

News, Notes and Views About BOOKS

By WINNIFRED REEVE
(Onoto Watanna)

It is possible that few people in Calgary are aware that the oldest and one of the greatest of Canadian poets is a resident of this city.

Charles Mair, author of "Tecumseh," "Dreamland," a volume of thirty-five poems, and many articles and stories, is 84 years old, but his mind is as keen and his eyes as bright as in the stirring days of his youth. One of our finest old timers of the west, his life's history reads like a romance. He was educated at King's college, Kingston, and it was originally intended that he should be a doctor. He came out to the northwest with a construction party to open communication from the Lake of the Woods to the Red River.

Shortly after his marriage to Miss Eliza MacKenney, a niece of Sir John Schultz, lieutenant-governor of Manitoba, he and his wife were taken prisoners by Riel. His wife, in fact, with her aunt, Lady Schultz, figures in history as one of the heroines of that adventure.

Mr. Mair, in spite of his great age, is a delightful person to meet. His memory appears to be unimpaired. As he graphically traced some of his extraordinary experiences and adventures to me, it seemed incredible that this fine, gentle, old poet, had passed through such wild scenes. His escape from Riel in itself is as thrilling an episode as could well be imagined. On a stormy, bitter night, he crawled through the window of his prison, slipped by the sentry at the gate and escaped to Portage la Prairie, traveling four hundred miles on snowshoes to St. Paul and on to Ontario. He still speaks with evident grief of the great loss he experienced at that time, when all of his previous manuscripts, the work of many years, were burned by Riel.

Mr. Mair takes an active interest in Canadian literary matters of today, and asked me questions concerning the Canadian Authors association, and the authors. In spite of his years, he by no means considers his work ended. On the contrary he contemplates writing his memoirs. To give some idea of this remarkable old man's tenacious interest in life, and the strength and virility of mind and body it is only two years since he made the long trip to New Zealand for the purpose of visiting a married daughter, resident there, and he told me, with a smile, that he was none the worse for the long trip and hoped to make it again.

Early last summer a manuscript was brought to me by another old-timer, who was one of the scouts who captured Riel. His somewhat ragged manuscript proved to be a human document of the most intense and throbbing interest. True, it made no attempt at literary grace or style; the expressions were rude and sometimes coarse; the grammar could bear doctoring; but nevertheless it was a singularly interesting script, and if published should be of some historical value. I spoke about this man to Mr. Mair, and mentioned his connection with the capture of Riel. Instantly the poet's face brightened:

"Why, I remeber him well. You don't mean to say that he is living in Calgary also? Well, well! I remember when he made the capture. I was right there. Riel was hidden in an old shack ?"

He went into the details of that famous capture of so long ago. I could see that to him, at least, the happenings appeared to be as if they were but yesterday.

It is strange that these two fine old figures from the stirring days of the past should now both be residents of our city of Calgary.

It is becoming quite a custom for visiting authors and editors, to call upon and pay their respects to the veteran poet. When Professor Allison was here and, with his charming wife, came to see me, one of the first things he said was that they had to make their visit short, for they were going to call upon Canada's oldest poet, and it was like visiting at a shrine. Mr. McKenzie, editor of MacLean's, also sought out the poet.

The "best seller" among the authors in Calgary is not a writer of novels. He is John M. Williams, better known as a musician. Mr. Williams' first book, "The Child's First Music Book," has run into no less than four large editions. It is used generally in the cities of the United States, and even in Australia and England the book has considerable circulation. He has also had the fortune of having his book used in Germany, which, in music, is considered extremely flattering. Besides this book, he is the author of "Adventures of Ten Little Fingers in Mother Goose Land." Both of these books are published by Schirmer Music Publishing company of New York. His new book, "First Lessons in Piano Playing," will be published at an early date. Besides these books on music Mr. Williams has written articles and stories for several of the magazines, among them the Ladies' Home Journal and other well known journals, and has had critical articles in the well known music magazines, The Etude and The Musician. He has also written several motion picture scenarios, and, though it is hard to get him to talk about it, Mr. Williams has under way a musical play which it is possible Calgary will be first to see.

In Calgary alone 600 copies of his "Child's First Music Book" have been sold. Mr. Williams is a member of both the Canadian Authors' association and the Authors' League of America. The recitals and concerts of his

pupils are an annual event of social and artistic importance in Calgary.

Beginning with the new year, the Canadian Women's club of Calgary contemplate a course of reading and study of the work of Canadian authors. This is a most laudable and patriotic intention. If the other Canadian clubs throughout Canada follow the lead of our Calgary club, it will not be long before our authors will be as well known in Canada as the American and English writers now are. I do not advocate buying Canadian books just because they are Canadian, but a discriminating inquiry into our literary productions will result in an acquaintance with the work of Canada's own writers. In the States, and in a measure, in England, the old proverb of a prophet, etc., scarcely applies today, so well do these countries cherish and encourage their talent.

