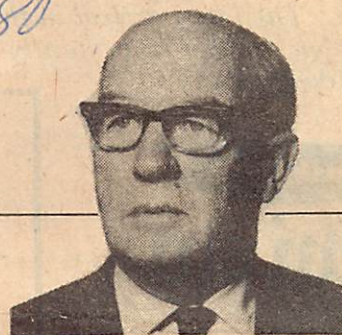
If you're offered a free ride, better re-check your destination.

Say thanks for your troubles occasionally — they're signs of life.

Promises may ignite friendship but loyalty keeps it burning.

19 EC.
31/80

Larryettes



A new year

By LARRY GRAY

Tomorrow will be what is described as "New Years Day", the beginning of a new year.

I could never understand why the middle of the least pleasant of our four seasons should have been chosen for the beginning of a new year.

I believe a new year should begin in April, that period when nature creates so many changes, gives so many of its creations a new lease on life, and brings forth so many new creations.

As a young lad, on our farm, I remember so many changes, and so many new things, in April. The changing weather brought gophers, badgers, and skunks, out from their winter hibernation, and brought migratory birds back from spending winter in warmer climates.

April was the month when our calves were born, our chickens were hatched, crocuses poked their furry purple heads above the prairie grass, and those fat buds on the poplar trees opened to disclose glossy leaves. In April, our garden plot was plowed, in preparation for seeding. From the house, we removed the "storm windows", and washed the outsides of permanent windows, unwashed through five months of winter. The large stove, which had occupied the living room through winter months, was carried to the machine whed, where it would remain until October, or maybe November.

So many things changed, and so many new things began, in April, it seemed almost like starting a new year.

Of course, beginning a new year in April, or in any other month, would be no guarantee of a better year ahead. Though we may enter each new year with hopes for something better than in the one just finished, we may find the new to be much like the old. There'll be wars, and rumors of wars. There'll be earthquakes and floods, riots and protest marches. There'll be higher taxes and lower morals, shorter tempers and longer faces.

We may wonder if this old world can possible survive another year, and if it can, what kind of place will it be.

But I believe people have been pondering on that, through several generations. I remember my father, when our government, and life styles were not of his choice, would often say: "I wonder what this world is coming to". When we review the sorry mess in which we find it now,

his concern would appear to have been justified.

But if tomorrow is really the beginning of a new year, let us not dwell on its less favorable aspects.

I look forward to 1981 being as interesting, as healthful, and as fruitful, as many others I have experienced.

I hope it will be the same for all of you.

Lewvan residents attend Christmas Carol play

Lewvan [cpd] — On Thursday evening the Milestone High School presented A Christmas Carol with Steve Merriam as Scrooge and Janice Harker playing Mrs. Cratchit.

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Farkas and Mrs. Iona Rienhumer motored to Rocky Mountain House to spend Christmas with their daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Don Hval and girls.

Home for the Christmas holidays at the Ian Buddings are Mr. and Mrs. Bob Jenzen and Kristine of Grand Prairie and Daphne Budding, Caronport.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Harker, Janice and Paul spent Christmas day, Boxing Day with Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Dambly and family in Melville. Other relatives at the Dambly's were Mr. and Mrs. Bob Niven and boys of Calgary, Mr. and Mrs. Chester Schwindt of Regina.

Christmas guests at the Otto Dreger's were Mrs. Art Wintringham of Yellow Grass, Ray Dreger, Saskatoon and Don Dreger of Regina.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Merriam, Steve of Lewvan, Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Merriam of White City spent Christmas day with Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Caine and other relatives in Tyvan.

Home for Christmas with the Jack Brown's were Mr. and Mrs. Rick Arneson, Lee and Scott, Milestone and Doug and Robert Brown of Regina.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Widdis of Indian Head were Christmas Day guests at the home of Tom and Grace Quigley.

Mr. and Mrs. Alan Widdis and Creighton were Christmas guests with Connie McLeod in Radville.

Home for Christmas at the Hugh McLaughlin home were Susan McLaughlin, Calgary; Mr. and Mrs. Grant McLaughlin and family of Moose Jaw, Mr. and Mrs. N.E. Wilson and Mr. and Mrs. Don McLaughlin and family of Regina, Mr. and Mrs. Don McLaughlin were involved in a rear end collision when turning off No. 6

highway and Pat McLaughlin required medical attention.

Mr. and Mrs. Herb Schwindt spent Christmas day in Regina with their family.

Home for Christmas at the Gordon McMorris' were Mr. and Mrs. Alan Gilbert, Camrose, Alta. and Lorna McMorris of Regina.

Stacey Bell returned home from the hospital a week ago. The Graham Bell's spent Christmas with Graham's family in Weyburn.

Kevin Aasen of Saskatoon is home for the holidays.

Froude folks to Texas for

Froude [cpd] — Trevor and Marie Dammann of Froude and Bill and Andrew Sigda from Fillmore left on Thursday, December 18 to spend Christmas in Texas with Le Roy and Eileen Dammann and Lois.

The school at Griffin had a dinner for the children and their parents, followed by a Christmas concert, which some of the Froude people attended on Thursday, December 18.

The family of Charles and Olivia Dammann took them to supper at the Stone House Inn in Halbrite on Thursday evening, December 18 for their 35th wedding anniversary. Those present were Wendy Dammann of Weyburn, Bev and Ken Hofmeister from Halbrite, Dal and Randy of Froude, Kathy Gottfried from Weyburn, Sharlie and Jim Skuce and family of Radville, Gerry and Darlene Dammann and Brent and Opal Keturkis from Heward.

On Christmas Sunday, December 21 in Froude United Church they had communion, followed by a coffee party and carol singing. There were about 20 present.

act. since '66

apx 6

'69

Larry Grey 7 Douglas Rd 1980

Ex-actor
farmer

Weyburn

1978

5 years of Rodeo Bird Country prior to 1981

Larryettes in Weyburn Paper

Local water church
Payer in Church Choir 1981

Member of Rotary Club

Letter: '84

family Ted & Joanne - living in Britain
(married & had kids?)

ages Joanne from Britain

2 trials & common mold around globe

Shirley (daughter) & Glen

Ted Joanne - now a home in
the Gatens Hill Leeb?

Shirley & Glen - farm near Regina
+ in border over →

WIPEG

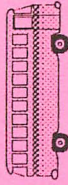
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Y PEOPLE FROM
AS YOU CAN AND
GETHER!



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Review my subscription 20 Jan / 97

Ellen (Shirley) Hubbard, Vice President of Canadian Federation of Agriculture 1980

Check with the Weyburn Review

THIS ONE RAISED THE HACKLES ON A DEVOUT
MEMBER OF THE FARMERS UNION, THE NDP, AND HIS
LOCAL HINKEY DINKEY CO-OP. SPOKE OF SUING ME.
I HOPE YOU DON'T HOLD YOUR PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY
TO BE INFALLIBLE.

NOT A PART OF MY STUFF, BUT THOUGHT PROVOKING. REMINDS ME, EVERY TIME WE
DECIDE TO BUILD A RAILROAD ADDITION, A HIGHWAY, A POWER LINE, A PIPE LINE, OR DO
ANYTHING ELSE REPRESENTING A PUBLIC SERVICE, WE MUST CONFER WITH ENVIRONMENTALISTS,
OR INDIANS.

In the beginning
There was Earth; beautiful and wild;
And then man came to dwell.
At first, he lived like other animals
Feeding himself on creatures and plants around him.
And this was called IN BALANCE WITH NATURE.
Soon man multiplied.
He grew tired of ceaseless hunting for food;
He built homes and villages.
Wild plants and animals domesticated.
Some men became Farmers so that others might become Industrialists,
Artists, or Doctors.
And this was called Society.
Man and Society Progressed.
With his God-given ingenuity, man learned to feed, clothe, protect, and
transport himself more efficiently so he might enjoy Life.
He built cars, houses on top of each other, and nylon.
And life was more enjoyable.
The men called Farmers became efficient.
A single farmer grew food for 41 Industrialists, Artists, and Doctors.
And Writers, Engineers, and Teachers as well.
To protect his crops and animals, the Farmer produced substances to repel
or destroy Insects, Diseases, and Weeds.
These were called Pesticides.
Similar substances were made by Doctors to protect humans.
These were called Medicine.
The Age of Science had arrived and with it came better diet and longer,
happier lives for more members of Society.
Soon it came to pass
That certain well-fed members of Society
Disapproved of the Farmer using Science.
The spoke harshly of his techniques for feeding, protecting, and preserving
plants and animals
They deplored his upsetting the Balance of Nature;
They longed for the Good Old Days.
And this had emotional appeal to the rest of Society.
By this time Farmers had become so efficient, Society gave them a new title:
Unimportant Minority.
Because Society could not ever imagine a shortage of food
Laws were passed abolishing Pesticides, Fertilizers, and Food Preservatives.
Insects, Diseases, and Weeds flourished.
Crops and animals died.
Food became scarce.
To survive, Industrialists, Artists, and Doctors were forced to grow their own
food.
They were not very efficient.
People and governments fought wars to gain more agricultural land.
Millions of people were exterminated.
The remaining few lived like animals.
Feeding themselves on creatures and plants around them.
And this was called IN BALANCE WITH NATURE.

Larry

Dear Norman:

The accompanying "Gang Letter" was designed for, and I hope will serve, the purpose of providing a general coverage of our existence - and attempt at co-existence - during the past year, for that group whose members claim they like to know what we have been doing, but are not really too interested in details. But there are those who, for long association, common interests, and/or conflicting views on political, economic, social, and moral issues, rate individual recognition. So, I'm providing this supplement, and you may choose, from the above list, your own category.

I mentioned in the "Gang" a mixed-up 1968. Probably an understatement. We really had two crops, the first one reaching a height of about six inches and early maturity, the second one appearing only after our first rain on July 15. We ignored the first crop, which virtually disappeared anyway, and waited for the second, with natural consequences, harvest time flooding and a frost. Yield and quality were, of course, down, but what we did salvage went into storage in good condition.

This damp grain problem is, in my opinion, largely inexcusable. It seems to me too many people of today have discarded their ingenuity and resourcefulness, and turned to government for a regimented - and dictated - way of life.

But let's not get too deeply into that. We so often, in recalling our experiences in Asia, have reason to be grateful for so much of what we have that others have not.

Your resume of family left me almost lost in centre field. I maintain a vague recollection of the number, but the names escape me, because I seem to have reached that age when the things I remember are those things I should forget.

However, it's always pleasant to hear of those whose families have matured, found, and established proper places within a proper form of society. There are so many who have not, and we consider ourselves most fortunate in having raised a family of which we are exceptionally proud.

We have no definite plans of travel for the coming winter, excepting a trip to Eastern Canada in January. If the weather co-operates, or whoever is running the show, co-operates, we may drive

East, and go for another look at Southern U.S.,
probably Florida. Europe is definitely out for this
time of year.

So glad to know you plan to take a break.
Wisconsin may not be sub-tropical, but I recall we
spent several days in the Madison area some years ago
and found it quite pleasant.

Your letter was among the first of our "annuale".
We expect, and hope for many more. We like to know
where people are, how they are, and if they are, because
we occasionally learn, with regret, that some no
longer are.

We're glad to know that you and Grace are,
and for both of you, all the best of all there is.

Larry



SEASON'S GREETINGS

143 Ash Drive,
Weyburn, Sask.

The tranquility of a late breakfast in our home was shattered this morning.

I had just finished reading the comics in the paper - a habit which, I suspect, Irma considers to be a waste of time, but after all, I never look at the Sports Section - a habit which I consider to be a waste of time. Was turning to the obituary column, to make sure we were not included, when Irma virtually broke the sound barrier by suggesting it was about time to write our Christmas letter.

Ye Gods! Where did the time go? And what did we do with it?

Well, six months of it, or more, was assigned to answering the exacting demands of a farming operation. And what a mixed up year! No summer, really, but drought, hail, frost, and excessive harvest time rains. We had a measure of each. But a comforting moisture reserve for 1969. You see, we still believe in counting our blessings.

By standards of a few previous years, our goings and comings through 1968 were limited. Two weeks at the West Coast in January, where cold winds and a bit of snow embarrassed the local Board of Trade people. Most unusual weather, we were told. Another two weeks in July for a visit to the Peace River area and Okanagan Valley in B.C. The massive dam near Hudson Hope is complete, and until the reservoir is filled, the Mighty Peace is reduced to a mere trickle. Hadn't realized before, how important water could be to a river. The Okanagan Valley was, as local residents claim always, beautiful. We wouldn't dispute their claim.

Both these trips were shared, but Irma took a further two weeks in September to attend the International Meeting of A.C.W.W. (Associated Country Women of the World) in Lansing, Michigan. Harvest and budget problems kept me at home.

May 1981

THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD EXPIRED, LEAVING MANY OF US WONDERING WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT, AND WHAT, IF ANYTHING, WAS ACCOMPLISHED.

THIS YEAR, PROBABLY NO MORE MEANINGFUL, BUT MORE LIKELY TO BE REMEMBERED BY SASKATCHEWAN TAXPAYERS, WILL FEATURE A YEAR-LONG BIRTHDAY PARTY,- 75 YEARS OLD, OR YOUNG.

A REAL "BANG-UP" PARTY COULD HAVE BEEN PLANNED, LIKE ONE IN ALBERTA, WHERE THE GOVERNMENT IS REPORTED TO BE SPENDING \$75 MILLION ON A SIMILAR PARTY, BUT SOME CIRCUMSTANCE HAS CAUSED OUR GOVERNMENT TO ALLOCATE ONLY A MEASLY \$5.5 MILLION; \$2.2 MILLION TO COVER SALARIES AND ADVERTISING, LEAVING ONLY \$3.3 MILLION FOR LOCAL DISTRICT COMMITTEES TO BUY BALLOONS, STREAMERS, FUNNY HATS, AND OTHER BIRTHDAY PARTY FEATURES.

