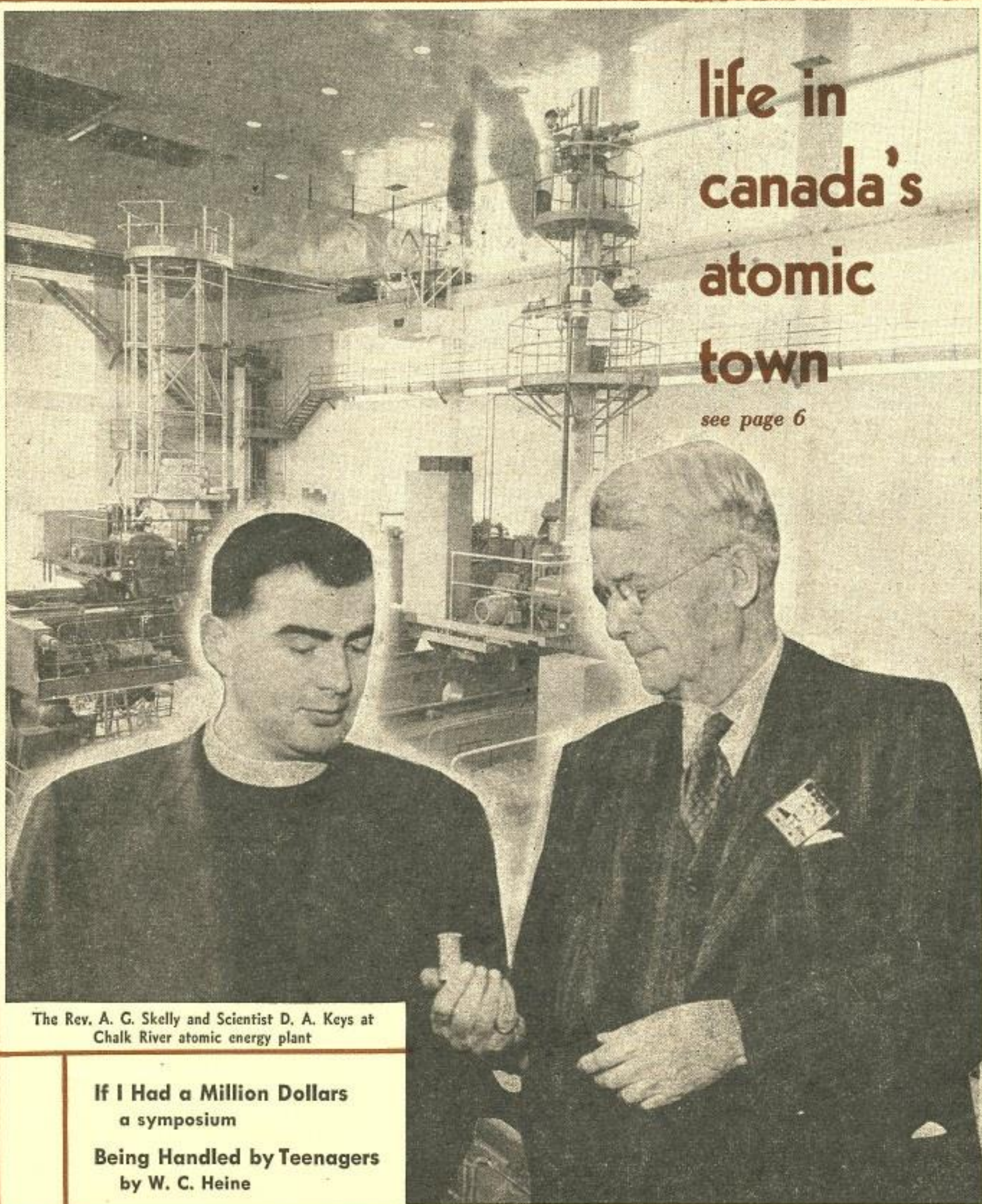


OBSERVER

life in
canada's
atomic
town

see page 6



The Rev. A. G. Skelly and Scientist D. A. Keys at
Chalk River atomic energy plant

If I Had a Million Dollars
a symposium

Being Handled by Teenagers
by W. C. Heine

Deep River—Not Quite Utopia

This carefully-planned town for Canada's Atomic Energy workers has no slums, no snob hill . . . it has dozens of recreational activities, good schools, a busy Community church . . . but most residents want to get away come spring

Amaurot, on the Island of Utopia, lies on a gently sloping hill and is almost square in shape. From a little below the top of the hill, it runs down two miles to the river. As it runs past Amaurot, the river has grown to the width of half a mile. . . The streets are conveniently laid out both for vehicles and for protection from the wind. Their buildings are by no means unsightly, with broken rows of houses facing each other and running along the streets through the whole town. The streets are 20 feet wide, and through the whole length of the city there are gardens behind the houses. . .

