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Is This Modern Youth?

A depressing condition of "sheer intellectual poverty" among teen-aged Britons is reported in a sociological study of the youth of Birmingham, the country's second biggest city. One wonders if it is a reflection of modern youth generally.

Semi-literacy is widespread and ambition generally low, boys and girls live lives that are "empty and barren. Rather than anti-social and vicious," the survey says.

The survey—"eighty thousand adolescents" (Allan and Unwin)—was conducted by 60 of the students and staff of Westhill Training College, Birmingham, over a three-year period among 81,976 persons between the ages of 14 and 19 who live in Birmingham.

The 188-page report makes these points:

1. Pocket Money—At 16, boys and girls average 11 shillings (\$1.70) weekly spending money. Four out of 10 boys and one out of three girls spend a sizeable portion of this on cigarettes. There are 80 movie houses, three vaudeville shows, 17 swimming pools, 104 dance halls and 1,389 public houses in Birmingham, and teen-agers patronize all of these to some extent. One girl in 20 and one boy in eight gamble regularly.

2. Liquor—One boy in six between 16 and 19 spends more than five shillings weekly drinking. Many girls drink too—but leave the paying to the boy friend.

3. Church-Going—40 per cent go to church regularly, the rest only when a relative is married or buried.

4. Entertainment—The movies and dance halls are favorite teen-age haunts. 41 per cent said they "never read books."

5. Dead-end Jobs—Although Birmingham has about 1,500 different trades, youngsters generally have at least two jobs within two years of leaving school at 14. Some have as many as 10.

6. Ambitions—One girl in seven regards marriage as an ideal career but only one boy in Birmingham mentioned that he wanted to be a good husband. Ambition generally followed the trade in which the adolescent worked—for instance bus conductors wanted to be drivers. But they ranged all the way between a 17-year-old girl who wanted to be "bally dancer" and a 19-year-old boy who wanted to be an Egyptologist and could spell it.

SEX EDUCATION

DON'T tell your children about "the birds and the bees," if you hope to give them a proper attitude toward sex. This is the advice of leading educators and psychologists throughout Canada, in a survey reported in a copyrighted article in Coronet. The educators were agreed that a child's questions should be answered directly, and in terms of humans, rather than birds and bees.

They also agreed that it is the parents' duty, not that of teachers or clergymen, to tell the child the facts of life. This, they admitted, was made difficult by the fact that most parents were themselves victims of lack of sex education and considered themselves inadequate to offer instruction on the subject to their children.

The need for a wholesome program of sex education was emphasized, says the article, as a result of three factors which were attributed to sex maladjustment caused by ignorance and misinformation in the formative year:

(1) an all-time high in Canada's convictions for sex offences. The majority of offenders came from homes where they received no wholesome, helpful sex information.

(2) a doubling of illegitimate births in ten years. A survey of 300 promiscuous girls showed that "the most striking feature was that most of these girls had incomplete or inaccurate sex information."

(3) a fivefold increase in divorces in Canada. The only grounds for divorce in this country were adultery, and this was frequently the result of sexual maladjustment.

As to how parents can inform their children on sex matters, the educators offered a number of rules. Among them were the following: "Answer all questions promptly, when they arise. But do not make the child's first question on sex the occasion for a 'complete' lecture. Tell the truth—but adapt it to the age level of the child. Do not resort to the story of the stork. Keep away from poetic answers and metaphors—this is just another way of evading the issue. Indicate that sex talks are a matter of privacy in the family, to avoid possible unpleasantness with less enlightened neighbors, should your child pass on your teaching to their children."

Victoria Report

by J. K. Nesbitt

The Doukhobor Problem—Mounties Taking Over—Drunken Driving

By J. K. Nesbitt

VICTORIA—Attorney-General Gordon Wismer sounds earnest enough when he tells of plans to solve the Doukhobor problem. He's as earnest as any of his predecessors, which was very earnest, but they never had much success and there's no reason to believe Mr. Wismer will have any more success than they.

But, like other A.G.'s in the last few decades, Mr. Wismer waxes indignant and makes wry statements about the whole subject. Something will be done, he says. A.G.'s have said that before. This isn't to say Mr. Wismer won't do his best.

The attorney-general came back from Ottawa the other day and immediately called a press-conference. He gave forth with high-sound phrases about the Doukhobors.

"This is a matter that amounts to civil insurrection," he said. "It may have to be dealt with as such, which means it may have to be dealt with by Ottawa."

You could see that Mr. Wismer hoped the powers-that-be in Ottawa would decide it was civil insurrection and that the federal authorities would step in. However, all these years the federal authorities have washed their hands of the Douk problem as an earwig runs from a shot of nicotine juice.

"These Sons of Freedom aren't going to be allowed to defy the criminal law of this province," cried the attorney-general, knocking the ashes from his pipe. "As soon as we have accommodation we will proceed with all those who break the law. We're looking over the old army camp at Vernon."

Mr. Wismer said there are a lot of fine young Doukhobors who want to become good Canadian citizens and who don't hold with all the burnings and the disrobings in public.

"We have a long range plan of education and assimilation for these good Doukhobors and we don't propose to allow a fanatical minority to interfere with those plans," said Mr. Wismer.

Mr. Wismer had a lot of controversial problems on his hands when he returned from Ottawa. Besides the age-old thorn-in-the-side of the Douks, he tried to placate hundreds of provincial policemen who don't like the idea of the "mounties" taking them over. Mr. Wismer said

he doesn't blame the provincial police for being worried but let them, he said, have no worry. They'll be looked after, every last man of them.

"We're going to see every man in the B.C. force is given the best possible treatment," he said. "I hope none of our men will jump to conclusions but will wait and see—the government is going to look after all these men—and I think they should be satisfied to wait and see."

