

THE CASE FOR ALLIE BONNER

by BARB TAYLOR

Miss Alwilda Bonner is probably not known at all to the freshmen class. She is however a most interesting woman, who is well-known to the university at large, and in an interview just before the Christmas recess, the writer was able to talk with her for nearly two hours. I have tried to be as objective as possible in relating her opinions on the various questions that I asked her.

Miss Bonner was born and grew up in Fredericton. There were eight children in the family and they were, she said, devoted to their mother. The latter was a charter member of the Salvation Army and she led her children in this way of thinking. Miss Bonner said that all the children wanted to be like their mother. "Her holy life wasn't like a censorship," she

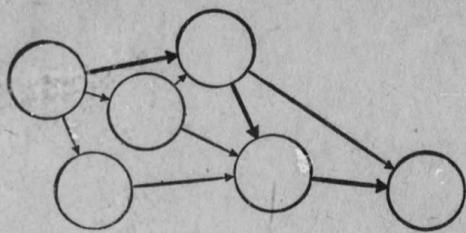
continued, "but rather like a blessing." She recalled how they used to bring home the pretty green gin bottles they found occasionally on the road. Their mother would wash them carefully and then sit the children down around the table to talk to them. "Do you see the devil in the bottle?" she would say. "He is there, with his horns and his long tail." And Miss Bonner said, "We all knew that the devil was there, because Mother would have never deceived us."

In her late teens, Miss Bonner went to Boston on a visit. There she met a friend who suggested that she try for a scholarship to study in Chicago, at the Chicago Training School (Methodist) for

Home, City, and Foreign Missions. Miss Bonner applied and received the scholarship to study social service work there. Today, the school which was affiliated with Garret College a part of the Northwestern University. The field work which was part of the two year course took her to mental hospitals, where she talked with alcoholics and down to the red light district of Chicago. The elite of Chicago used to entertain the girls one night she said, and then the next night they would go down to the slums. She graduated in 1911 and decided to take up nursing at the Massachusetts General Hospital. While there she took courses in obstetrics at the Boston Lying-In, and studied eye and ear diseases at the Eye and Ear Infirmary. In 1917 she was commissioned as a nursing sister under Colonel Percy Guthrie and did two years work in camps in New Jersey and Boston. She was thus in Boston during the flu epidemic of 1918. She also studied at one time at the Neurological Institute in New York under Dr. Elsberg. At that time Dr. Wilder Penfield was intern there. It was here, she said, that she really learned what alcohol could do to the brain.

In 1929 the Crash sent all the Canadian nurses home. At this time Miss Bonner's father had a stroke, her sister Maud was ill and she was needed on the home front. She has been working in this area ever since, and lives in Fredericton taking care of her sister, who is 85. Miss Bonner is 76.

Miss Bonner is well known to the students for her liquor campaign and her avid political af-



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THE CHIGNECTO MYTH

by W. J. REDDIN

(The following is a portion of a speech given to the 1962 annual meeting of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council)

filiations. Her interest in the Conservative party goes back, she says, to her family's loyalty to Sir John A. MacDonald. "John Deffenbaker," she said, "is the best prime minister we've (Canadians) ever had. He is doing a great job with the austerity crisis." Her nephew is a social credit supporter however, and attorney-general of British Columbia.

Politics and liquor make only one combination in Miss Bonner's mind. "Gladstone," she cited, "said that we should make our laws so that it would be difficult to do wrong. Since alcohol is a drug, a poison like opium, heroin or thalidomide, it should be given out only in prescription form in order to protect the youth, which is our best export, from deterioration in body, mind, character and efficiency."

When the new liquor laws were passed last year, Miss Bonner has strong feelings on the subject. "I felt," she said, "that since we didn't have a plebiscite to let people speak, the government's action in extending outlets as they are today, was taking advantage of the people of New Brunswick." Now, she outlined, there are thirteen places in the city of Fredericton, where she can get a drink should she want one. She then told me how she had gone down to the Beaverbrook dining-room and ordered drinks (which she did not drink of course), until the whole table was covered with glasses. Then she went on to order and buy bottles of rum and whisky and this was on a Sunday. Thus, she said, the hotel was defying the Lord's Day Act. "The state is the servant of the people," she went on, "not the reverse, as in Russia. But the government wants revenue and finds it in the multi-million dollar liquor traffic."

People should not drink, Miss Bonner maintained, if for no other reason, than that highway fatalities are increasing. Sixty-five per cent of highway fatalities are a direct result from drinking she said, and added that these were government statistics. In New York policemen have to walk four abreast in some sections of the city at night. She feels that this is a direct result of alcoholism and delinquency in turn may be blamed in part on alcoholism. She also believes that retarded children are born in some instances because either the mother or father was intoxicated during conception.

"Our ancestors," she said, "were devout, sober people, who trusted in God and looked to him for guidance. Our nation wasn't born of drunkards and drug addicts. We protect our trees by spraying them. Similarly we should protect our Youth by telling about the effects of alcohol. Alcohol is slower than arsenic, but eventually just as detrimental to the system and character."

Miss Bonner is also strongly against smoking. She would like the government to follow the English law where cigarette advertising is banned until 9 o'clock at night. Anti-smoking clubs have also sprung up in England, and she hopes to see them here sometime soon. She would also like to see a Salvation Army Har-

The "CHIGNECTO MYTH" and other such similar Maritime folklore is a Maritime problem because it is causing many capable and earnest people to misdirect their energies, and to make Maritimers look a little irresponsible in the eyes of those who know the facts:

What are the arguments for Chignecto?

What are the facts?

Argument 1. "The actual cost of constructing Chignecto will cause \$100,000,000 to be spent in the region and this will expand the economy."

Answer: This statement is true but incredibly narrow as it does not consider the far more effective alternative ways of spending this large sum; on secondary manufacturing for instance.

Argument 2. "The canal is economically sound."

Answer: Recent figures indicate clearly that the canal will cost \$5,000,000 annually and will bring in revenue of only \$500,000 — one tenth as much as is needed to cover annual expenses.

Argument 3. "The canal is needed as a transportation route."

Answer: The fact that annual revenues are only one tenth of the annual expenses should refute this argument.

Argument 4. "\$100,000,000 of additional expenditure will be created by Maritime industrialists if the canal is built."

Answer: This offer has now been withdrawn.

Argument 5. "The canal will employ 2,000 or more men for up to five years."

Answer: \$100,000,000 invested at 6% would provide \$6,000,000 annually, enough to give each of these 2,000 men and their future heirs \$3,000 per year in perpetuity without touching a cent of the capital.

Argument 6. "The Economic Research Corporation report advanced irrefutable arguments that the canal should be built."

Answer: The report in part said that the canal could not be justified on transportation grounds alone.

Argument 7. "Canada can afford the South Saskatchewan dam, the Crow's Nest Pass, the Colombo plan, the C.B.C. It can also afford Chignecto." Quotation from the editorial page of a Maritime newspaper.

Answer: I'm afraid I can see no logic or point to this recent statement and thus cannot refute it. Surely it is not meant to suggest that an argument for inefficiency and waste is that it has been practised elsewhere. Let's leave boondoggling south of the border. The Maritimes need assistance too much to propose to waste what they get!

Chignecto is a football that needs to be punctured. Ottawa and most Maritimers see it as a bright but completely uneconomic symbol of our future. Some things have to be believed to be seen. I hope not too many believe in Chignecto, spending \$100,000,000 unwisely might be a fatal error. I suggest they start dealing with real problems and advancing sound suggestion for the alternative use of federal funds. We cannot afford to waste money in the Maritimes—even federal government money.

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