IN the four and a half centuries since Thomas More wrote those words in 1515, man has never been able to create a Utopia. But if More could look down on the community of Deep River, Ont., he might be shocked into thinking his dream had at last come true.

Carved out of the wilderness of northern Ontario during World War II when Canada, Britain, and the U.S. joined hands to produce the atomic bomb, this unusual community of 4,300 people is the Utopian-styled haven of the research scientists and technicians who man the government's big Atomic Energy plant at nearby Chalk River, Ont.

Nowhere else in Canada is the egghead

made to feel more at home — or more important — than in Deep River, where university degrees are as plentiful as passports and over a tenth of the experts have Ph.D.'s.

Until this year a company town owned by the Federal Government, Deep River has no slums and no snob hills. The highest salary is \$20,000 a year and nobody makes less than \$4,000. You can rent a three-bedroom house for \$79 a month or buy a house outright from the government for anywhere from \$4,000 to \$15,000 on a 30-year NHA mortgage at 5½% interest.

A Suburb in Nowhere

Like a metropolitan suburb cast in the middle of nowhere, the town slopes down from a barren outcrop on the edge of No. 17 highway to the sandy shore of the Ottawa River. Its box-shaped, multi-coloured houses face each other along rows of half-moon crescents, skilfully devised to help slow down traffic.

But at the end of the village's 16 miles of 20-foot-wide asphalt streets, there is nothing but open timberland. It is 130 miles to Ottawa and a hundred miles to North Bay. You can walk out of the house and gaze across the river at the smoky blue outline of the Laurentian mountains and take in deep breaths of pine-scented air.

Climb over the backyard fence and you're in deer country.

To combat the effects of perpetual isolation, Deep River spends more per capita on organized recreation than any other town in the Dominion. A \$100,000 a year fun budget keeps a full-time recreation director and two assistants constantly on the hop, and helps support 68 different clubs and societies that cater to everything from hunting and fishing to glass-blowing and chanting Elizabethan madrigals.

An inexhaustible store of recreational facilities includes football and hockey uniforms for the youngsters and 20 buildings housing recreational equipment of different kinds. One in every three families has a boat and practically everyone drives a car.

Like everything in Deep River, the church has its Utopian twist, too. Deep River Community Church, one of three churches in the village, is a most unusual place of worship. A Protestant congregation of 500 people, its membership is made up of adherents from 20 different denominations — American Baptists, Scots Presbyterians, Nazarenes, members of the United Church of Canada, etc. It suggests a passage from *Utopia*:

"Though they hold different beliefs on matters of religion, all the Utopians agree

with their wiser sort in this, that there is only one supreme power, the Maker and Ruler of the universe whom they call in their native language, Mithra. But they differ as to who he is; some think he is one god, others another. But whatever god each person regards as the chief god, they all agree in thinking that God is the very Being to whose power and majesty the supremacy over all things is attributed by universal consent."

Deep River's disparate faiths, like those in Utopia, are "astonishingly harmonious" according to the Rev. A. Gardiner Skelly, M.A., B.D., the popular, well-read pastor of the congregation who says that many people arrive in Deep River with narrow denominational views, but usually go back to their own churches with a larger view of the world church.

55 Doctors in Church

Shattering the commonplace belief that scientists are atheists or agnostics, Community Church numbers among its members 55 of the 106 Ph.D.'s in the village. And most of the remainder are Anglicans or Roman Catholics. Sixty per cent. of Community congregation have degrees and at least as many have outlooks that begin by questioning the relative positions of God and Science.

Pastor Skelly, a young mild-spoken United Church minister who was born in

Ireland and preached as a Presbyterian in England before emigrating, says: "While science may do much to modify and correct some of the admitted aberrations of traditional religion, there is no danger of it taking the place or fulfilling the function of religion. The idea that religion and science are mutually exclusive is not only antiquated, it is indefensible . . . for the one is concerned with the measurable; the other with the immeasurable. Nothing but religion of some kind or other can bring an abiding sense of fulfilment to the moral and spiritual elements in human personality."

