

inside a cabinet shaped like a phone booth and the lights were turned off. Two of the group held Mrs. Poole's hands. Sir Arthur stood in front of the cabinet.

The table moved violently up and down and lunged at Sir Arthur like, in his words, "an angry dog." Sir Arthur was so impressed that he described the evening at length in his book, *Our Second American Adventure*, and he came back to visit the Hamiltons twice, after his death.



The 1950 flood.

The Royal Ballet

Winnipeg was once described by a native as "one hundred and fifty dollars away from anything." He went on to say that "we figured we'd just have to do these things ourselves."

What they did was build a cultural oasis of their own. The keystone is, of course, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, a troupe that travels to great acclaim all over the world (it will be in London from October 19th to the 30th at Sadler's Wells).

A few years ago Agnes de Mille, the USA's great lady of the dance, published an appreciation of the company in its magazine *Ballet-Hoo* in which she described her first visit to Winnipeg in 1963.

Below are excerpts.

"In October 1963, I received a letter from an unknown writer in an unknown place called Winnipeg, Manitoba. The letter asked me to do a ballet. . . . I did not say 'no'. . . .

"The dancers were waiting for me in the overheated lounge of a cabaret, the uncleared tables and dirty linen pushed to the sides. . . .

"I relaxed a little when I saw that the rehearsal discipline never lessened, but rather intensified over the week. . . ."

Miss de Mille wound up enchanted.

"Winnipeg is absolutely self-contained. Very little seems to happen. . . . Yet this provincial cut-off town boasts a good symphony, a fine ballet company, and one of the three best repertory theatres on the North American continent. No middle-western city in the United States, with the exception of Chicago, had until ten years ago comparable cultural organizations. . . .

"The citizens of Winnipeg support the company because it is fine and because the citizens are neither surfeited nor corrupted. They still take joy in beautiful things. . . ."



The Royal Winnipeg Ballet in Five Tangos