BUT LIMITED FUNDS WON'T DISCOURAGE PUBLIC SPIRITED CITIZENS LIKE PETE KEEFER, MAYOR OF TURKEY RIDGE, THAT DUMP NOT FAR FROM GOPHER GULCH. SPEAKING AT A MASS MEETING IN THE DINING ROOM, ADJACENT TO THE COCKTAIL LOUNGE, IN HIS HOTEL, PETE SAID: "WE AINT AGONNA TAKE NO BACK SEAT TO NOBODY IN THIS HERE SELLYBRATE ON SASKATCHEWAN. ANYTHING THEM CITIZENS IN GOPHER GULCH CAN DO, WE CAN DO BETTER, AND IF OUR GOVAMINT DON'T GIVE US ENOUGH MONEY TO DO IT, I KNOW YOUSE GUYS'LL SHELL OUT A COUPLA BUCKS. ANYWAYS, FOR WHAT I PLAN TO DO, WE SHOULD GET MORE THAN THAT GUY IN MOOSE JAW, WHO GOT 50 BUCKS FOR JUST BUILDIN AN OVERSIZE DOG HOUSE IN HIS FRONT YARD."

PETE HAS SEVERAL PROJECTS LINED UP TO SELLYBRATE ON SASKATCHEWAN, IN TURKEY RIDGE, ONE OF THEM TO BE A ROCK THROWING CONTEST,- NO PROBLEM THERE. THE PLACE IS POLLUTED WITH ROCKS. BUT "FRENCHY" MOLOFSKY, THE "MOUNTIE" IN TURKEY RIDGE IS SKEPTICAL. HE SAYS A THING LIKE THAT COULD GET OUT OF HAND IN A PLACE WHERE COMMUNITY AND FAMILY FEUDS HAVE PREVAILED THROUGH THREE GENERATIONS.

"LARRYETTES" BY LARRY GRAY

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK? NO! I WASN'T FIRED. IT WAS A COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES LEAVING ME FACING A TUESDAY MORNING DEADLINE WITHOUT ANYTHING I WOULD HAVE CONSIDERED OFFERING TO THOSE WHO READ MY COLUMN. SO, NO LARRYETTES LAST WEEK.

BUT CAME THURSDAY, I HAD AN EXPERIENCE I SHOULD REPORT. I HAD GONE TO THE MALL, OR WEYBURN SQUARE, AND BOUGHT A POSTCARD, THOUGH I REALLY DIDN'T NEED TO BUY ONE, HAVING A DOZEN, OR MORE, AT HOME, GATHERED FROM MOTELS WHERE WE HAD STAYED, LAST SUMMER. MY REAL PURPOSE FOR GOING THERE WAS TO COMPARE PRICES ON A NUMBER OF ITEMS WITH PRICES ON SIMILAR ITEMS IN SHOPS OVER ON THIRD STREET. BUT I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT THAT, SOME OTHER TIME.

ON COMING TO THAT PLACE IN THE MALL WHERE ONE WILL USUALLY SEE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE-WATCHERS, SITTING ON BENCHES, I WAS HAILED BY AN OLD MAN,- WELL, ANOTHER OLD MAN, WHO SAID: "HEY LARRY! I WANTA TALK TO YOU." BECAUSE I KNEW THIS FELLOW, I WASN'T EXPECTING ANY PROFOUND, OR ENLIGHTENING, CONVERSATION, BUT I SAT DOWN BESIDE HIM, BECAUSE ONE NEVER KNOWS WHAT MIGHT DEVELOP FROM THE MOST UNLIKELY SOURCES, AND I DID NEED SOMETHING FOR MY COLUMN. "WHAT'S YOUR TROUBLE?" I ASKED. "OH, NO TROUBLE." HE REPLIED, "BUT TELL ME, WERE YOU REALLY A MEMBER OF THAT DISTRICT WHERE YOU LIVED, BEFORE YOU RETIRED?" FEARING IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A "TRICK" QUESTION, I HESITATED A BIT, BUT FINALLY SAID: "OF COURSE I WAS A MEMBER OF THAT DISTRICT, AND FOR MORE THAN 45 YEARS. WHY DO YOU ASK?" "YEAH!" HE SAID. "I KNEW YOU HAD LIVED THERE QUITE A WHILE, BUT I MEAN, DID YOU GO TO ALL THE GATHERINGS, LIKE SCHOOL PICNICS, SPORTS DAYS, AND WHEAT POOL MEETINGS. WERE YOU A DIRECTOR OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, AND WERE YOUR KIDSMEMBERS OF 4-H CLUBS, AND STUFF LIKE THAT?" "WELL, NO." I SAID. "I WASN'T MIXED IN ALL THINGS LIKE THAT, BECAUSE I NEVER SEEMED TO HAVE TIME TO GO TO EVERY MEETING, LIKE SOME OTHERS IN THE DISTRICT DID." "NEITHER DID I," HE SAID. "WHEN WE MOVED TO OUR DISTRICT, 50 YEARS AGO, WE HAD THREE KIDS. THE OLDEST WAS SIX YEARS, AND THE YOUNGEST WAS SIX MONTHS. THAT WAS BEFORE WE HEARD OF BABY SITTERS, SO WE STAYED PRETTY MUCH TO HOME. OF COURSE, WE WERE INVITED TO ALMOST EVERYTHING GOING ON IN THE DISTRICT, AND WE GOT TO SOME OF THEM, BUT IT WAS SUCH A CHORE, GETTING THOSE KIDS READY TO GO ANY PLACE, THEN GETTING THEM READY TO COME HOME AGAIN. AND AFTER A WHILE, PEOPLE MUST HAVE NOTICED WE WEREN'T TAKING PART IN MANY THINGS AROUND THE DISTRICT, BECAUSE A FELLOW WHO SEEMED TO GO EVERYWHERE, AND BE INTO EVERYTHING, TOLD ME IF WE WANTED TO BE CONSIDERED MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT, I SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY THE WHEAT POOL, THE BEEF RING, AND VOTE LIBERAL. BUT Y'KNOW, LARRY! 15 YEARS LATER, THAT SAME FELLOW TOLD ME I SHOULD BE A DIRECTOR OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, A MEMBER OF THE WHEAT POOL COMMITTEE, A MEMBER OF THE FARMERS UNION, JOIN THE CO-OP, AND VOTE CCF." "AND DID YOU JOIN ALL THOSE THINGS, AND VOTE CCF?" I ASKED. "WELL, NO," HE REPLIED. "I NEVER WENT TO AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, OR WHEAT POOL, MEETINGS, AND WHEN A NEIGHBOR TOLD ME A FELLOW GOT A DOLLAR FOR EVERY NEW MEMBER HE SIGNED UP IN THE FARMERS UNION, I DECIDED IF THAT OUTFIT HAD TO BUY ITS MEMBERS, TO MECK WITH IT! I NEVER VOTED CCF, AND THAT BUNCH WE HAVE IN OTTAWA WOULD DRIVE ME TO VOTE COMMUNIST, BEFORE I'D VOTE LIBERAL." AT THAT POINT, I STOOD UP, AND SAID: "SORRY, BUT I MUST GO NOW. I PROMISED TO BE HOME A HALF HOUR AGO." "YEAH!" HE SAID, "MAYBE I'LL GET A CHANCE TO TALK TO YOU AGAIN SOMETIME." YEAH! AND I'M AFRAID HE MIGHT.

SAME PLACE, DEC. ~~24~~

Nov 28

DEAR NORMAN:

I DELIBERATELY WITHHELD MY YEAR-END COMMUNIQUE, AND REBUTTAL, UNTIL I DISCOVERED WHAT MIGHT COME FROM BINSARTH THIS TIME.

I'VE PERUSED THE ENCLOSED CLIPPINGS, NOTING THE \$129,000 SHACK WITH 2½ BATHS ON THE BOULEVARD, INDICATING AN ABSENCE OF FALSE MODESTY AMONG ITS OCCUPANTS, WHO MAY BE JAPANESE, NURTURED IN COMMUNAL BATHING. I ALSO NOTED LOCATION OF THE PLACE,- MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN, REMINDING ME OF A CHAP WHO BOUGHT ONE OF THOSE IN TORONTO, ADVERTISED AS BEING ONLY 20 MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN, DISCOVERING AFTER HE MOVED IN, IT WAS 20 MINUTES BY TELEPHONE. THE C.S.M. ITEM ON MILK CONTROL BOARDS, BY JOHN GOULD, RECALLS THE NUMBER OF YEARS, AS PRESIDENT OF SASK CO-OP CREAMERIES, I WAS A TARGET FOR SNIPING BY THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF CONSUMERS, PROMPTING ME TO SUGGEST ONE OR TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE C.A.C. BE APPOINTED TO EACH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS MARKETING BOARD, AND TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR EVERY MAJOR MANUFACTURING COMPANY. I VENTURE TO SAY THAT WOULD RESULT IN LESS CRITICISM OF MARKETING BOARDS AND MANUFACTURING COMPANIES. JOHN GOULD WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN AN OWNER, OR OCCUPANT, OF ONE OF THOSE SMALL DIVERSIFIED FARMS, WITH TWO COWS, TWO SOWS, A FLOCK OF HENS, AND A GARDEN. THOUGH YOU MARKED, WITH AN ASTERISK, AUGUST HECKSCHER'S ITEM,- "THE MOON IS FULL", I HAVE NO COMMENT.

1981 CROPS IN THE WEYBURN DISTRICT RANGED FROM FAIR TO EXCELLENT, DEPENDING ON WHERE RAIN SHOWERS FELL. ONE NEED BE ONLY FIFTY YARDS AWAY FROM THOSE, TO FEEL ADVERSE EFFECTS. THOUGH I'M AWARE OF AN IMBALANCE BETWEEN COSTS OF PRODUCTION, AND REALIZED MARKET RETURNS, FOR WHEAT, WHEN I HEARD ONE CHAP SAY THE PRODUCER NEEDED \$10 PER BUSHEL F.O.B. WEYBURN, OR WHEREVER, TO STAY ABOVE BANKRUPTCY, I WONDERED IF HE WAS A 10 BUSHEL PER ACRE, OR 30 BUSHEL PER ACRE PRODUCER. I ALSO WONDERED HOW MANY OF THOSE PEOPLE I SAW IN ESATERN

ASIA WOULD BE POTENTIAL BUYERS OF WHEAT AT \$10 PER BUSHEL, F.O.B. WEYBURN, OR ANYWHERE ELSE.

YOUR ACCOUNT OF A TRIP TO HAY RIVER, BY ROAD, IS INTERESTING. THOUGH WE HAVE BEEN FARTHER NORTH, INTO ALASKA AND THE YUKON, WE'VE NOT BEEN NORTH OF PEACE RIVER IN ALBERTA. THAT WOULD BE WHERE YOU WOULD TAKE THE MCKENZIE HIGHWAY?

MY MAP DOESN'T SHOW THE TOWN OF LITTLE SLAVE LAKE, WHERE THE POPULACE IMPRESSED, OR MAYBE PRESSED YOU, BUT YOU'RE FORTUNATE THEY DIDN'T EXACT TOLL FROM YOU, TO TRAVEL ON A ROAD THEY NEITHER BUILT, PAID FOR, OR MAINTAINED. WE NEVER ENCOUNTERED ANY OF THOSE CREATURES, UNTIL WE WENT TO THE DAM AT HUDSON HOPE. THE DAM WAS COMPLETED, AND BEGINNING TO FILL THE RESERVOIR BY LIMITING THE RIVER FLOW.

IN FACT, ONE COULD ALMOST WALK ACROSS THE "MIGHTY PEACE" BELOW THE DAM. THIS HAD CAUSED A LARGE AREA OF MUSKRAT HABITAT, FARTHER DOWNSTREAM, TO DRY UP.

A GROUP OF ENVIRONMENTALISTS, OR MAYBE GREEN PEACE PARASITES, WERE URGING THE INDIANS, WHO WERE ON FULL WELFARE, TO PROTEST THE RUINING OF THEIR TRAPPING GROUNDS. SO, THEY LOITERED AROUND THE DAM, EATING POTATO CHIPS, SMOKING CIGARETTES, AND TELLING VISITORS ABOUT THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

NO, WE DIDN'T MAKE THAT LONG PROMISED RUN TO BINSARTH. WE VENTURED BEYOND OUR POSTAL CODE AREA ONLY ONCE DURING THE ENTIRE YEAR,- TO CALGARY, TO ASSESS MY SISTER'S CHANGE OF LIFE STYLE, FROM A HOUSE TO SOMETHING OF MORE COMFORT, AND FEWER RESPONSIBILITIES,- A PLACE WE WOULD CHOOSE FOR OURSELVES, WERE IT IN WEYBURN. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF BEING THAT CLOSE TO THE MOUNTAINS, WE MADE OUR BIENNIAL VISIT, FINDING THEM AS IMPRESSIVE AS EVER. RETURNING VIA CALGARY, WE NARROWLY ESCAPED THE CALGARY STAMPEDE. I REMEMBER SEEING A PART OF THAT SPECTACLE, 25 YEARS AGO, AND FOR ONE WHO HAS OWNED , AND WORKED WITH HORSES AND CATTLE, IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A DISGUSTING EXHIBITION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS, ENHANCED BY IMITATION COWBOYS, AND DIRTY INDIANS.

THOUGH IRMA'S PROBLEM WITH ARTHRITIS RESTRICTS OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES TO VIRTUALLY NIL, I KEEP REASONABLY ACTIVE; WALKING A MILE B.P. (BEFORE PORRIDGE) EACH MORNING, ATTENDING ROTARY MEETINGS, EACH WEEK, TO PROTECT MY 46-YEAR MEMBERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CLUB, SING, OR OCCUPY A CHAIR, IN THE CHURCH CHOIR, AND OF COURSE MY PUBLIC EXPECTS A COLUMN, EACH WEEK.

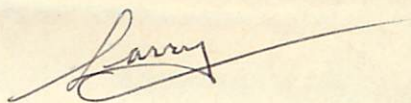
THOUGH WE QUALIFY FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE LOCAL SENIOR CITIZENS ORGANIZATION, BEING 20 YEARS OLDER THAN SOME OF THEM, THEIR PROGRAMS FAIL TO ENTHUSE US. WE NEVER DID DEVELOP INTEREST IN BINGO, CHECKERS, DOMINOES, OR CARPET BOWLING, AND ON THE TWO OCCASIONS I RESPONDED TO A SPECIAL INVITATION TO ATTEND THEIR EVENING MEETINGS, I FOUND MOST OF THEM SITTING AROUND LIKE DREARY GUESTS AT A PARTY, REPEATING THEIR COMMENTS, UNTIL IT BECAME CLEAR HOW LITTLE THEY EVER DID HAVE TO SAY. BUT PERHAPS I'M ANTI-SOCIAL?