The formation of Community Church was fundamentally a marriage of convenience between the 20 different Protestant denominations in the village and Atomic Energy of Canada, Limited, who built the plain pavilion-like church which serves them.

Back in 1946, before there was any church in Deep River, 85 per cent. of the Protestants in the community voted to join hands in a single congregation (although local Anglicans remained apart and now share the company-built church with Community Congregation). The United Church withdrew its denominational work and Mr. Skelly was appointed in 1953 from among six candidates representing United Church, Baptist and Presbyterian traditions.

The plan, according to Dr. G. O. Baines, assistant to the vice-president of AECL and an officer of the church, has worked out better than was expected.

Each week a staff of 55 Sunday school teachers handles 400 children in the crowded church basement. Mrs. G. R. Piercy, supervisor of the primary department, says she has never had trouble finding teachers in Deep River—something she could not say for the city Sunday school she left. Last fall, in three weeks of a professionally-run money-raising campaign, the congregation dug up a total of \$107,000 to finance a new Sunday school and Christian education building.

Advantages and Disadvantages

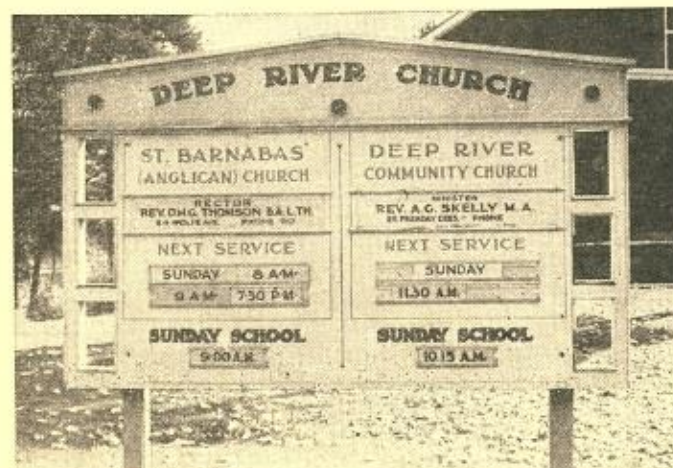
The basic advantage of Community Church, Dr. Baines says, is that it gets away from the modern-day tendency to overchurch small communities.

Nevertheless, Pastor Skelly will admit that there are disadvantages to inter-denominational churching, as well as advantages. But he is convinced the advantages are greater. One chief disadvantage, he says, is that the congregation has no direct ties with a mother church. "A Presbyterian in Deep River feels he is no longer a Presbyterian," one Community Church

(Over)



Photos courtesy Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.



Community Congregation and Anglicans share facilities . . .



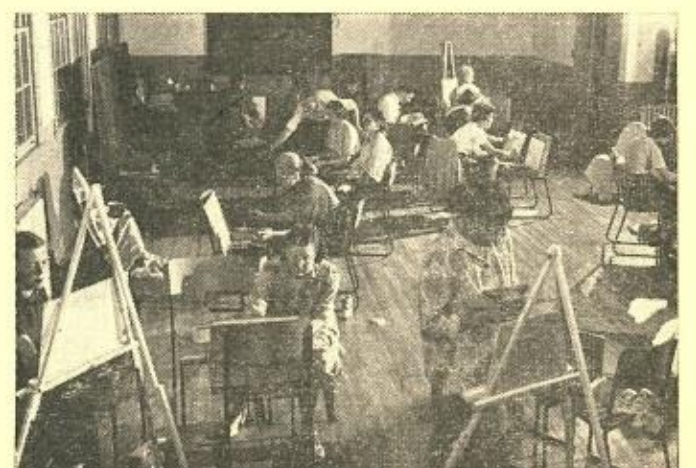
. . . of church built by Atomic Energy of Canada

OBSERVER, APRIL 1, 1959



There are dozens of recreational activities; sailing is popular . . .

OBSERVER, APRIL 1, 1959



. . . and Community Centre art class draws big enrolment



For Quality
CHURCH GOWNS
that are new and different
write **D. MILNE**
CLERICAL SUPPLIES
463 St. Catherine St. West, Montreal

Residential School for Girls

ALMA
COLLEGE

Founded 1876, High School including Grade XIII. Fine Art, Secretarial, Home Economics, Music.