Then there was the matter of drunken driving to concern Mr. Wismer. He admitted it's a headache. He said that perhaps it might be a good idea if, instead of the law having to prove that a driver is drunk, the driver should prove that he is sober, or that, if he had a drink, that drink didn't interfere with his safe driving.

"I think that perhaps it would be a good idea to let a driver know that if he wants to have a drink, or two or three drinks, he does so at his own peril," Mr. Wismer said.

Queen Mother Mary, when her hand-made carpet was displayed in the Legislative Buildings here, did more than show 15,000 Victorians an example of perfect needlework. She showed many of them for the first time the interior of the Legislative Buildings. They always intend to, of course, but never get around to it. After viewing the carpet, they roamed round the corridors, they studied the pictures of pioneers in the lobby,

Big Blast Goes Off

"A very successful blast," said C. A. Berner, divisional superintendent of the CNR here, who witnessed over 60 tons of dynamite rip a rock pit open near Pacific, 110 miles east of here.

"There was no interruption of traffic and no damage caused," Mr. Berner stated. "The rock was very successfully broken to suitable size."

The blast scattered a little, the C.N.R. official said. From the blast, the company obtained 100,000 yards of rock to be used for rip rap, a type of grade fill and ballasting material for the grade along the Skeena River. Supervised by Fred Bergman, powder specialist, 2400 cases of dynamite were packed into "coyote tunnels" totalling 1500 feet. Loading began April 7.

Also on hand to keep a watchful eye was R. C. Davidson, divisional engineer.

crowded over the golden bar and peered into the dimness of the blue carpeted, marble pillared legislative chamber, trooped into the library and archives, poked around in the Museum of Natural History, saw the Indian exhibits, generally said they were surprised that the Legislative Buildings, which they pass every day, are so splendid and so filled with interest, historical and otherwise.

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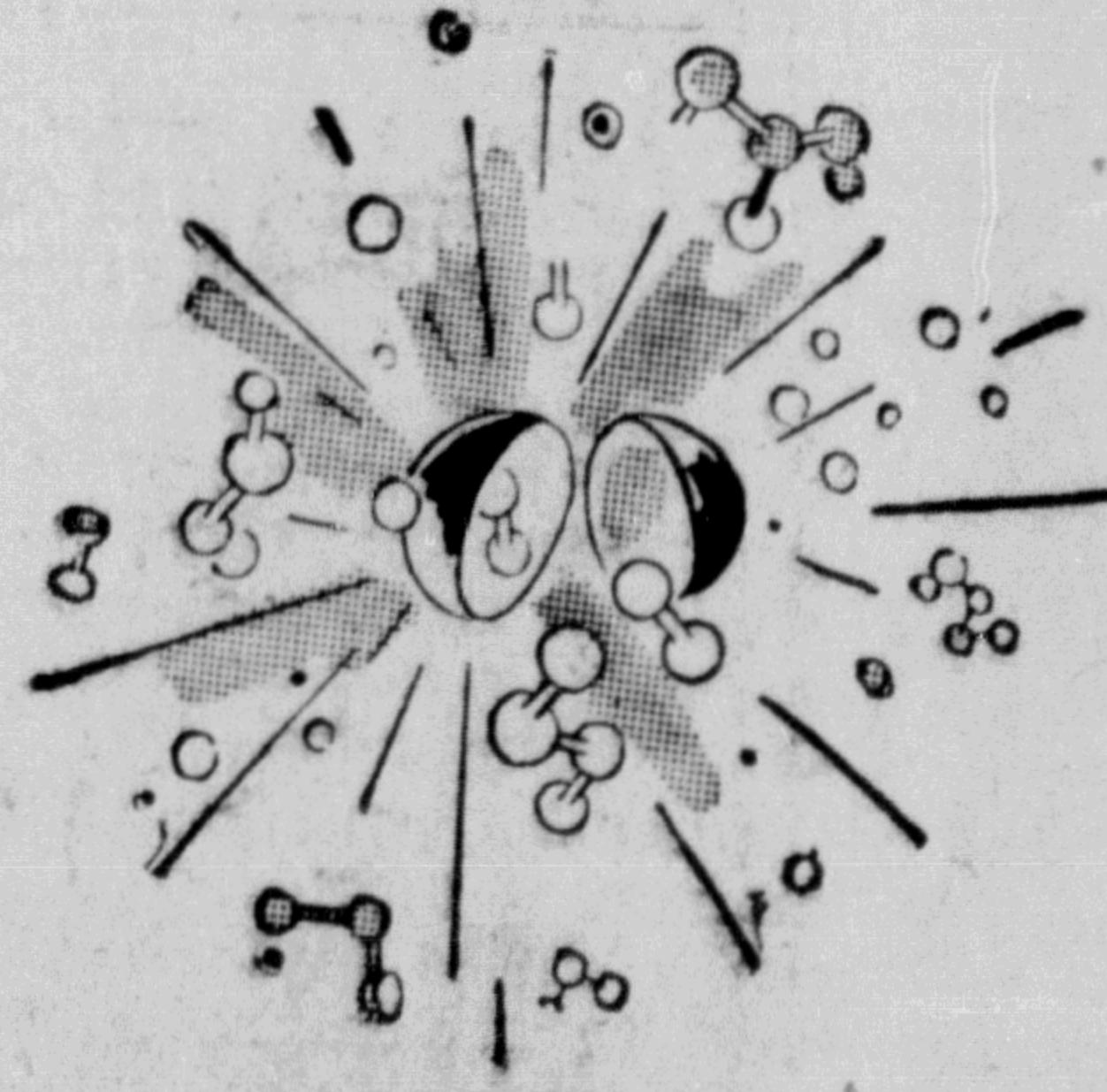
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