WE SPENT CHRISTMAS DAY AT THE FLATEN FARM, WITH TED AND WIFE JANICE FROM OTTAWA, THE FOUR JUNIOR FLATENS, BARBARA FROM VICTORIA, TWO BOYS FROM SASKATOON, AND ONE AT HOME. SHIRLEY AND GLEN ARE HOLIDAYING IN FIJI. IT'S BECOMING DIFFICULT TO GET THAT FAMILY ALL TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME.

I NOTE YOUR LAST CLAN COUNT TOUCHED FIFTY, INDICATING SOME PRODUCTIVE GENES SOMEWHERE, MORE LIKELY IN THE ATKINSON LINE, RECALLING YOU WERE A LONER TURNBULL. IS THAT RIGHT?

HAD A LETTER FROM BILL SCARTH, REPORTING HIS TRIP TO THE MARITIMES, AND PLANNING TO BE IN EDMONTON AT CHRISTMAS. ALSO HAD A LETTER FROM THE DAUGHTER (RICKER), NOW IN TORONTO, REPORTING LORNA'S DEATH.

YOU'VE HAD YOUR 1951 CHRISTMAS. SO, MAY YOUR 1952 CHRISTMAS BE CHEEFUL, AND MAY THE YEAR OF 1952 BE HEALTHFUL AND SUCCESSFUL FOR YOU, FOR GRACE, AND FOR THOSE OTHER FIFTY.



"LARRYETTES" BY LARRY GRAY

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK? NO! I WASN'T FIRED. IT WAS A COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES LEAVING ME FACING A TUESDAY MORNING DEADLINE WITHOUT ANYTHING I WOULD HAVE CONSIDERED OFFERING TO THOSE WHO READ MY COLUMN. SO, NO LARRYETTES LAST WEEK.

BUT CAME THURSDAY, I HAD AN EXPERIENCE I SHOULD REPORT. I HAD GONE TO THE MALL, OR WEYBURN SQUARE, AND BOUGHT A POSTCARD, THOUGH I REALLY DIDN'T NEED TO BUY ONE, HAVING A DOZEN, OR MORE, AT HOME, GATHERED FROM MOTELS WHERE WE HAD STAYED, LAST SUMMER. MY REAL PURPOSE FOR GOING THERE WAS TO COMPARE PRICES ON A NUMBER OF ITEMS WITH PRICES ON SIMILAR ITEMS IN SHOPS OVER ON THIRD STREET. BUT I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT THAT, SOME OTHER TIME.

ON COMING TO THAT PLACE IN THE MALL WHERE ONE WILL USUALLY SEE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE-WATCHERS, SITTING ON BENCHES, I WAS HAILED BY AN OLD MAN,-- WELL, ANOTHER OLD MAN, WHO SAID: "HEY LARRY! I WANTA TALK TO YOU." BECAUSE I KNEW THIS FELLOW, I WASN'T EXPECTING ANY PROFOUND, OR ENLIGHTENING, CONVERSATION, BUT I SAT DOWN BESIDE HIM, BECAUSE ONE NEVER KNOWS WHAT MIGHT DEVELOP FROM THE MOST UNLIKELY SOURCES, AND I DID NEED SOMETHING FOR MY COLUMN. "WHAT'S YOUR TROUBLE?" I ASKED. "OH, NO TROUBLE." HE REPLIED, "BUT TELL ME, WERE YOU REALLY A MEMBER OF THAT DISTRICT WHERE YOU LIVED, BEFORE YOU RETIRED?" FEARING IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A "TRICK" QUESTION, I HESITATED A BIT, BUT FINALLY SAID: "OF COURSE I WAS A MEMBER OF THAT DISTRICT, AND FOR MORE THAN 45 YEARS. WHY DO YOU ASK?" "YEAH!" HE SAID. "I KNEW YOU HAD LIVED THERE QUITE A WHILE, BUT I MEAN, DID YOU GO TO ALL THE GATHERINGS, LIKE SCHOOL PICNICS, SPORTS DAYS, AND WHEAT POOL MEETINGS. WERE YOU A DIRECTOR OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, AND WERE YOUR KIDSMEMBERS OF 4-H CLUBS, AND STUFF LIKE THAT?" "WELL, NO." I SAID. "I WASN'T MIXED IN ALL THINGS LIKE THAT, BECAUSE I NEVER SEEMED TO HAVE TIME TO GO TO EVERY MEETING, LIKE SOME OTHERS IN THE DISTRICT DID." "NEITHER DID I," HE SAID. "WHEN WE MOVED TO OUR DISTRICT, 50 YEARS AGO, WE HAD THREE KIDS. THE OLDEST WAS SIX YEARS, AND THE YOUNGEST WAS SIX MONTHS. THAT WAS BEFORE WE HEARD OF BABY SITTERS, SO WE STAYED PRETTY MUCH TO HOME. OF COURSE, WE WERE INVITED TO ALMOST EVERYTHING GOING ON IN THE DISTRICT, AND WE GOT TO SOME OF THEM, BUT IT WAS SUCH A CHORE, GETTING THOSE KIDS READY TO GO ANY PLACE, THEN GETTING THEM READY TO COME HOME AGAIN. AND AFTER A WHILE, PEOPLE MUST HAVE NOTICED WE WEREN'T TAKING PART IN MANY THINGS AROUND THE DISTRICT, BECAUSE A FELLOW WHO SEEMED TO GO EVERYWHERE, AND BE INTO EVERYTHING, TOLD ME IF WE WANTED TO BE CONSIDERED MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT, I SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY THE WHEAT POOL, THE BEEF RING, AND VOTE LIBERAL. BUT Y'KNOW, LARRY! 15 YEARS LATER, THAT SAME FELLOW TOLD ME I SHOULD BE A DIRECTOR OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, A MEMBER OF THE WHEAT POOL COMMITTEE, A MEMBER OF THE FARMERS UNION, JOIN THE CO-OP, AND VOTE CCF." "AND DID YOU JOIN ALL THOSE THINGS, AND VOTE CCF?" I ASKED. "WELL, NO," HE REPLIED. "I NEVER WENT TO AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, OR WHEAT POOL, MEETINGS, AND WHEN A NEIGHBOR TOLD ME A FELLOW GOT A DOLLAR FOR EVERY NEW MEMBER HE SIGNED UP IN THE FARMERS UNION, I DECIDED IF THAT OUTFIT HAD TO BUY ITS MEMBERS, TO KECK WITH IT! I NEVER VOTED CCF, AND THAT BUNCH WE HAVE IN OTTAWA WOULD DRIVE ME TO VOTE COMMUNIST, BEFORE I'D VOTE LIBERAL." AT THAT POINT, I STOOD UP, AND SAID: "SORRY, BUT I MUST GO NOW. I PROMISED TO BE HOME A HALF HOUR AGO." "YEAH!" HE SAID, "MAYBE I'LL GET A CHANCE TO TALK TO YOU AGAIN SOMETIME." YEAH! AND I'M AFRAID HE MIGHT.

ANOTHER, AND PROBABLY MORE EASILY CONTROLLED EVENT, IS TO BE A LOG ROLLING CONTEST IN A DUGOUT ON PETE'S FARM (THE FARM IS SUBSIDISED BY ONE DEPARTMENT OF HIS HOTEL), BUT PETE SAYS IF THE SPRING THAW DOESN'T PUT ENOUGH WATER IN THE DUGOUT TO FLOAT A LOG, THERE WILL BE OTHER ENTERTAINING, AND EDUCATIONAL, ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING WALKATHONS, BIKEATHONS, A GLUTTONY CONTEST AT A SUNRISE PANCAKE BREAKFAST, AND MAYBE A WHISKER GROWING CONTEST, THOUGH THAT ONE HAS NEVER BEEN POPULAR IN TURKEY RIDGE. TURKEY RIDGE GALS WON'T SNUGGLE UP TO SOMETHING RESEMBLING A STABLE BROOM.

AS NO COMMUNITY CELEBRATION IS CONSIDERED COMPLETE WITHOUT A BEAUTY CONTEST, TURKEY RIDGE WILL HAVE ONE. "SCOTTY" DOSCOVITCH, THE GRAIN BUYER AT ALKALI FLATS, HAS BEEN APPOINTED JUDGE, AND IF "SCOTTY" IS ASTUTE, HE WILL DELIVER HIS VERDICT IN A SEALED ENVELOPE, AND IMMEDIATELY GET OUT OF TOWN.

P.S. THE REGULAR WEDNESDAY MEETING OF THE SILLYBRATE SASKATCHEWAN COMMITTEE WAS CANCELLED LAST WEEK. PETE KEEFER APPEARED IN POLICE COURT ON A CHARGE OF HAVING SOLD A BOTTLE OF BLACK LABEL SCOTCH TO A MINOR. ON PROVING HE DIDN'T HANDLE BLACK LABEL SCOTCH, THE CHARGE WAS DISMISSED.

SAID PETE, OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM LATER: "ANYWAYS, IT WAS A FILTHY LIE. IT WASN'T SCOTCH, IT WAS GIN."

SUPPLEMENT TO "LARRYETTES"

IN A MORE SENSIBLE VEIN, WHAT WE NOW NEED MORE THAN RIDICULOUS PLANS FOR "SILLYBRATE" SASKATCHEWAN, IS RAIN.

THOUGH THE CIRCUMSTANCE HERE HAS NOT REACHED A DISASTER STAGE, WE LACK THAT CUSHION NORMALLY PROVIDED BY SUBSOIL MOISTURE,- EXHAUSTED BY A BOUNTIFUL CROP LAST YEAR, AND NOT REPLENISHED.

WITH A PROFOUND FAITH IN NATURE'S BENEVOLENCE, OUR PEOPLE ARE DOUSING THEIR FIELDS WITH SEED, FERTILIZERS, AVADDEX, AMMONIA, AND WHAT NOT.

TO BALANCE TOTAL INVESTMENT WITH POTENTIAL RETURNS APPEARS, TO ME, A MATHEMATICAL IMPOSSIBILITY.

IN RETROSPECT, FATE HAS BEEN KIND TO ME IN MANY FORMS, INCLUDING THE OPPORTUNITY, AT A MOST OPPORTUNE TIME, TO BECOME DIVORCED FROM AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. IF IT WOULD NOW RELIEVE ME BILINGUALISM, METRIFICATION, LOUSY TELEVISION PROGRAMS, TRUDEAU AND HIS HENCHMEN, I COULD LOOK FORWARD TO COMPLETING A FULL AND REWARDING LIFE.

THOUGH FURTHER OVERSEAS TRAVEL FOR US IS UNLIKELY, WE REMAIN REASONABLY MOBILE AND AGILE, WHILE OTHERS AT OUR AGE SEEM TO BECOME SENILE AND FRAGILE. WE WALK DAILY (ONE MILE FOR IRMA, TWO MILES FOR ME), HAVE VORACIOUS APPETITES DESPITE ESCALATING COSTS OF BOLOGNA AND HAMBURGER, CONTINUE TO VISIT THE FAMILY, AND DEPLORE THEIR EXTRAVAGANCE. I CONTINUE TO SING, OR OCCUPY A CHAIR, IN THE CHURCH CHOIR, SHARE IN ROTARY CLUB ACTIVITIES, WRITE MY WEEKLY COLUMN, AND EXCHANGE INSULTS WITH OTHER COFFEE HABITUES,- ALL IN ALL, NOT A DEMANDING ROUTINE, BUT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ASSOCIATION WITH SENIOR CITIZEN GROUPS, WHERE CONVERSATION SEEMS TO DWELL ON SUCH TOPICS AS RESPIRATION, CIRCULATION, AND ELIMINATION.

THOUGH I DREAD YOUR COMMENTS ON ALL THIS, LET ME HAVE THEM.



7 DOUGLAS ROAD, WEYBURN,
JANUARY 22/81.

DEAR NORMAN:

YOUR LETTER, WITH ENCLOSURES, CAME THROUGH UNCENSORED. AFTER READING, REREADING, AND ANALYSING THE ENCLOSURES, TWO OF THEM WENT TO MY WASTEBASKET, THE OTHERS FILED FOR FUTURE REFERENCE, AND USE. I CAN USE THEM. THANKS.

THOUGH THE C.S.M., WITH COUNTLESS OTHER PUBLICATIONS, IS AVAILABLE IN OUR PUBLIC LIBRARY, IT HAS NEVER DRAWN MY ATTENTION, PROBABLY BECAUSE THE WORD "CHRISTIAN" HAS BECOME SO MUCH A FEATURE OF CRACKPOT RELIGIOUS GROUPS. AS ONE "BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN" ASKED ME: "WHY DON'T YOU BECOME A CHRISTIAN?" PHOOEY! I KNOW MORE OF HIS UNSAVORY PERSONAL HISTORY THAN HE SUSPECTS.

HAVING NEGLECTED TO COPYRIGHT MY "TEN LOST YEARS" VIEWPOINT, YOU MAY DISTRIBUTE IT, BUT ONLY IN MODERATION. I DON'T WISH TO BE WIDELY KNOWN AS A CRITIC OF THE FINE ARTS.

TELL ME, WHAT IS THIS "DADGAB AND MUMGAB, OR WHATEVER, PROGRAM? BASED ON PAST RECOLLECTIONS, AND MORE RECENT ASSOCIATIONS, I INCLINE TO SUSPECT THE AUTHOR IS NOT SO MUCH A BOLT WITHOUT A NUT, AS A NUT WITHOUT A BOLT.

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO GO BACK TO RADIO BROADCASTING, BUT I FOUND FOUR YEARS OF THAT ON A FIVE-DAYS-PER-WEEK BASIS, MEETING A DEADLINE EVERY DAY, WAS TOO DEMANDING OF TIME AND EFFORT, AND MY INBORN LAZINESS REBELLED.

WOULD I HAD STARTED WRITING, EARLIER IN LIFE, MAYBE HAVING WRITTEN A BOOK, AND RETIRED ON THE ROYALTIES. BUT IT'S TOO LATE NOW, AND I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH DIRTY WORDS, TO WRITE THE TYPE OF BOOK WHICH WOULD SELL ON

TODAY'S MARKET,- BOOKS SUCH AS THOSE BEING WRITTEN BY MARGARET LAURENCE, MAX BRAITHWAITE, FARLEY MOWATT, AND W.O. MITCHELL.

RECENTLY, I READ FOUR PAGES OF "THE DIVINERS", BY MARGARET LAURENCE. PHEW! WHAT A FILTHY TONGUE THAT WOMAN HAS.