Write for prospectus.
Mrs. Steele Sifton, B.A. B.Ed.
Principal

Opens Sept. 10, 1959

ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO, CANADA



Albert
College

CO-EDUCATIONAL
Founded 1857

A sound cultural education in a Christian environment.

GRADES IX TO XIII •
SECRETARIAL, BUSINESS,
CULTURAL COURSES
• MUSIC AND DRAMA
• ALL FORMS OF
PHYSICAL RECREATION



For complete information and illustrated prospectus, please write to:

REV. A. E. MACKENZIE,
B.A., D.D.,
PRINCIPAL,
ALBERT COLLEGE,
BELLEVILLE,
ONTARIO,
CANADA.

ADVERTISERS

will appreciate your mention of
THE UNITED CHURCH OBSERVER
WHEN YOU WRITE TO THEM



MEMORIAL
STAINED GLASS
WINDOWS

SMITS & RAMSDALE STUDIOS

442 Sherbourne St., Toronto, WA. 4-1565

member said. "He hands over his baptismal certificate or his church membership card when he joins and to all intents and purposes severs connections with his mother church until he leaves."

The Rev. D. M. G. Thompson, rector of the local Anglican Church, commented, "We did not join in Community Church because we feel our people want to retain their identity as Anglicans, which would have been impossible had we entered the union."

Who Gets the Money?

Still another difficulty within an interdenominational congregation involves the question of missionary givings. Development chemist Len Wray, chairman of the Missions Board of Community Church, says: "Those who would like to support their own missions are unable to do so in a church like ours which has to have a policy of supporting only interdenominational missions." (About 50 per cent. of the missionary givings go to Dr. Graham's Homes in India, and other missions supported include: the Severance Hospital in Korea, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Grenfell Medical Mission in Labrador, and the Rural Life Faith Mission at the Canadian Lakehead.)

But on alternate Sunday mornings, when Community congregation takes over the traditional 11 o'clock hour from the Anglican congregation (which then has the evening hour), the church is packed for worship. They use the *Baptist Hymnal*, but since 70 per cent. of the congregation is United Church and the minister is a United Church man on loan, the service is typically "United."

Too Much Activity

During the week, Community Church programme includes Explorer, C.G.I.T., Tyros and Sigma-C groups, choir practice, Young People's and a Women's Circle. But some members think there is so much other activity going on in Deep River throughout the week that church groups don't have much opportunity for success. "We tried to form a Bible Study group here when we first came," said one member of the

congregation, "but it fell through because people wouldn't turn out—they had too many other things to do."

Father J. R. McElligott of the local Roman Catholic parish is inclined to agree that the church takes a second place in Deep River during week nights. He thinks there may be too much going on in the town. "People have trouble keeping up with everything," he says, "and their home life becomes one of merely eating and sleeping. I am sure that in some cases health and domestic life suffers."

Other Deep Riverites see it differently. "If we didn't have things to keep us occupied up here, we'd all go batty," said one woman. To the outsider, a few of Deep River's pastimes may seem like scraping the bottom of the barrel, but in a community where the egghead shines, some rare and esoteric pleasures are bound to sprout forth. One of the strangest was a snail-watching cult which blossomed up for a while and culminated its activities with a series of facetious letters to the editor of the *North Renfrew Times*, the community newspaper, giving the latest details on the snails' crawl velocity.

Some Like the Conventional

But there are more conventional forms of fun in Deep River, too. In the summertime, the mile and a half bulge in the Ottawa River opposite this Atom Age village is alive with tilting sails and the thrash of power-boats. There is bowling, fencing, badminton, tennis, rugger, square dancing, chess, checkers, bridge, and pretty well anything else you can think of. There are three active ballet groups and seven small orchestras, and the local library has the highest circulation record in Ontario—37 volumes per year per member.

Nonetheless, do it yourself recreation—even when everything is provided—can become tiresome in snowbound winter months when sub-zero polar winds whip clouds of fine snow across the frozen river and thermometers drop to 50° below. "They have a saying up here," says Len Wray, "that it's a summer resort in the

(Continued on page 25)



Taxes are expected to increase on these Deep River homes now that town is incorporated

OBSERVER, APRIL 1, 1959

THE DEEP RIVER STORY

(Continued from page 8)

summer and a last resort in winter." And Fred Skelly (they call their minister by his first name in Deep River) adds: "By the time March and April roll around you're getting pretty sick of it. You feel like going on a long trip and seeing how the rest of the world lives."

