

The Rattler's Den



By Rathburn Rattler

Inventors lead a hard life. Witness Barry Powell, the Clarkson area inventor whose Bed-Dri device for children who suffer from bed-wetting now is drawing orders from every Canadian province.

Mr. Powell, who toils by day for Atomic Energy of Canada and at night becomes the proprietor (and 90 percent of the staff) of the Bed-Dri Company Ltd., has lately been thinking of branching out. But he's having a dickens of a time convincing anyone — and his banker in particular — that there's a market for his latest invention.

It's a sun lamp for turtles.

"Turtles," Mr. P. explained the other night, "are very sensitive to temperature variations. Below 68 degrees — room temperature — they can barely move about."

"My Turtle Basking Lamp would solve all that. The moment the turtle's temperature fell below 68 degrees, the Turtle Basking Lamp would automatically switch on, warming him up again. Some sort of turtle sensor, would probably do the trick; I haven't worked out all the bugs there yet."

"There are other problems, of course. The lamp, for instance, would have to pass CSA (Canadian Safety Association) standards. It would hardly do to electrocute the little chaps when the lamp went on, would it?"

His voice trailed off. We tiptoed reverently out of the Bed-Dri factory, skirting the electric train set and the laundry tubs.

At the basement steps, we turned for one last look. There, in the cheery glow of a naked bulb, stood the inventor, cradling a turtle bowl lovingly in his hands, his thoughts obviously light-years away in a time when no turtle, regardless of race or creed, would ever have to go cold.

★ ★ ★
The Turtle Basking Lamp is still in the future. Another recent invention, the pepper-base spray bomb designed to keep postmen's pant-cuffs and ankles out of the mouths of unfriendly canines, is already proving a deterrent more powerful than the H-Bomb.

Postmaster Art Barstead of the Clarkson area post office (sorry, Art, but we're MISSISSAUGA people here!) reports his men have been drawing their dog-bombs each day ever since the devices were issued.

But the word, apparently, is out. So far, not one bomb has been fired in anger — or even self-defence.

The nasty nippers of the Clarkson area obviously read the papers, too.

But the upcoming Ottawa conference, sponsored by the Federal Government to consider a Bill of Rights to be attached to the British North America Act, will spend more time looking inward toward our own two solitudes, rather than outward toward London or Paris.

All the provincial premiers are to attend the conference. They've been given a grounding in the agenda by Justice Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who visited the 10 provincial capitals in preparing for the four-day session. A successful conference could make Trudeau the man to beat in the Liberal leadership sweepstakes.

While Prime Minister Pearson didn't plan it that way, the conference has turned into the second round of the new constitutional dialogue. The first was of course the Confederation for Tomorrow conference last fall in Toronto, organized by Ontario and enthusiastically supported by all the provinces.

Out of that conference came a remarkable amount of goodwill, and a significant softening of attitudes by the Western premiers. Previous to that get-together, they had hardly recognized

Quebec as part of Canada, let alone been willing to consider reshaping the country's government framework in order to accommodate the one-third of our population of French origin.

But by the time the Confederation for Tomorrow conference had ended, it was evident a fresh wind was threatening to blow away the cobwebby old BNA Act.

The session also marked a radical turning point in the strategy and tactics of Quebec premier Daniel Johnson.

It now appears that Mr. Johnson came out of the conference convinced that Quebec could gain more by going along as just one of the 10 provinces in the never-ending federal and provincial power struggle. Quebec actually had much in common with the other provinces in seeking common increased provincial powers.

Instead, therefore, of taking on both Ottawa AND all the other provinces, it now appears Mr. Johnson would not be head a common assault by ALL the provinces on federal powers.

This is why the Quebec stand at next week's conference will be to ask for increased authority for every province, instead of a special status for Quebec.



A fog-bound sentinel

THIS WEEK and NEXT

All for one

By Ray Argyle

Next week's constitutional conference will take Canada another step along the road away from Britain, reducing further the country's weakening links with our traditional institutions.

Ironically, at the same time as most of the country appears ready to demolish the ties between Canada and Britain — which in recent years

have been more symbolic than real — closer links are being forged with France. As English-speaking Canadians strike out to a new destiny within North America, our French-speaking citizens have suddenly discovered, (and have been discovered by), their own "mother country."

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Straight from
the (Soft)
Shoulder

Les enfants

BY FAYE COOPER

What wondrous little people children are!

If adults had the forthrightness of children it would be a merry, exhilarating and madcap world.

It would also be a world in which directness counted for everything.

So-called sage businessmen would have to cease hiding behind "fact-finding" committees and avoiding decision-making just because they don't understand the problem. They'd have to come right to grips with it and solve it right now, and wouldn't THAT be hilarious?

Economic chaos in no time flat.

Look at all the made-in-heaven marriages that would never materialize under the new system.

Imagine a man answering the traditional "Do you love me?" question with, "Are you kidding? But you've got a great shape, baby, and your dad's loaded!"

Wouldn't that kick romance in the pants?

The effects of child-like candor on the politicians of the country would have to be electrifying. Les enfants terribles would be marching on Ottawa and grasping student power before the Liberals recouped enough to elect their leader.

It would never work. We'd have a countrywide, psychotic nervous breakdown within a week.

There are some people, though, who cope with the here and now of children with great success. They're to be admired and wondered at because they even seem to enjoy and be refreshed by it.

They are children's theatre performers. They know the ground rules, all right. If they're peppy, interesting and active, they enthrall the children. If they're dull, they're soon drowned out by the immediate crescendo of noise.

They know they have to stay on their toes, and they do.

There must be a moral in that somewhere for us cynical, sophisticated adults.