MAX BRAITHWAITE WROTE TWO DECENT BOOKS, SEVERAL YEARS AGO, BUT HAS NEVER WRITTEN ANOTHER ONE.

FARLEY MOWATT, OBSESSED WITH THE PLIGHT OF THE ESKIMO, CONTINUES TO BEAT THE DRUM ON WHAT THE WHITE MAN HAS DONE TO THEM. I WONDER IF MOWATT HAS EVER VISITED THE PHILIPPINES, INDONESIA, OR SOUTH AMERICA.

W.O. MITCHELL HAS SLIPPED INTO THE CLASS OF "DIRTY BOOK" WRITERS. OF COURSE HE NEVER DID KNOW HOW TO WRITE ANY TYPE OF BOOK. COULD THAT BE BECAUSE HE WAS A WEYBURN LAD? NO COMMENT, PLEASE.

ENOUGH OF THAT FOR ONE ISSUE. I NEED SOMETHING TO BEEF ABOUT, NEXT WEEK.

SUCCESS TO YOUR, WHATEVER IT IS, BUT DON'T LET IT BECOME CLUTTERED WITH BAFFLEGAB, OR GOBBLEDEGOOK. LEAVE THAT STUFF FOR THE POLITICIANS.



WATER ON OUR STREETS TODAY, FROM WHAT LITTLE SNOW WE HAD. WE DO LIVE A CHARMED LIFE- AT TIMES.

I'VE LEFT ATTACHED TO THE DECEMBER 31 ISSUE OF "LARRYETTES", NEWS ITEMS FROM A COUPLE OF AREA VILLAGES.

OUR PAPER GIVES CONSIDERABLE SPACE TO NEWS FROM A 40-MILE RADIUS, ALL PUBLISHED AS WRITTEN BY LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS. THE STYLE OF CONTENT WILL VARY WIDELY:

"THE BUCKBRUSH SENIOR CITIZENS STUDY GROUP MET IN THE HOME OF MRS HECTOR VERMIN FRIDAY EVENING, WITH SEVEN MEMBERS PRESENT. OFFICERS FOR THE COMING YEAR WERE CHOSEN, WITH MRS VERMIN AS PRESIDENT. GUEST SPEAKER, MARCELLA GROSSNECK, SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR, SPOKE ON THE SUBJECT OF MARRIAGE COUNSELING AND FAMILY PLANNING. LUNCH WAS SERVED BY MRS VERMIN, ASSISTED BY MRS DUNCAN PLASTERAS."

"PETE KEEFER, MAYOR AND HOTEL PROPRIETOR OF TURKEY RIDGE, WAS ACQUITTED IN MAGISTRATE'S COURT , WEDNESDAY MORNING, ON A CHARGE OF HAVING SOLD A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH TO A MINOR. IT'S A FILTHY LIE. SAID PETE, OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM LATER. IT WASN'T SCOTCH. IT WAS GIN."

TO KEEP INFORMED ON COMMUNITY EVENTS, I KEEP MY SUBSCRIPTION PAID IN ADVANCE.

VIEWPOINT - BY LARRY GRAY

WITH ENOUGH OTHER ADULTS, TEENAGERS, AND CHILDREN, TO FILL THE AUDITORIUM IN OUR COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL, WE WENT, ONE EVENING, TO WATCH A STAGE PRODUCTION BASED ON THE BOOK "TEN LOST YEARS", WRITTEN BY BARRY BROADFOOT.

I WATCHED THE PLAY WITH MIXED FEELINGS - ADMIRATION FOR OUTSTANDING ACTING, TEMPERED AMUSEMENT AT EXAGGERATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT FEATURED THE "DIRTY THIRTIES", AND UTTER DISGUST AT USE OF CERTAIN FOUR-LETTER WORDS BY MEMBERS OF THE CAST.

I DON'T THINK THAT CLASS OF WORDS ADD TO ANY STAGE PRODUCTION, NOR TO ANY OTHER FORM OF VOCAL EXPRESSION. AMAZING THOUGH, HOW MANY ARE ACCEPTING THEM IN THEIR STANDARD OF CONVERSATION; AS ONE INDIVIDUAL REMARKED, DURING INTERMISSION - 'AH WELL! EVERYBODY USES 'EM THESE TIMES". MAYBE, BUT THEY DON'T USE 'EM IN OUR HOME.

A BIOGRAPHY OF MR BROADFOOT, IN OUR PUBLIC LIBRARY, REVEALS HE WAS BORN IN 1926. THEREFORE, WE HAD RECOVERED FROM THE "DIRTY THIRTIES" BEFORE HE HAD BECOME A TEENAGER.

OBVIOUSLY, HIS INFORMATION AND IMPRESSIONS OF THAT ERA WERE GATHERED FROM WHAT DOCUMENTED RECORDS WERE AVAILABLE TO HIM, SUPPLEMENTED BY STORIES, TOLD AND RETOLD, BECOMING MORE INCREDULOUS WITH EACH TELLING, AS STORIES WILL - STORIES OF BARBECUED GOPHER MEAT, COFFEE BREWED FROM ROASTED BARLEY, MASHED POTATO PIE, MADE TO RESEMBLE PUMPKIN BY ADDING VEGETABLE COLORING. A WIDELY CIRCULATED STORY ABOUT PEOPLE USING SLABS OF DRIED COD FISH TO SHINGLE A GRANARY, OR THAT OTHER LESS DELICATELY MENTIONED BUILDING, MORE FUNCTIONAL THAN A GRANARY AT THAT TIME. THAT STORY WAS A MERE FIGMENT OF IMAGINATION, BECAUSE NO ONE RECEIVED ENOUGH OF THOSE SLABS TO COVER THE ROOF OF THE SMALLEST BUILDING.

UNFORTUNATELY, FEW PEOPLE IN WESTERN CANADA WERE FAMILIAR WITH DRIED COD FISH. PROPERLY COOKED, DRIED COD FISH IS QUITE ACCEPTABLE AS A DINNER MENU ITEM.

AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT ON THAT SHIPMENT OF DRIED FISH FROM THE MARITIMES, FOR DISTRIBUTION AMONG DISTRESSED PEOPLE IN THE WEST, WAS REVEALED BY A NOVA SCOTIAN WHO KNEW HIS FISH. SAID THE NOVA SCOTIAN: "HELL! THAT'S NOT COD. THAT'S THAT DAMNED HAKE".

HAKE, I LEARNED, IS A FISH OF LOWER QUALITY, AND LOWER PRICE. I DON'T KNOW ITS ULTIMATE MARKET. MOST OF THEIR COD FISH GOES TO THE U.S. MARKET. HOW THE HAKE BECAME A SUBSTITUTE FOR COD, IS MERE CONJECTURE.

ALONG WITH THE FISH STORY, WAS REFERENCE IN THE PLAY, TO IGNORANCE, ARROGANCE, AND SKULDUGGERY OF OFFICIALS IN THE R.B. BENNETT AND MCKENZIE KING GOVERNMENTS. THAT PROMPTS ME TO SUGGEST ONE NEED NOT GO THAT FAR BACK IN HISTORY TO DISCOVER THOSE CHARACTERISTICS IN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

FOR MANY, THE "DIRTY THIRTIES" WERE HARSH TIMES. ONLY TOO WELL DO I KNOW IT. I BEGAN FARMING, IN MY OWN RIGHT, ONLY TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MARKET CRASH OF 1929, FOLLOWED BY DISASTER PRICE LEVELS FOR GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK. I EXPERIENCED TEN CONSECUTIVE YEARS IN WHICH RETURNS FROM MY FARM FAILED TO PAY OPERATING COSTS. OUR CHILDREN WERE BORN DURING THAT PERIOD. THEY MAY NOT HAVE LEARNED TO "DO WITHOUT", BECAUSE THEY HAD NOT KNOWN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT WE LEARNED TO DO WITHOUT MANY THINGS WE HAD PREVIOUSLY KNOWN.

I NEVER TREKED NORTH IN SEARCH OF THOSE GREENER PASTURES I KNEW WERE THERE, BUT SAW MANY WHO DID. FOR SOME, IT WAS A PRUDENT MOVE; FOR OTHERS A SORRY EXPERIENCE.

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID OF THE COURAGE AND FORTITUDE OF THOSE WHO LOADED THEIR FEW REMAINING ASSETS ON WAGONS, TRAILING THEIR COWS AND EXTRA HORSES, CAMPING OVERNIGHT, OFTEN WITHOUT SHELTER, ON THE LONG TRIP NORTH. BUT LITTLE WAS SAID OF THOSE WHO REMAINED, WITH A PROFOUND BELIEF THAT NATURE'S BENEVOLENCE WOULD RETURN, WHICH IT DID, IN ABUNDANCE. THEY TOO, HAD COURAGE AND FORTITUDE.

I WATCHED A PLAY SCENE DEPICTING A FAMILY SUPPOSEDLY TREKING TO THE PEACE

RIVER COUNTRY IN A JOLTING WAGON, FIGHTING HORDES OF MOSQUITOES, AND ENDURING THE SEARING HEAT OF MID SUMMER. THAT EXPERIENCE WAS NOT UNIQUE IN THE ANNALS OF THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES. I WAS A FEW YEARS TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE FOR MY PARENTS, 77 YEARS AGO, ⁽¹⁹⁰²⁾ HAVING ARRIVED IN WEYBURN AFTER A 10 DAY TRIP FROM ONTARIO IN A "COLONIST COACH", ATTACHED TO A FREIGHT TRAIN. THEY TOO, LOADED THEIR ASSETS ON WAGONS, AND TREKED ACROSS THE PRAIRIE TO THE HOMESTEAD.

I DOUBT THEY BLAMED THE GOVERNMENT OF THAT TIME FOR THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES. THEY CAME HERE TO ESTABLISH A NEW HOME THAT PROMISED BETTER ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES THAN THOSE PREVAILING IN THE PLACE THEY LEFT, AND THAT PROMISE IS WHAT PROMPTS MOST PEOPLE TO MIGRATE.

THE QUALITY OF LIFE AVAILABLE ON THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES TODAY HAS FAR SURPASSED THAT OF THE HOMESTEAD DAYS, OR ANY PERIOD SINCE THAT TIME. THIS WAS NOT ACHIEVED BY BEMOANING PAST HARDSHIPS AND PRIVATIONS, BUT BY CONSTANT DETERMINATION TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

THREE TIMES, I HAVE VISITED EASTERN ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. FOUR TIMES, I HAVE VISITED BRITAIN AND PARTS OF EUROPE. DESPITE THE GLAMOUR OF THOSE PLACES DEPICTED IN TRAVEL BROCHURES, BE ASSURED THAT COME DEPRESSION, INFLATION, OR WHATEVER, THERE ARE LESS DESIRABLE PLACES IN WHICH TO LIVE, THAN CANADA, INCLUDING WESTERN CANADA.

I SUGGEST A SEQUEL TO "TEN LOST YEARS", APPROPRIATELY TITLED "TEN LOST YEARS REGAINED THREEFOLD, OR MORE".

THOUGH I HAD WRITTEN THIS TWO YEARS AGO, MY VIEW PREVAILS.

h.

7 DOUGLAS ROAD, WEYBURN,
DECEMBER 29/80

DEAR NORMAN:

FOLLOWING A CHRISTMAS LETTER, CLOSELY, WITH A NON-CHRISTMAS LETTER, MAY BE A DEPARTURE FROM THE "APPROVED" STYLE OF SOCIAL INTERCOURSE, BUT IN THE YEAR-END, AND SEMI-ANNUAL, CLEAN-UP OF NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS AND OTHER PARAPHERNALIA ON MY DESK, IN MY DESK, AND UNDER MY DESK, I FOUND AN ITEM FROM THE WEYBURN REVIEW, I HAD WRITTEN SOME YEARS AGO. APPARENTLY, IT HAD BEEN REPLACED, AFTER EACH CLEAN-UP, WITH THE OTHER 95 PERCENT OF STUFF WHICH SHOULD HAVE GONE TO THE WASTE BASKET.

I'M KEEPING IT FOR POSTERITY, BUT BELIEVING ONE WITH YOUR DISCERNING MIND MIGHT DETECT A THOUGHT OR TWO IN WHICH YOU COULD BE IN AGREEMENT, I'VE MADE A COPY.

THAT STORM WHICH SLASHED OTHER AREAS OF THE WEST, TOUCHED US MORE TENDERLY, LEAVING FOUR INCHES OF SNOW, OUR FIRST SIGNIFICANT SNOWFALL, WELCOMED BY THOSE WITH SEVERAL THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH OF SNOWMOBILES CLUTTERING THEIR BACK YARDS SINCE THE WINTER OF 1978-79. BUT THEIR JOY WAS SHORT LIVED. A SEMI-CHINOOK REMOVED THE SNOW ON SATURDAY (27TH)

OUR FAMILY, FROM REGINA, SPENT THREE HOURS WITH US ON CHRISTMAS DAY, ENROUTE TO A FLATEN FAMILY RE-UNION, OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS DAY ALONE, AT HOME, IN 49 YEARS. FORTUNATELY, WE HAD PLANNED TO STAY AT HOME, BECAUSE IT WAS A BITTERLY COLD DAY, AND WE NO LONGER WILL RISK TRAVELLING IN THOSE CONDITIONS.

WE ATTEMPTED TO SHARE OUR HAMBURGER WITH THE BACHELOR ACROSS THE HALL, BUT HE WAS SPENDING THE DAY WITH AN ELDERLY AUNT. THAT WAS HIS STORY ANYWAY, THOUGH WE NOTED HE DIDN'T RETURN UNTIL AFTER MIDNIGHT. SOME ELDERLY AUNTS KNOW HOW TO ENTERTAIN A BACHELOR.

THIS IS MY LAST SHEET OF CLEAN STATIONERY, SO ROLL OVER -----

OTHER SIDE

WE INSTITUTED WHAT MAY BE A NEW CHRISTMAS FAMILY POLICY THIS YEAR,-- NO EXCHANGING OF GIFTS WITHIN THE HOME. IRMA HAD BEEN OGGLING SOCKS AND A SWEATER, BUT I VETOED THAT. BEING A YOUNGER MEMBER OF A LARGE FAMILY, (FIVE BROTHERS AND TWO SISTERS) MOST OF MY CHRISTMAS GIFTS OF CLOTHING WERE "HAND-ME-DOWNS". IF I WAS GIVEN SOCKS, THEY WOULD BE TOO LARGE, OR TOO SMALL, TOO SHORT, OR TOO LONG. IF I WAS GIVEN A SWEATER, IT WOULD SAG TO MY KNEES, OR LEAVE A GAP BETWEEN WHERE IT ENDED, AND MY BELT. THE ONLY THING I REMEMBER BEING GIVEN, NOT REQUIRING ALTERATIONS, WAS A HANDKERCHIEF. SO, ON CHRISTMAS MORNING, I GREETED IRMA WITH "MERRY CHRISTMAS! IS THE PORRIDGE READY?"