This deep yearning for change can be seen in the way townsfolk will run wherever they can find professional entertainment. When the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra played a winter evening concert not long ago, the tickets were sold out a week in advance. A Community Concerts Association series is always well booked in advance in Deep River and the house is packed three times a year when the local Players stage their productions.

Every night the privately-owned Strand movie theatre does a fabulous business, filling nearly all of its 569 seats for two showings. "I wouldn't exchange it for the best city movie house," says the manager.

Yet while most Deep River people agree their town—now 15 years old—is a pretty compact and economical place in which to live, they almost all agree that it isn't the Utopia it is sometimes cracked up to be. "It makes you wonder," says one housewife, "if Utopia is really possible."

Great Place for a Holiday

"It's a great place to spend a holiday," said one visitor who spent a few weeks there on business recently, "but I'd hate to have to bring up my family there. It's too unrealistic. The youngsters would get the idea all they had to do is say "boo" and someone would produce a hockey stick out of nowhere. It's all right while you're living here but what happens when you return to normal city life?"

Even the summertime has its disadvantages in Deep River. Shuffling about the streets in tennis shorts, bathing suits and open-neck shirts, townsfolk find themselves in a continual battle with black flies, and AECL reportedly spends several thousand dollars a year on anti-fly chemical which is sprayed like a mist over the townsite several times a week.

As a matrimonial happy hunting ground for young scientists and secretaries, Deep River can be equally disappointing, although Pastor Skelly reports that he marries about 10 couples a year from the company's Staff Hotel and its annex, where 250 single men and women AECL employees live in an informal atmosphere that is something like that of a university residence. On the other hand, since two-thirds of the population is between the ages of 25 and 36 years and only 37 residents in the village are over 60, Community Church has had only one funeral in five years.

The 32-bed hospital gets its largest turnover from maternity cases. Deep River has one of the highest birth rate indices in

Canada —"which," said one resident, whimsically, "is not surprising under the circumstances!"

When all is said and done, however, Deep River offers advantages that no other community of its size in the Dominion can equal. When it assumed independence under the Ontario Municipal Act at the beginning of the year and for the first time elected a mayor and council, the taxpayers were left a legacy worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in the form of paved streets, sewers, schools and recreational facilities—all prepaid out of government funds.

"Where else could you find a set-up like this where the home-owners get their local improvements free and all they have to do is maintain them?" asks Dr. David Keys, the former McGill professor who helped plan Deep River and now acts as scientific adviser to the president of AECL.

But taxes are expected to take a sharp jump now as the town begins to assume the burden of innumerable fringe benefits heretofore shouldered by the company. The first heavy blow will be schools. Although there are already four schools in the community — two public schools, a separate school, and a high school—more are needed. Moreover, if Deep River—no longer a company town—expands, and new industry comes in, local taxpayers will have

to start digging for capital expenditures on extended roads, sewers and electricity. And whether expansion takes place immediately or not, all maintenance costs will fall on the taxpayers.

Nevertheless, salaries are good in Deep River; the average scientist makes \$7,900 a year and teachers pull in as much as \$8,100 in the local high school. Deep Riverites are far from the commercial rat-race of the city and relatively free from the daily pressures of modern living. Most of those who stay in the community like its atmosphere of suburban security and independence—despite the isolation. They can buy almost anything in their mid-village, glass-front shopping plaza which displays such varied luxuries as caviar, fine Swedish crystal and imported New York fashions. As one resident puts it, "You can do anything you want to do. All you need is the daring and the imagination. You can dress up like a prince, or a showgirl, or a pauper, and no one will think anything about it. If you want to don a chemise, or tails and top-hat that's your business—as long as you look as though you know what you're doing."

And the Rev. Fred Skelly sums it up: "All in all, Deep River is a pretty good place to live. Those who decide to stay here think there's no other place as good." ●

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY

During April religious leaders of all faiths throughout Ontario will stress the moral aspects of the traffic accident problem. They will be asking you as a motorist or pedestrian to accept individual responsibility for obeying the traffic laws and the rules of the road.

This personal appeal to the users of our streets and highways is the basis of the Moral Responsibility Campaign sponsored by the Ontario Department of Transport. It is receiving enthusiastic endorsement and active support from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and from local safety councils, police departments, service clubs, women's groups and other community organizations.

You can help the Moral Responsibility Campaign achieve success by practising the Golden Rule of traffic safety—drive and walk as you would have others drive and walk.



ONTARIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
Highway Safety Branch