While on the subject of the Canadian Women's club of Calgary, the work done by this organization. Authors' book week was one of the most notable achievements of the week in Canada. The short articles concerning eminent literary Canadians that appeared daily in both of our newspapers were written by members of the club, and despite the fact that the authors of these minute size biographies were not professional writers, they were extremely well written and in some cases showed the technique and craft of the experienced writer.

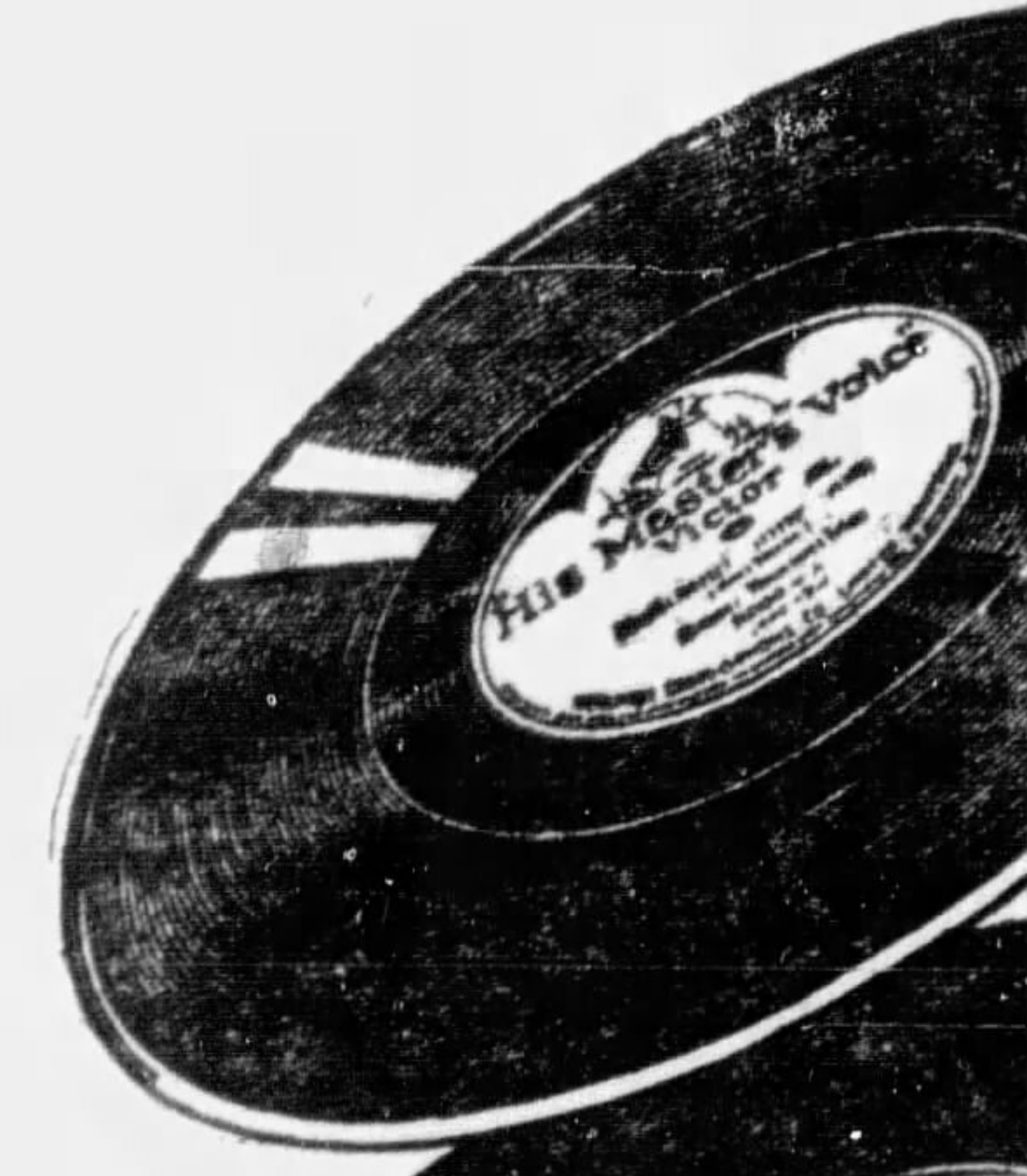
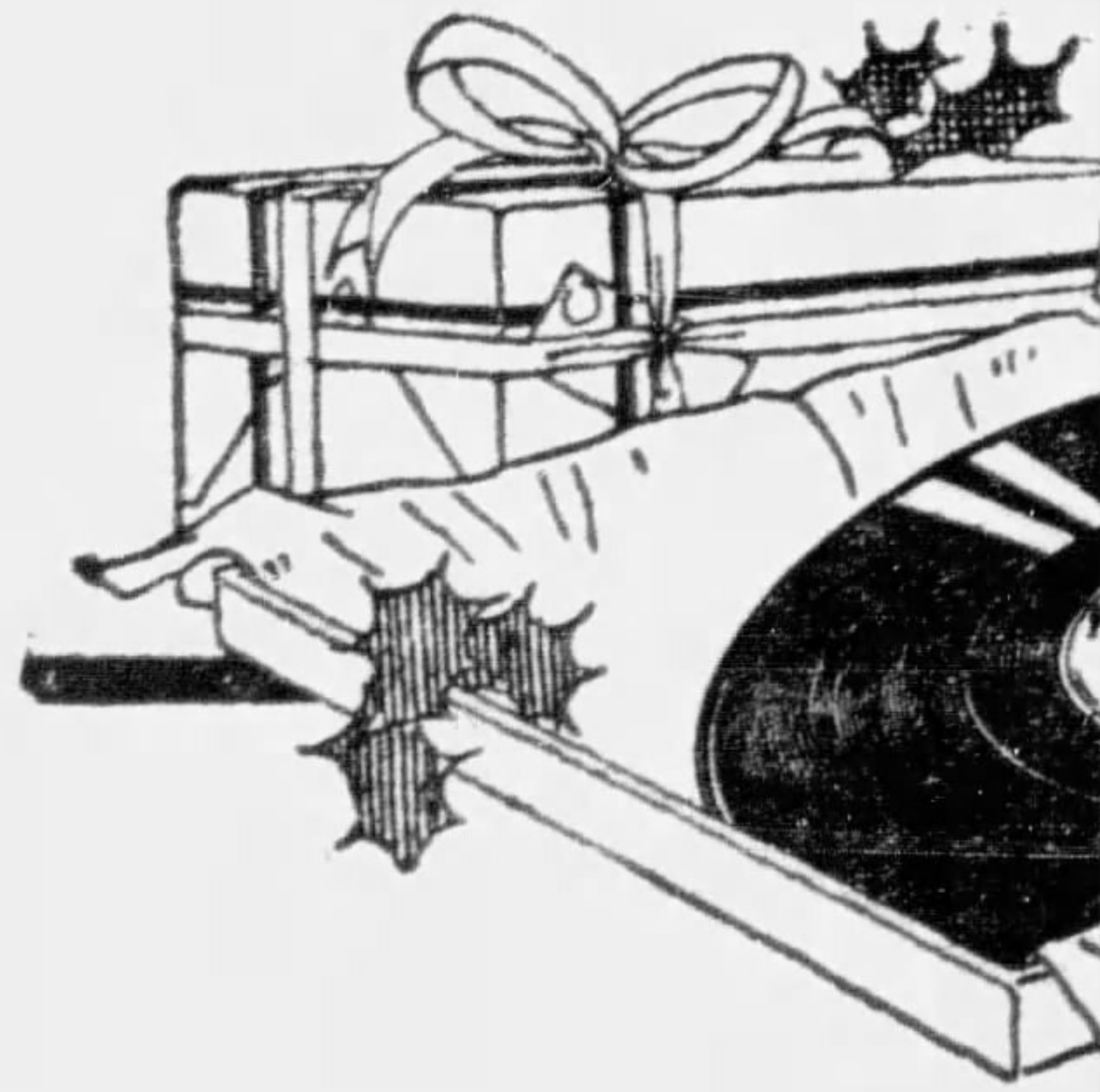
A Puzzle a Day



Can you change the figure 3 shown above to a figure 5 without making any erasures?

Yesterday's answer:

If five foxes take five minutes to catch five geese, the same five foxes will be able to catch a hundred geese in a hundred minutes. When asked in an off-hand manner, this question usually will bring the answer "one hundred foxes." But if five foxes are catching geese at the rate of five in five minutes, they are catching them at the rate of one a minute, or a hundred in a hundred minutes.



Says I to
"Well He
You're a
Seems li
You'd ot
Say

Says He
"Well Ji
There's
For me
So many
An' wa
That I
That
sper
Sa

Says I,
"You'll w
You'll w
Some co
An' that
An' not

"Well Ji
"I've son
To get
They'll r
They're
An'—gee
Although
You've r
An' as f
I guess
An' if t
For I'll
My body
Sa

Says I
"You ar

Says He
"Well Ji
You see
Sa

Says he
The bot
Your wa
It's just
The Go
Sa

There's
Says

WINN
Blythe E
writer o
for the
Tribune,