WHAT IS YOUR VERSION OF THE SANTA CLAUS MYTH? I SUSPECT THE AVERAGE KID WITH FIVE, OR LESS, YEARS BEHIND HIM, OR HER, KNOWS AS WELL AS WE DO WHERE ALL THAT STUFF COMES FROM.

DURING THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS OF MY LIFE, THERE WERE THREE PHASES OF MY BELIEF IN SANTA CLAUS. FIRST, I BELIEVED IN SANTA CLAUS. THEN I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUS. THEN I WAS SANTA CLAUS. BUT WHAT A JOLT, TO DISCOVER, AT A VERY IMPRESSIONABLE AGE, DEAR OLD SANTA WAS ONLY A MYTH!

ENOUGH FOR NOW. MAYBE ANOTHER "LARRYETTES" ISSUE, LATER, IF I WRITE ONE REASONABLY FREE OF COMMENTS WHICH MIGHT AGITATE YOUR ULCERS.

MAY 1981, FOR YOU AND YOURS, BE AS INTERESTING, AS HEALTHFUL, AND AS FRUITFUL, AS THE ONE I HOPE TO EXPERIENCE.

Larry

APT 6, 7 DOUGLAS ROAD SL4H ON3
WEYBURN, JUNE 8/79.

DEAR NORMAN & GRACE:

IF YOU HAVE SUSPECTED THE PURPOSE OF THIS OUT-OF-SEASON COMMUNICATION, YOU WILL BE RIGHT,- THE APPROACHING ANNIVERSARY OF AN EVENT OF LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND PROBABLY INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE, FIFTY YEARS AGO.

THE FAMILY HAS ARRANGED, VERY HUSH HUSH, AND SUPPOSEDLY UNKNOWN TO US, WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS A "COME AND GO SOCIAL HOUR" FROM 2 TO 5 P.M. IN THE LOWER AUDITORIUM OF GRACE UNITED CHURCH, ON SATURDAY, JUNE 30. THE CORRECT DATE SHOULD HAVE BEEN JULY 3, BUT CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE MADE THE CHANGE NECESSARY.

WE HOPE YOU WILL NOT FEEL SLIGHTED, BY NOT RECEIVING AN ENGRAVED INVITATION. NO ONE ELSE IS RECEIVING ONE. BUT A CORDIAL INVITATION IS EXTENDED.

REGRETFULLY, WE CANNOT OFFER YOU THE USUAL HOSPITALITY OF OVERNIGHT ACCOMODATION THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE IN THE HOUSE WE HAD OCCUPIED. OUR APARTMENT SPACE IS LIMITED, AND FOR THOSE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY COMING FROM A DISTANCE, WE HAVE ARRANGED ACCOMODATION IN A MOTEL.

CONFLICTING REPORTS ON SEEDING OPERATIONS HAVE LEFT US IN DOUBT OF PROGRESS IN YOUR LOCALITY. OURS IS WOEFULLY BACKWARD, WITH INTERMITTENT RAINS. MANY HUNDREDS OF ACRES, NORMALLY SEEDED TO WHEAT, WILL BE SEEDED TO COARSE GRAINS, OR FLAX, AND MANY OTHER HUNDREDS, YET UNDER WATER, WILL REMAIN UNSEEDED.

IT HAS BEEN A MEASURE OF RELIEF FOR US, NOT HAVING TO MEET THE SITUATION, AND WE SYMPATHIZE WITH THOSE WHO MUST. RETIREMENT MAY HAVE ITS PROBLEMS, BUT IT ALSO HAS ITS BENEFITS.

WE, RATHER SURPRISINGLY, HAVE NOT ENCOUNTERED ANY PROBLEMS, AFTER

ALMOST SEVEN YEARS, FITTING INTO THE GROOVE (OR RUT, AS SOME DESCRIBE IT). I MAINTAIN MEMBERSHIP IN OUR LOCAL ROTARY CLUB, THE CHURCH CHOIR, OTHER LESS FUNCTIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND HAVEN'T CHANGED MY POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, OR RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY. IN OTHER WORDS, I CONTINUE TO BE REASONABLY ACCEPTABLE TO A PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION, AND A THORN IN THE FLESH TO ANOTHER PERCENTAGE.

AFTER ALMOST FOUR YEARS IN MEETING THE DEADLINE FOR A DAILY RADIO PROGRAM, I DROPPED IT, IN FAVOR OF SOMETHING LESS DEMANDING,- A COLUMN IN OUR WEEKLY NEWSPAPER.

THOUGH I HAVE A BROAD FREEDOM OF CHOICE IN CONTENT, I ENDEAVOUR TO DEVELOP A REASONABLE BLEND OF SENSE AND NONSENSE, AND ENCLOSE A COPY OF ONE ISSUE, FOR YOU TO DETERMINE WHICH IT MIGHT BE.

I CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE MORE THAN THE NORMAL MEASURE OF GOOD HEALTH AT 79 YEARS, EATING LESS, SMOKING MORE, AND DRINKING NOT AT ALL.

OTHER THAN A PROBLEM WITH ARTHRITIS, IRMA REMAINS QUITE ACTIVE, WITH CONTINUED INTEREST IN FAMILY, LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. THE ARTHRITIS PROBLEM HAS PARTIALLY CURTAILED OUR MOVEMENTS,- 12 CONSECUTIVE MONTHS WITHOUT HAVING GONE BEYOND BOUNDARIES OF OUR CONTINENT. THE FAMILY HAS DONE BETTER; SHIRLEY AND GLEN CURRENTLY ON ANOTHER TOUR OF BRITAIN AND EUROPE. HOPEFULLY, WE MAY DO THAT AGAIN, DURING THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

NO COMMENT ON THE RECENT FEDERAL ELECTION, OTHER THAN TO SAY, FOR ME, IT WAS GRATIFYING, THOUGH I HAD HOPED FOR A LARGER MAJORITY FOR CLARK. WHETHER HE WILL SUCCEED, OR NOT, ANY CHANGE WILL BE AN IMPROVEMENT.

MAY WE BE SEEING YOU ON THE 30TH?

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Larry", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Norman & Grace

DIDN'T WE WRITE TO YOU AT APPROXIMATELY THIS SAME TIME LAST YEAR? SURE, WE DID! AND BECAUSE YOU REPLIED, WE'RE WRITING AGAIN, BECAUSE WE WANT TO KNOW IF YOU STILL EXIST, AND WHAT YOU ARE DOING. WE ALSO WANT YOU TO KNOW WE REMAIN ALERT, ACTIVE, AND REASONABLY MOBILE, THOUGH OUR YEN FOR TRAVEL, SO GRATIFIED THROUGH SO MANY YEARS, HAS DIMINISHED. WE MADE ONLY ONE VENTURE BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF SASKATCHEWAN THIS YEAR - A TOUR OF ONTARIO, THE MARITIMES, AND NORTHEASTERN STATES, THROUGH SEPTEMBER AND EARLY OCTOBER.

AT OTTAWA WE GATHERED TED AND JANICE, PRIMARILY TO HAVE THEM SHARE THE TRIP WITH US, BUT WITH AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE OF HAVING THEM DOING THE DRIVING, GIVING IRMA AND ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO WATCH THE SCENERY, INSTEAD OF WATCHING THE ROAD.

AUTUMN COLORS WERE AT THEIR BEST, AND THOUGH WE HAD SEEN THAT SPECTACLE OF NATURE ON PREVIOUS TRIPS, IT NEVER FAILS TO IMPRESS US. THE LET-DOWN COMES WHEN WE RETURN TO SASKATCHEWAN'S NAKED POPLARS, AND TIRED GARDENS.

THIS YEAR, WE DECIDED WE WILL NOT BORE YOU WITH BABBLING ABOUT FAMILY. THERE IS REALLY LITTLE TO REPORT ON THAT TOPIC. TED AND JANICE HAVE COMPLETED RENOVATION OF THEIR HOUSE IN THE GATINEAU HILLS NORTH OF OTTAWA, NOW A LOVELY HOME ON ABOUT $1\frac{1}{2}$ ACRES OVERLOOKING THE GATINEAU RIVER, PLUS A GUEST HOUSE FOR OVERNIGHT AND WEEKEND VISITORS.

SHIRLEY AND GLEN, ABLY ASSISTED BY SON GORDON, CONTINUE TO OPERATE THEIR FARM AT REGINA, THOUGH AT TIMES, IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE SECONDARY TO NUMEROUS OTHER ACTIVITIES. GLEN, AS VICE-PRESIDENT, AND OCCASIONALLY ACTING-PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE, DOES CONSIDERABLE TRAVELLING ACROSS CANADA, AND OCCASIONALLY OVERSEAS. SHIRLEY TEACHES PIANO ONE DAY EACH WEEK TO A GROUP OF PUPILS IN THE SCHOOL AT ROULEAU, 40 MILES FROM REGINA, AND HAS TWO OTHER GROUPS IN REGINA. HER FAMILY, LIKE A FAMILY OF BIRDS, HAS SCATTERED. BARBARA IS FINISHING HER COURSE IN MUSIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, WAYNE IS IN NEW ZEALAND ON A ONE-YEAR STUDENTS EXCHANGE PROGRAM, MURRAY AT UNIVERSITY IN SASKATOON, AND GORDON AT HOME, ATTENDING SHELDON WILLIAMS COLLEGIATE IN REGINA, ATTENDING THE NEEDS OF SEVERAL THOUSAND BROILER CHICKENS, AND COUNTING THE DAYS LEFT UNTIL HE GETS HIS DRIVER LICENSE.

DID WE SAY WE WOULDN'T BORE YOU WITH BABBLING ABOUT FAMILY? WELL, AFTER ALL, WE'VE BEEN SUBJECTED TO THAT FROM OTHER PARENTS, AND GRANDPARENTS.

ON THE HOME FRONT, IN COMBATING A LINGERING TOUCH OF ARTHRITIS, IRMA WALKS A MILE EACH DAY, WEATHER PERMITTING, CARRYING A CANE TO IMPRESS, AND SUPPRESS, LEASH-FREE DOGS. I'VE ATTEMPTED WALKING WITH HER, BUT A DIFFERENCE IN THE LENGTH OF OUR STRIDES WILL OFTEN SEPARATE US BY SEVERAL YARDS, CAUSING PEOPLE WE MEET TO WONDER IF SOME DOMESTIC WRINKLE HAS PUT US IN ONE OF THOSE NOT-SPEAKING-TO-EACH-OTHER-MOODS. SO, I USUALLY WALK IN SOME OTHER DIRECTION.

BEFORE WE RAMBLE FURTHER, IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE, AND TIMELY, TO COMMENT ON THE CHRISTMAS SEASON, - THAT PERIOD WHEN PREPARATIONS FOR COMMEMORATING AN HISTORICAL BIRTH ARE OVERSHADOWED BY PREPARATIONS FOR ARRIVAL OF A MYTHICAL SANTA CLAUS.

I REMEMBER, DURING THE FIRST 40 YEARS OF MY LIFE, THREE PHASES OF BELIEF IN THAT MYTH. FIRST, I BELIEVED IN SANTA CLAUS. THEN I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUS. THEN I WAS SANTA CLAUS. I ALSO REMEMBER IT WAS A BIT SHATTERING TO DISCOVER, AT AN IMPRESSIONABLE AGE, IT WAS ONLY A MYTH. SO, WHY DO WE PERPETUATE IT?

THERE IS SOME UNCERTAINTY OF HOW, AND WHERE, WE SHALL SPEND CHRISTMAS DAY THIS YEAR. IT COULD BE WITH MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILY, IT COULD BE WITH NEIGHBORS, OR IT COULD BE IN OUR OWN HOME, AND ALONE, WHICH WOULD NOT BE A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR US. ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION DURING THOSE EARLIER YEARS ON OUR FARM, BEFORE WE HAD CHILDREN TO SHARE IT WITH US, WE WERE ALONE ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

WITH CONTINUING GOOD HEALTH, A COMFORTABLE HOME, AND MORE OF THE AMENITIES OF LIFE THAN GIVEN TO MANY OTHERS, HOW AND WHERE WE SHALL SPEND CHRISTMAS DAY WILL BE ACCEPTABLE.

OUR WISH FOR YOU IS FOR EQUALLY GOOD FORTUNE, A PLEASANT CHRISTMAS, A HEALTHFUL AND REWARDING 1981.

Larry & Irma

When you telephoned from Regina, we were booked to go there the following morning for an appointment Ima had with a doctor. She had been on the waiting list for 8 days, and as you may know, if one fails to appear when called, the next call could be ten days or two weeks later.

Her problem has been diagnosed as arthritis, but she has not been responding to treatment, and we are now waiting for consultation with another doctor. A bit ironic that, after 78 years of excellent health, to be suddenly threatened with a crippling illness. But when we visit a friend of our age group, confined to a wheel chair for 27 years, we learn to count our blessings. It has not been given to everyone, 78 years of excellent health, 50 years of companionship, and a family that has been a source of satisfaction and pride.

I doubt we shall be doing any more extensive travelling, especially overseas. We've had ten of those trips, and the glamour seems to have faded, though we did spend the month of May this year, touring Britain again, taking Ted and his wife with us, - probably the most pleasant of several visits to that part of the world.

I also made a brief trip to Ontario early in October, to visit Ted in Ottawa, and my 86 year old brother in Kingston, who can walk farther and faster, eat more porridge, stay up later at night, and play a meaner game of cribbage than any other member of our clan.

It was the second week in October, a time when mother nature was staging her annual extravaganza with autumn colour, a display one must see to believe. We had seen it several years ago in

several of the New England States, a direct contrast to stubble fields, roadside buck brush, and naked poplars.

Because uncertainty of the next three weeks, our annual Christmas "gang letter" may not be published this year, so my year-end, and possibly irritating, comments should be included here.

The result of our October election was not surprising. It would be difficult to upset any government having support of organized labor, 85,000 Indians, undetermined numbers of senior citizens and welfare recipients, plus undetermined numbers of civil servants.

It should be noted though, the combined Liberal and ~~P.C.~~ P.C. vote exceeded the N.W.P. vote, a government elected by a minority of the people. But that could be challenged by a theory that many liberals, realizing they hadn't a hope of winning, voted N.W.P. to ensure defeat of the P.C. I don't understand such aversion to a P.C. government. Is it a tradition that P.C. governments are comprised of bureaucrats dedicated to squeezing the life blood of the proletariat? When it comes to squeezing life blood, our liberal government in Ottawa has no equal.

But politics is a lousy topic. I prefer economics. There's plenty of scope in that.

Evading any political overtones that often filtered in, for years I have questioned the inequity of the crown-mint freight rate structure, established to comply with circumstances prevailing 80 years ago, when a man on the railroad would contribute a ten-hour work day for one dollar. I don't know the level of wages for railway workers today, but the freight

rates on grain to Vancouver, or Thunder Bay, remain at the 1900 level. They weren't reduced when wheat prices sagged to 20 cents, nor increased when those prices reached 6 dollars on the export market.

I don't claim to have a practical solution, but has anyone ever suggested establishing freight rates based on the market value of products moving by rail? Of course there would be exceptions, such as diamonds, wrist watches, pearls, etc. but fixed rates per ton mile do create inequities. Imagine a railway company being compelled to haul several hundred thousand pingpong balls at 4 cents per ton mile. Another classic example: - for hauling 48 pounds of barley from Red Deer, Alberta, to Vancouver, the C.P.R. is paid $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents, while the post office department is paid 14 cents for taking a one ounce letter the same distance, and the P.O. department is losing money.

We talk much of, and deplore inflation. Everyone seems to have the solution, the most prevalent being a suggestion that government introduce programs to create more employment. It's my firm belief inflation will not be cured until wages are reduced to allow industry to employ more people. Our prime minister has hinted at introducing wage and price controls again, but if he does, it will need to be more effective than the previous attempt, that controlled nothing.

Did I say politics was a boring topic? How does one
Over

5. Note, I'm a conservationist - save paper, and save our forests.

avoid it?

Winter touched down briefly here two weeks ago with those confusing temperature readings we haven't yet learned to interpret, but only a minimum of snow, most annoying to those maniacs who have invested fantastic sums in high-powered motor sleds, allegedly for physical exercise. What I suggest they need is a bit of mental exercise. And if they need physical exercise they should try walking, - much more practical, and much less costly.

There you are! If somewhere I've touched a raw nerve end, attribute it to my habit of rubbing feathers the wrong way. I'll expect a rebuttal.

Now, only 15 shopping days before Christmas, and 92 shopping days before Easter. So, get out and buy! buy! You don't have to pay until March 31, but by that time, for many, it could well be bye-bye.

However, may your Christmas be pleasant, and all your days be healthful

Larry

P.S.

We enjoyed the brief visit with Bob a while back. He seems to have his feet on the ground

13/3/84

Dear Norman:

When reporting Bill Scarth's death, I believe you had planned going to Victoria, and may have been informed, but I continue to ponder on what nature of circumstances could have developed for Bill. Though I had known Lorna's sudden death had literally torn his world apart, his note to me at Christmas carried no symptom of unbalance.

That of the four who occupied room 249 at M.A.C. through the 1919-1920 winter, two had taken their own lives, is a disturbing thought, though I would expect your philosophy of life, sense of human values, and family associations, would continue to counteract any similar inclination, and the number of old scores I have yet to settle should keep me alive indefinitely. However, for me at 83 years plus, came another disturbing thought, with information leaving me the sole survivor from a 1918-19 grade twelve class of seven lads in Weyburn Collegiate, my last competitor for longevity being one Allen (Stinky) Metheral, a nondescript lad who had achieved the peak of his career by becoming inspector of dog licenses for the City of Toronto.

Our full 29 February days of sunshine and exceptionally high temperature readings were replaced by a more Marchlike March,- cloud cover, fog, and variable frosts. Snowmobile maniacs deplore the complete absence of snow, and farmers, apprehensive about lack of water, are including weather in their damnation of government and the CPR.

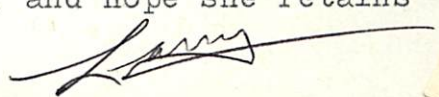
Apropos of government,- of little import here, at the moment, though a big issue in Manitoba, was the Pawley NDP

government, with support and coercion from the three major federal political parties, attempting to make Manitoba the only bilingual province in Canada, the three-party alliance being a thinly veiled wooing of the Quebec vote. Whatever the political advantage to backing bilingualism nationally, the idea of forcing it upon Western provinces, founded and populated by people from all over Europe, smells, and the traditionally anglo-saxon Manitobans would be well advised to consider a change of government, come the next provincial election. Federally, I see little prospect for improvement. Eastern Canada never has welcomed a Western Prime Minister, and we may be only exchanging a communist french catholic for an Irish catholic resident of french Canada.

Our travel, beyond City limits, since late December, has totalled two visits to the farm at Regina, and likely to stay at that total until comes May, when we shall head West, East, North, but not South. Since our experience of last summer, we've developed an aversion to our Southern neighbors taking a 25-cent slice from our 78-cent Trudeau dollar.

Our family continues to travel, visiting foreign countries, including Quebec, going to India in May, or June. Fortunately, we did our wandering 10 and 20 years ago, while we were more agile.

Keep us alerted to any unseemly, or unfitting behavior, maintain your eating at reasonable levels, and get your regular measure of footwork. Regards to Grace, and hope she retains her proven ability to tolerate you.



21 - Peggy &
Elizabeth Graham R

Reel 5-
22 Peggy
✓ 62 Peggy & Esther &
Jack, Jennie & Lissy
✓ 72 Peggy & Esther
85 Jack Jennie & Lissy

Reel 4-70 J + J + Peggy

Reel 8
✓ 75 J + J + P? ✓
✓ 76 Peggy + Esther ✓
✓ 77 Esther?
✓ 78 Esther + Jack
✓ 79 Jennie + Peggy?
80 Peggy?

Reel 6-38 family
✓ 48 family
✓ 78 P + E

Ellen & Hall
H. pers.
July 4th
G.H.

Summers

143 Ash Drive, Weyburn
Feb. 1st/66.

Dear Norman:

May I indicate this is the first time in thirty or more years that your Christmas letter is a month late. Don't think I'm unappreciative, but, after such consistency, any unexplained deviation is apt to suggest development of a shipping ticker, or some other less horrible, but valid, excuse.

I had forgotten just where in the haze and maze my letter had been written, but in Hong Kong it would have been the third week in November - that much I do remember. Not being a methodical individual, I made no notes, blandly assuming everything and every place could be recalled at will. The result - a jumbled storeroom of memories, but what wonderful memories.

We flew approximately 25,000 miles on ten airlines, used an undetermined number of taxis, buses, trains, and boats, visited eight countries, changing currency every time, including Australia, New Zealand, & Fiji where they use £.S.D. each at a different rate of exchange.

freezer amply stocked and try to arrange
a wood splitting bee or some equally fascinating
diversion. We shall also be interested in
analysing that daughter, having been fortunate
in producing a rather versatile one of our own.

Your preference in weather is not unlike mine.
Hope we both achieve satisfaction

Yours

Larry

The language barrier was no problem until we reached Australia. Ted speaks enough Japanese to get by. English is widely used in Hong Kong, Thailand, and Malaya, but those Russians have a dialect both distinctive and indistinguishable. We left Honolulu Dec 26 with a temperature of 85° arriving 5 hours later in Vancouver with 12 inches of snow. After 18 hours delay in Vci a flight to Calgary, another overnight delay there and into Regina and -16° what an anticlimax! However, a most delightful trip, exceeding all our expectations and creating a desire to go again.

Just returned Saturday night from a two week stay in Toronto for Dairy Farmers and Federation of Agriculture annual sessions. Unable to leave the hotel during the weekend storm that almost paralyzed the city. To Wfg for a meeting there Saturday, Wfg temp. -34° , hotel cold, fed up with meetings, anxious to get home, glad to be home. There is no place like it.

Sorry you chose to come to Estevan at a time when we were away but noting your thoughts of coming again. However, let me brief you in case our programs interfere. I plan to be away Feb 13th-18th and March 14th-18th otherwise I expect to be within hickory distance of Weyburn. A few days notice of your intentions would guarantee this. We shall keep the

11
For Dad
Interest.

1979 7 DOUGLAS ROAD S4H ON3

NORMAN:

I MAY, OR MAY NOT, HAVE TOLD YOU, I
ENDEAVOUR, IN "LARRYETTES", TO DEVELOP A
REASONABLE BLEND OF SENSE, AND NONSENSE.

I'VE BEEN ACCUSED OF OVER EMPHASIS ON
THE LATTER.

AFTER SCANNING THE ENCLOSURES, IF YOU DO,
MAY I HAVE YOUR ASSESSMENT?

Larry

1979
A STORY COMING OUT OF ENGLAND, TELLS OF A YOUNG FARMER'S DAUGHTER, OR I SHOULD SAY, THE YOUNG DAUGHTER OF A FARMER, WHO SAYS SHE IS OUT TO BREAK WHAT SHE CALLS "THE GREATEST CLOSED SHOP IN THE WORLD",- THE FARMING INDUSTRY.

SHE DEPLORES THE FACT REVEALING HALF OF ALL GRADUATES FROM BRITAIN'S AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY FARMS. HAVEN'T WE HEARD THAT IN OTHER PLACES?

A YOUNG MAN, COLLEGE GRADUATE, OR NON-GRADUATE, WISHING TO ACQUIRE A FARM IN CANADA TODAY, HASN'T A HOPE, UNLESS HIS FATHER OWNS ONE, AVAILABLE FOR HIM, OR UNLESS HE GOES BEYOND ANY REASONABLE PROSPECT OF PAYING OFF A DEBT, INCURRED BY BORROWING ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY FOR ONE.

THE YOUNG LADY, AN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE GRADUATE, ACCOMPANIED BY ANOTHER GRADUATE, PLANS TO VISIT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, HOPING TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM FACING YOUNG POTENTIAL FARMERS IN BRITAIN.

THESE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT AMONG THOSE WHO ROAM THE WORLD, WITH STARRY-EYED DREAMS OF REFORMING IT, NOR WILL THEY BE FINANCED FROM PUBLIC FUNDS. BOTH ARE BENEFICIARIES OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PROFICIENCY AT AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

THOUGH THEIR PROJECT BE LAUNCHED WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS, I DOUBT THOSE INTENTIONS WILL BECOME A REALITY, BECAUSE FARMLAND IS NO MORE PLENTIFUL, NOR MORE REASONABLY PRICED, IN EUROPE, THAN IN BRITAIN.

SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAVE TAKEN MEASURES TO PRESERVE THEIR FARMLANDS, BY REQUIRING THEY REMAIN AS FARMLANDS, A DEVELOPMENT APPEARING IN A SOMEWHAT MODIFIED FORM, IN SOME PROVINCES OF CANADA.

DENMARK LIMITS THE ACREAGE OF FARMLAND TO BE OWNED BY ONE PERSON (SHADES OF THE N.F.U. PROPOSAL,- LIMITING THE POTENTIAL INCOME OF THE FARMER), THE THEORY IN DENMARK BEING, EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A PIECE OF THE CAKE. GOOD IN THEORY, PERHAPS, BUT AS MORE YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME FARMERS, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SLICE THE CAKE MORE THINLY.

I WONDER IF, IN DENMARK, EVERYONE GETS A PIECE OF CAKE FROM THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY, DOES EVERYONE ALSO GET A PIECE OF CAKE FROM EVERY OTHER INDUSTRY. THAT WOULD BE ONLY FAIR, WOULDN'T IT?

AN ELDERLY LANCASHIRE FARMER OFFERED A RATHER AMUSING COMMENT ABOUT THAT YOUNG LADY, AND HER CAMPAIGN TO SOLVE PROBLEMS FOR YOUNG FARMERS.

HE SAID: "THAT GAL WILL END UP IN PARLIAMENT, FOR SURE". HE COULD BE RIGHT, IF SHE GAINS SUFFICIENT POPULARITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF SHE BECOMES TOO MUCH OF A NUISANCE, HER GOVERNMENT MIGHT DO WHAT ONE OTHER GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN KNOWN TO DO,- PUT HER IN THE SENATE.

HAVE YOU EVER ATTENDED A RE-UNION OF SCHOOL CLASSMATES, OR OTHER ASSOCIATES,- ONE OF THOSE AFFAIRS WHERE PEOPLE GATHER TOGETHER, ONLY TO DISCOVER WHO IS FALLING APART? I HAVE. IT WAS AT THE RURAL SCHOOL WHERE, AT THE TENDER AGE OF $4\frac{1}{2}$ YEARS, I WAS EXPOSED TO "BOOK LEARNIN" (LOCAL YOKEL VERNACULAR). THOUGH I NEVER WON ANY MEDALS FOR PROFICIENCY, DURING MY TERM THERE, I ACHIEVED THE DISTINCTION OF BEING VOTED THE STUDENT LEAST LIKELY TO SUCCEED.

APPROXIMATELY TWO HUNDRED FORMER STUDENTS, REPRESENTING THREE GENERATIONS, SIGNED A REGISTER (OR HAD SOMEONE WITNESS THEIR "X"). A NUMBER OF THEM WERE PARENTS, A LESSER NUMBER WERE GRANDPARENTS.

WHAT JOLTED ME TO AWARENESS OF MY OWN AGE, WAS THE NUMBER, AND VARIETY, OF EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH FOREHEADS, BAGS UNDER THE EYES, TRIPLE CHINS, MISPLACED WAISTLINES, CANES, CRUTCHES, BIFOCALS, AND HEARING AIDS.

BUT MOST DISTURBING, WAS TO AGAIN MEET THE CHARMING AND VIVACIOUS BROWN-EYED BRUNETTE WHO HAD OCCUPIED A DESK ACROSS THE AISLE FROM ME, AND CAUSED ME TO FLUNK EVERY EXAM I HAD WRITTEN. AS CHARMING AND VIVACIOUS AS EVER, AND TO TOP IT, HAD ARRIVED IN A LATE MODEL CHRYSLER IMPERIAL, ACCOMPANIED BY AN EQUALLY CHARMING DAUGHTER, AND TWO LOVELY GRANDCHILDREN. I VOWED I'D NEVER GO TO ANOTHER RE-UNION.

HAVING ASSESSED PHYSICAL ALTERATIONS TO A NUMBER OF THOSE I HAD KNOWN IN EARLIER YEARS, I WENT TO EXAMINE ALTERATIONS TO THE SCHOOLHOUSE THROUGH 65 YEARS. A BRICK BUILDING HAD SUPPLANTED THE ORIGINAL FRAME STRUCTURE, BUILT IN 1905, WHEN I WAS AMONG ITS FIRST GROUP OF PUPILS.

A CAST-IRON, COAL-BURNING, "STATION AGENT" HEATER, THEORETICALLY SUPPOSED TO HEAT THE PLACE, IN WINTER MONTHS, TO A POINT ABOVE FREEZING BEFORE MID-AFTER NOON, AND OCCASIONALLY DID, HAD GIVEN WAY TO AN OIL-BURNING FURNACE.

THE FLY-SPECKED AND COBWEB-DRAPE D PICTURES OF QUEEN VICTORIA AND KING EDWARD VII, SO LONG ADORNING THE WALL ABOVE THE TEACHER'S DESK, WERE GONE. I NEVER LEARNED THEIR FATE, BUT A FACT OF INTEREST IS, THEY WERE NEVER REPLACED WITH PICTURES OF KING GEORGE AND BOSSY QUEEN MARY. APPARENTLY, OLD "VICKY", AND KING "EDDY" HAD RUN THE SHOW THROUGH THOSE YEARS WHILE "GEORGIE" WAS GROWING UP, LEAVING HIM NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR AFFAIRS OF STATE, AND HE BECAME INVOLVED IN A BIT OF HANKY PANKY AROUND TOWN, RAISING A FEW EYEBROWS, AND LOWERING HIS REPUTATION, THERE AND ELSEWHERE. THUS, LESS THAN EXTRAVAGANT EXPENDITURES FOR PICTURES OF "GEORGIE" AND MARY, BY SCHOOL BOARD SKEPTICS.

FOR ME, THE MOST NOTICEABLE CHANGE IN THAT SCHOOLROOM WAS SINGLE SEAT DESKS, REPLACING THE FORMER TWO-SEATER TYPE, WITH THEIR HAND CARVED TOPS.

IN MY DAY, IT WAS COMMON PRACTISE FOR LADS TO INSCRIBE THEIR INITIALS ON TOP OF THE DESK THEY OCCUPIED, LEAVING A RECORD OF THOSE WHO HAD SPENT ANY LENGTH OF TIME IN THE INSTITUTION.

THE ONE BREAK IN THAT RECORD WAS DURING A YEAR WHEN THE TEACHER WOULD CONFISCATE ALL JACKKNIVES, IN THE MORNING, FOLLOWING THE LORDS PRAYER, AND SINGING "THE MAY PULL LEAF FREVER", RETURNING THEM TO THEIR RIGHTFUL OWNERS AT 4 OCLOCK, AFTER APPLICATION OF THE STRAP TO THOSE WHO HAD MERITED A SPOT IN HER BLACK BOOK OF THE DAY.

I HAD ACQUIRED A JACKKNIFE BEFORE THAT TEACHER APPEARED ON THE SCENE, SO, PROBABLY IN THE UPPER STORAGE SPACE IN SOME FARM MACHINE SHED, MAY BE FOUND AN OLD TWO-SEATER SCHOOL DESK, DEEPLY AND WOBBLY INSCRIBED L.L.G., ONE OF MY FEW CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN WEST.

NOTE:

THIS HAD APPEARED IN "LARRYETTES", BUT FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, NOT IN ITS ENTIRETY.

NORMAN:

AS YOU KNOW, I HADN'T ALWAYS BEEN DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PRODUCTION OF FOOD FOR AN OVERLY PRODUCTIVE WORLD POPULATION.

THERE WAS A BRIEF INTERLUDE OF SCHOOL TEACHING, WHICH I DOUBT HAD ENHANCED, OR ADVANCED, THE EDUCATION OF THOSE HAPLESS YOUNGSTERS EXPOSED TO MY LIMITED TALENTS.

THERE WRE SEVERAL YEARS INVOLVEMENT IN THE DAIRY PROCESSING AND MERCHAN-DISING INDUSTRY,- THE LONGEST PERIOD OF TIME IN WHICH I WAS ABLE TO HOLD A JOB WITH THE SAME EMPLOYER.

DURING A PORTION OF THAT TIME, I WAS A TRAVELLING SALESMAN, PUSHING SALES OF BUTTER AND ICE CREAM, TO HOTELS, CAFES, AND MERCHANTS, IN THE REGINA TRADING AREA.

ONE OF MY REGULAR CALLS WAS IN THE TOWN OF CRAIL, MID-WAY BETWEEN REGINA AND SASKATOON, ARRIVING THERE AT NOON, AND TAKING THE RETURN TRAIN TO REGINA AT 7.00 P.M.

MY BUSINESS SELDOM REQUIRED MORE THAN ONE HOUR, LEAVING ME WITH SIX HOURS, AND NOTHING TO DO.

NOT THE MOST GLAMOROUS, BUT MORE CONVENIENT, PLACE TO SPEND WASTE TIME, WAS IN THE LOBBY OF THE CRAIK "HOTEL EMPIRE", A SECOND RATE DUMP ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE STATION. IT WAS ALSO A FAVORITE HAUNT OF THE TOWN COP, ONE OF MOST ACCOMPLISHED LIARS I HAVE EVER KNOWN, AND I'VE KNOWN A VARIETY OF LIARS.

I REMEMBER ONE OF HIS YARNS, MAYBE NOT HIS MOST CLASSIC, BUT ONE REMAINING IN MY RECOLLECTION OF THE MOUTHY OLD BASTARD.

IT WON'T BE APPEARING IN "LARRYETTES", SO, HERE IS A COPY. I DEPLORE THE ABUSE OF POETIC LICENSE, BUT THE THING JUST DOESN'T LEND ITSELF TO MUSIC.

THIS IS THE TALE, AS I HEARD IT, TOLD BY A SMOLDERING FIRE,
IN A POT-BELLIED STOVE IN THE LOBBY OF THE CRAIK "HOTEL EMPIRE".

THERE WERE FOUR IN THE GROUP THAT EVENING, TWO OF US AWAITING THE TRAIN,
THE GAP-TOOTHED HAG WHO RAN THE JOINT (THE BOYS ALL CALLED HER JANE),

AND THE ONE WHO WAS TELLING THE STORY (I RECALL HIS NAME WAS JAKE),
BY HIS OWN CLAIM (UNSUPPORTED) THE MAN WHO DISCOVERED CRAIK.

HE WAS THERE BEFORE THE RAILROAD, WALKED IN FROM SOMEWHERE EAST,
HAD LIVED FOUR MONTHS ON BANNOCK, MADE WITH FLOUR, SLOUGH WATER, AND YEAST.

JAKE WAS GENEROUS WITH DETAIL, THOUGH CONSIDERABLY SHY WITH FACT.
'T WAS RUMORED MOST FOLK ROUND THERE CONSIDERED THE GUY A BIT CRACKED.

HIS HOMESTEAD WAS SOUTH OF THE VILLAGE, WHERE HE'D PRODUCED THE FIRST BUSHEL
OF WHEAT.

HE BUILT THE FIRST SCHOOL IN THE VILLAGE, THEN KEPT THE PLACE COZY AND NEAT.
WHEN THE VILLAGE GREW TO BE CALLED A TOWN, WITH BOARD SIDEWALKS, GAS STREET LAMPS,

AND ALL, JAKE WAS APPOINTED TOWN MARSHAL, IN CASE SOMEONE STARTED A BRAWL.
IN EARLY DAYS OF THE VILLAGE, THE PRINCIPAL SPORT WAS BASEBALL,

PLAYED ON A MAKESHIFT BALL DIAMOND, JUST WEST OF THE VILLAGE HALL.
JAKE, OF COURSE, WAS THE UMPIRE, NO ONE ELSE WOULD TACKLE THE JOB,

BUT JAKE WAS COMPLETELY INDIFFERENT TO HOOTS AND CATCALLS FROM A MOB.
SPORTS DAY WAS AN EVENT OF THE SEASON, TEAMS COMING FROM NEAR, AND FROM FAR.

THERE WERE THOSE WHO TRAVELLED ON HORSE BACK. OTHERS BY "MODEL T" CAR.
EXCITEMENT RAN HIGH IN THE VILLAGE, WITH THE HOME TEAM'S HONOR AT STAKE,

BUT THE BOYS WERE QUITE CERTAIN OF WINNING. AFTER ALL, THE UMPIRE WAS JAKE.
THE GAMES CARRIED ON UNTIL EVENING, WHEN THE OLD FOLKS WENT HOME, TO MILK,

AND CRAIK REMAINED IN THE RUNNING, WOUND UP IN A TIE, WITH DILKE.
AMONG THE BOYS ON THE HOME TEAM WAS A COUNTRY LAD, NAMED ZEKE,

DISTINGUISHED BY HIS PATCHED UP TROUSERS, AND AMOST UNUSUAL BEAK.

PLAY HAD REACHED THE TOP OF THE NINTH, BASES FULL, WITH ZEKE ON THIRD.
LOCAL FANS WERE HOWLING WILD, AND GIVING DILKE "THE BIRD".

THE PITCHER THREW AN OUTSIDE CURVE, IT REALLY WAS A "BALL", BUT THE BATTER
SWUNG, CONNECTED RIGHT, AND IT HIT A BACKHOUSE WALL.

THE OUTFIELD SCOOPED IT UP, AND THREW, BUT THE DISTANCE WAS SO GREAT,
THAT ZEKE, BY RUNNING ALL WAY OUT, HAD ALMOST REACHED HOME PLATE.

ZEKE WAS RELUCTANT TO SLIDE FEET FIRST. HE COULD LOSE THE PATCH FROM HIS PANTS.
THERE WAS ONLY ONE HOPE. GO IN HEAD FIRST. HE DECIDED TO TAKE THAT CHANCE.

WHETHER ZEKE, OR THE BALL, REACHED HOME BASE FIRST, WAS ARGUED ALL NIGHT,-
WHO KNOWS? BUT ACCORDING TO JAKE, NOT A SHADOW OF DOUBT,-ZEKE HAD WON,- BY THE
LENGTH OF HIS NOSE.

THAT WAS THE TALE, AS I HEARD IT, TOLD BY A SMOLDERING FIRE, IN A POT-BELLIED
STOVE IN THE LOBBY OF THE CRAIK "HOTEL EMPIRE".

Larry Grey

Weyburn Jan 1 1917

Dear Norman:

Your Xmas letter

on schedule

was duly appreciated. I was spending a few days in bed at the time with a mixture of flu and stomach trouble so I'm starting now to send out my Xmas mail. I don't know what my trouble might be but I'm going to give the boys in Winnipeg another chance to find out before spring comes around. We are spending the winter in Weyburn again, managed to get possession of our house last summer and have it all to ourselves. We had the floors sanded, painted and papered the works from top to bottom and I'm now working on kitchen cupboards. If you get a chance to come this way I'll show you what can be done but have your ideas at home. Irma changes her plans every time someone comes in.

We have had winter with us for some time with more snow than last year but not much wind as yet.

although we live in ~~daily~~ dread of a
storm. All roads are blocked except the
main highway to Regina. We closed up
everything at the farm in November so
that's one load off my mind. It will
probably be a permanent arrangement until
the youngsters are through school. Incidentally
speaking of youngsters you appear to have
faith in the permanency of the children's
allowance bet. I suppose it's all very natural
and all that but don't you realize your
age has some bearing on the matter
that must sooner or later be given
serious consideration? I realize that we
were fifteen years late getting started
and that we hadn't a chance to
compete but I hope that handicap
will never create any jealousy of your
evident ability to eliminate immigration.
Perhaps I should stop there and say what
I started to say — my nature with the
aid of medical science, be kind, and
may you get your wish — a boy!

I had a card from Evelyn telling
of Don's accident. You had mentioned
it some time ago but I had assumed
that he had recovered fully and that
there would be no ill effects. It's a tough
break that shouldn't come to anyone, least
of all to Evelyn. She has been a rather
remarkable girl and I hope Garry appreciates
her. I never got to know him very well
since I met him only once or twice.

We had a rather quiet Xmas
time owing to my failure to cooperate
with my stomach. My eldest brother & family
drove from Ft Francis Ont. to spend a
few days and my youngest brother
came from Edmonton. He is still here
and may stay for another week. I
half planned a trip to Wby with him
but couldn't arrange a hearing with the
clinic to suit us so it will probably
be sometime next month. Will check you
a line if I go. On the meantime look me
up on developments & the best of luck to Grace
and Larry

Ena.
This will give
you a real chuckle.
Could you return it
some time soon.

Larry Grey

7 Douglas Road 54H-0N3
Wayburn.
Dec 4/78

Norman:

So! We didn't see you on your last visit to this latitude. But it's your own fault. You seem to have a penchant for arriving unexpectedly, risking the possibility of finding doors locked, the burglar alarm set, and suspicious glances from the neighbors. Harold Clark did that one time. We were away, so he parked his oversize motor home on the driveway, attached his water system to the garden hose, his lighting system to an outlet in the garage, and went to bed. When we arrived home, after midnight, the police were there, had Harold overpowered, trussed up, and were loading him into their patrol car.

However, by producing our birth certificates, social security cards, a variety of oil company credit cards, and a receipt for the previous year's taxes on my house, we convinced the officers we were reasonably law abiding citizens. Meanwhile, Pama had displayed her usual tact by producing coffee and cookies, the police left, the neighborhood settled down, and we should have done the same, though we continued to yack until the stars began to fade.

Norman & Grace:

143 Ash Drive, Weyburn.

Remember us? We wrote last year, - or did we? Well, if you missed an issue, it was intentional. We don't like to bore our readers with regularity.

Bet you expected this to be a Christmas letter. Sorry, but tell us, how can one read the daily paper, listen to C.B.C. news, watch a mob of sport fans yelling for blood, and develop a Christmas spirit? No, we're not quite that impervious.

So, perhaps you should toss this in the trash, where it properly belongs, because the rest of it may be nothing more than a run down on where we are, where we've been, how we are, and all that.

To begin, we're still living, temporarily, in Weyburn. But who isn't living only temporarily, somewhere?

Where have we been? At home most of the time. There was a trip East in one long January, with ~~three~~ week in Quebec City, then back to Canada for ten days in the Toronto area. Not too alluring at that season, so at Mid-September, with our harvest complete, we hurriedly decided to make a long debated, and long postponed trip to Britain. Stopped a few days in London to visit Ted and Janice, determine location of all convenient pubs, and learn the rudiments of converting ten bucks, two bits, a dime, and three nickels, to one guinea, three pound, two bob, and thruppence. Our Australia and New Zealand experience was helpful.

From London's throb, a leisurely three-day bus trip through the Midlands to Edinburgh. Pastoral scenes and peaceful villages previously pictured only in imagination, centuries-old churches, walls covered with ivy on the outside, algae on the inside, a mediaeval castle somewhat in need of repair. Our guide was blest with a pure Caledonian accent and cursed with obviously a mail order set of dentures, so I may have missed something in translation, but I'm sure he said

the Castle's last occupant had been Sir Maurice Fitzmaurice, one of the Epileptic Fitzes of Lushingup Manor, Swill-On-Thames, descendants of Sir Sourpuss Fitzmaurice, Pickle Maker By Appointment to His Majesty King George III. Believe me, no one with temperamental dentures should be employed as a bus tour commentator.

Our stay in Scotland was brief, the "Land of Shamrock and Blarney" calling, so a flight to Dublin and the traditional Irish greeting, "CIED MILE FIALTA", or in Canadianese, "A HUNDRED THOUSAND WELCOMES". The "Emerald Isle" was every bit as emerald as extolled in song and story, the colleens charming, the whiskey horrible, the blarney,- I'd say merely the gift of saying the right thing instead of the obvious.

A circle of Southern Ireland, back to London for another week, a visit to the Isle of Wight, a weekend in Yorkshire, and home again to mow the lawn so the neighbors could find their kids.

Our farm experience was a parallel to that of many farms in this area, a large crop, unsaleable at present as you well know, but for those of us with more years experience in Southern Saskatchewan, and keener memories, this should be a problem of lesser importance, and we're still counting our blessings.

Our family. Can you take it? Ted and Janice enjoy London. For Janice, with her parents living in Yorkshire, England is home. Ted's work in Trade and commerce is exacting in its demands, but resulting contacts with various trade commissions from most other countries of the world bring abundant experience. He anticipates another move next year. It could be Lebanon, Australia, Peru, they never know. We're hoping it might be South America.

Shirley and her family have a calendar overflowing with activities attainable only by the young, Shirley and Glen in their numerous organizations,

the youngsters in school, music, and all those things that, to us, are acceptable and commendable. There are so many today that are not. music occupies a top spot in their lives, but this is not surprising. Music was always a feature of our home. I recall my mother constantly singing; the only person I've known who could sing and clobber one of the kids at the same time, without missing a beat in her song. Of course this was no major physical feat for Mother, because ours was a large family, and in the combination kitchen-dining-living-room of our farm home she had but to swing an arm, and was almost certain to clout one of us, which explained why our most treasured play spots were in more remote corners of the room.

Enough of that. Now, how about your kids? Have they done anything cute lately? No? Well, they will, and don't be afraid to tell us about it. We can take it too.

That's about it for 1969, a good year for us. We hope it has been good for you. While becoming a bit more forgetful sometimes, and a bit less tolerant of government at all times, we continue in excellent health, with contentment in life, pride in our family, and anticipation for the future.

All of this good fortune, and a pleasant Christmas, is our wish for all our friends and all others who may deserve it.

Larry & Irma

143 ASH DRIVE, JUNE 12,/76.

DEAR NORMAN:

RETURNING TWO WEEKS AGO FROM ANOTHER SIX WEEKS TOUR OF ENGLAND, WALES, AND SCOTLAND, OUR ACCUMULATED MAIL PRODUCED A LETTER FROM A MRS WOODHOUSE, AND A MRS TURNBULL, INVITING US TO BINSARTH FOR OBSERVANCE OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR MARRIAGE TO GRACE, - OR HER MARRIAGE TO YOU. THE LETTER DIDN'T SPECIFY.

HAD I BEEN ASKED THE EXACT DAY, OR EVEN THE EXACT YEAR, OF THAT WORLD-SHAKING EVENT, I COULDN'T HAVE ANSWERED WITH ANY DEGREE OF ACCURACY. I ONLY KNEW IT WAS BEFORE 1929. THAT'S WHEN I SUCCEEDED IN PERSUADING A CERTAIN CHARMING YOUNG LADY TO SHARE WITH ME, MY FORTUNES AND MY DESTINY. THE FOLLOWING YEARS ARE PLEASANT HISTORY.

THE DATE OF YOUR ANNIVERSARY CREATES A MINOR PROBLEM. I'M COMMITTED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL IN REGINA JUNE 24-26, WITH STATED DUTIES ON BEHALF OF OUR LOCAL CLUB. I HAD GIVEN SOME THOUGHT TO LEAVING REGINA EARLY P.M. SATURDAY, IF I COULD FIND A SUBSTITUTE CAPABLE OF FULFILLING MY DUTIES EVEN CLOSE TO AS WELL AS I WOULD, BUT AS YOU KNOW, OR SHOULD KNOW, THAT CHANCE WOULD BE REMOTE. IT'S ONLY ABOUT 150-160 MILES FROM REGINA TO BINSARTH, AND I'M INTRIGUED WITH THE PROSPECT OF VISITING, AND REFRESHMENTS. BUT THE GAMES? WELL, NO! THE YEARS HAVE TAKEN THEIR TOLL. MY 100 YARD DASH IS NOW A MEDIUM-TO-SLOW WALK. MY ONCE FAMOUS HIGH JUMP, NOW, NOT MUCH ABOVE STEPPING OVER THE GARDEN HOSE. AND MY SWIMMING PROWESS LIMITED TO THE LENGTH OF THE BATHTUB.

HOWEVER, IF I DON'T GET TO BINSARTH ON THE 26TH, IT'S ON OUR CALENDAR.

I'M BOOKED TO LEAVE AT MID-JULY ON A FIVE WEEKS TRIP TO SOUTH AMERICA, HOPING TO GET THERE AND BACK AGAIN BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS AND EARTHQUAKES. IT'S BEEN A LONG CHERISHED DREAM. IN FACT, I PROMISED IRMA A TRIP TO S.A. ALMOST 50 YEARS AGO. NOW, SHE WON'T GO. SO I MUST TAKE ALL THE PICTURES, MAKE ALL THE NOTES, AND PICK UP ALL THE SOUVENIRS.

OUR RECENT TRIP TO BRITAIN WAS ONE OF THE MOST PLEASANT OF ALL TRIPS WE'VE EXPERIENCED. WEATHER CO-OPERATIVE, FLOWERS IN PROFUSION, AND CROPS ABOUT A MONTH AHEAD OF OURS. WE TRAVELLED BY CAR, TAKING TED'S WIFE WITH US AS CHAUFFIER, GUIDE, AND INTERPRETER (IN SCOTLAND). VISITED THE ISLES OF SCILLY, ABOUT 40 MILES S.W. OF LANDS END, ENGLAND, REACHED BY HELICOPTER, AND THE HEBRIDES OFF THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND. DIDN'T GET TO THE ISLE OF GROATS, BUT CLOSE TO IT. ANOTHER PAGE IN OUR BOOK OF MEMORIES.

MAY YOUR ANNIVERSARY BE BLESSED WITH SUNSHINE, AND A HOST OF FRIENDS, OF WHICH WE KNOW YOU HAVE MANY.



IT NEVER FAILS TO STARTLE ME, WHEN IRMA ANNOUNCES THE DEADLINE FOR MAILING OUR CHRISTMAS LETTER. IF NOT REMINDED, I'D PROBABLY LEAVE IT UNTIL THE 24TH.

LAST YEAR, THERE WAS NO LETTER, OR DID YOU NOTICE? THE POSATL WORKERS DECIDED IT WAS THEIR TURN TO STRIKE.

SO, THIS WILL BE A BIENNIAL REPORT, AND WITH MY SKETCHY MEMORY, THERE MAY WELL BE A FEW OMISSIONS.

BUT FOR BOTH OF US, IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER TWO YEARS OF CONTINUED ACTIVITY, BELY-ING THE FACT THAT, FOUR YEARS AGO, WE HAD REACHED THAT POINT IN LIFE KNOWN BY SOME AS RETIREMENT.

MY DAILY RADIO PROGRAM, NOW IN ITS THIRD YEAR, TAKES A SHARE OF MY TIME, OTHER COMMITMENTS, ANOTHER SHARE, BUT I DO FIND TIME TO EAT, AND SLEEP. IRMA'S CALENDAR, THOUGH NOT SO CONGESTED, DOES INDICATE INVOLVEMENT IN A NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES. FLOWERS AND SHRUBS REMAIN A MAJOR INTEREST, THOUGH THIS YEAR'S PROLONGED DROUGHT HAD AN ALMOST DEVASTATING EFFECT. BUT JUST WATCH WHAT HAPPENS NEXT YEAR!

WE CONTINUE TO TRAVEL, THOUGH NOT ALWAYS TOGETHER. HOWEVER, THAT DOESN'T INDICATE ANY INTENTION OF SEPARATION, OR DIVORCE.

IN MAY OF LAST YEAR, I JOINED TED ON ANOTHER VISIT TO JAPAN, KOREA, AND TAIWAN, MUCH IMPRESSED WITH CHANGES IN THOSE COUNTRIES SINCE OUR PREVIOUS VISITS.

IN APRIL, THIS YEAR, IRMA AND I MADE ANOTHER TRIP TO BRITAIN. TED'S WIFE, JAN, WHO HAD GONE A FEW DAYS EARLIER, MET US IN LONDON, WHERE WE SPENT A WEEK, OBTAINED A CAR, DROVE TO LANDS END ON THE SOUTHWEST COAST, FLEW BY HELICOPTER TO THE SCILLY ISLANDS FOR A WEEKEND, BACK TO THE MAINLAND AND NORTH TO WALES, THAT LAND OF CONTRASTS, -ROW UPON ROW OF GRIMY DRAB COTTAGES, OCCUPIED BY COAL MINERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. THEN, A FEW MILES FARTHER, LUSH GREEN VALLEYS AND HILLSIDES POLKA DOTTED WITH SHEEP. A BEAUTIFUL LAND, IN SOME PLACES.

ACROSS ENGLAND, TO VISIT JAN'S MOTHER IN YORKSHIRE, AND NORTH AGAIN TO SCOTLAND WITH A WEEK ON THE HEBRIDES ISLANDS, THEN TO PRESTWICK, ALL TOO SOON, FOR OUR FLIGHT HOME. A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR US WAS TRAVELLING, FOR THE MOST PART, ON COUNTRY ROADS AND LANES, STOPPING OVERNIGHT IN FARM HOMES CATERING TO SMALL GROUPS OF TOURISTS. THE MOST DELIGHTFUL OF MANY TRIPS WE HAVE HAD. WE PLAN TO GO AGAIN NEXT YEAR.

IN JULY, THIS YEAR, SHIRLEY AND I JOINED A SMALL GROUP ON A ONE MONTH TOUR OF SOUTH AMERICA, FOR ME, A LIFELONG DREAM COME TRUE. I HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO GO THERE. ALMOST FIFTY YEARS AGO, I OFFERED A CHARMING YOUNG LADY A TRIP TO SOUTH AMERICA, IF SHE WOULD SHARE MY FORTUNES AND MY DESTINY. SHE ACCEPTED THE OFFER, BUT NEVER GOT THE TRIP, AND WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES FINALLY MADE IT POSSIBLE, SHE DECLINED TO GO. IT WAS AN INTERESTING TRIP, IN SOME ASPECTS A PLEASANT TRIP. BUT MY CURIOSITY HAS BEEN SATISFIED. I SHALL NOT GO AGAIN.

BUT COME JANUARY, WE PLAN ANOTHER TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, TASMANIA, FIJI, AND OTHER SOUTH PACIFIC SPOTS. THIS TIME, I SHALL BE GUIDE, INTERPETER, AND EVERYTHING ELSE, EXCEPT SPIRITUAL ADVISOR, FOR A GROUP OF FARMERS AND THEIR WIVES. ANOTHER NEW EXPERIENCE. HOPEFULLY, IT WILL BE A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE.

NOW, IF YOU'RE SUFFICIENTLY BORED WITH ACCOUNTS OF OUR TRAVELS, I'LL TURN TO OUR FAMILY AND GRANDCHILDREN. THEY'RE GROWING UP, AS GRANDCHILDREN WILL, WITH PROFOUND INTERESTS IN SO MANY THINGS, - MUSIC, SPORTS, SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, WITH ALL ADVANTAGES THAT A COMBINATION OF LIFE ON A FARM, AND EASY ACCESS TO FACILITIES THAT A CITY CAN OFFER.

SHIRLEY AND GLEN HAVE A CALENDAR THAT STAGGERS OUR IMAGINATION. TED AND JANICE, TOO, HAVE HAD A FULL TWO YEARS, SPENDING WHAT SPARE TIME THEY'VE HAD, REMODELLING A HOUSE IN MUCH NEED OF REMODELLING. TED IS NEARING TERMINATION OF HIS ASSIGNMENT IN ESTABLISHING A PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, WHERE HE GOES NEXT HAS NOT BEEN DETERMINED.

HAVING HAD OUR ENTIRE FAMILY WITHIN ONE HOUR OF TRAVELLING TIME, HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE NOT GIVEN TO ALL PARENTS, AND WE VIEW WITH MIXED FEELINGS, THE PROSPECT OF SEPARATION AGAIN, BY HALF A WORLD.

BUT IN RETROSPECT, LIFE HAS BEEN KIND AND GENEROUS, GIVING US A COMFORTABLE HOME, EXCELLENT HEALTH, A FAMILY OF WHOM WE ARE EXCEPTIONALLY PROUD, AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SEE SO MANY OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. FOR THIS, WE ARE GRATEFUL, BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY OTHERS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN AS FORTUNATE.

WE PLAN THE CHRISTMAS WITH OUR FAMILY, EITHER HERE, OR THERE. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE A FAMILY, WE HOPE THAT WILL BE YOUR GOOD FORTUNE ALSO.

AND TO ALL OF YOU, FROM ALL OF US, THE SAME, AND EVER SINCERE WISH,-

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND A BRIGHT NEW YEAR".

Larry Gray

Irma & Larry

Do you have Bill's address in Victoria?

No.

NAME
NOM

RESOURCE