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A CLOSE UP STORY OF THE FAMOUS DIONNE BABIES

"Ottawa Citizen" Man Who Visited the Dafoe Nursery

(By R. A. Jeffery, Citizen Staff Writer)

CALLANDER, Ont., June 2—Hon. David Croll set at rest here this week all conjecture with regard to the future care of the world's most famous children, the Dionne quintuplets. He declared in part at the second anniversary birthday dinner, "The babies have remained, and will remain, within the safety of what used to be called the 'Dafoe Hospital', but it is now the 'Dafoe nursery'; next it will be the 'Dafoe finishing school'. The babies are well and happy."

He said further that \$250,000 was now added to the quintuplet fund and the fund has now reached a point where neither the babies, the parents nor the other five children need worry about their normal requirements for their lives.

With cameras clicking, improvised sound contrivances ingeniously placed and Dr. Allan Roy Dafoe as master of ceremonies, the dark eyes twinkled excitedly in five animated pink faces as the Dionne quintuplets, the far famed sweethearts of the world, industriously participated in the continent-wide broadcast that marked the second anniversary of their birth.

Sensed The Unusual

The quintuplets are growing up, they actually seemed to feel that they were "stepping out", they sensed that something unusual was afoot and Yvonne, Annette, Cecile, Emelie and Marie romped and gurgled about the nursery or splashed in their bath to the utmost satisfaction of Dr. Dafoe. Judge Valin and Hon. David Croll, the guardians, and the staff of five qualified nurses, all of whom participated to some extent in the broadcast. There were birthday cakes, too, and it was difficult to say which were the happier. Dr. Dafoe cutting a cake or the five little elfin-like beauties trying to bury their tiny fingers in the attractive icing.

With the guardians I passed through the blue-coated sentries, the double line of steel fencing and the envious glances of hundreds of people, to prattle and play with the world's most famous, most publicized little ladies whose birth and amazing preservation has made the rough, rockbound settlement of Corbett a Mecca for hundreds of thousands of tourists, many of them from points far beyond the confines of the American continent. The comparative few who are permitted to cross the threshold of that closely and constantly guarded Dafoe nursery count themselves fortunate, indeed.

A Remarkable Picture

Much has been written of the famed quintuplets since the dawn of that epochal morning on May 28th, 1934 when Dr. Dafoe gazed at the sparse ten pounds of wiggling humanity that lay in a common basket and exclaimed breathlessly, "Gosh!" Much more might and doubtless will be written of these precocious little girls who have endeared themselves to the hearts of millions of people, but they and the remarkable facilities provided for their care must be seen to be fully understood and appreciated.

There are cynics who scoff and protest that they are wearied of a subject that has been served to them "ad nauseam", but the prattle and pranks of demure little Marie, smallest and frailest of the five at birth, as she upsets the chairs, pulls the hair of her little sisters and sends her

infectious laughter ringing through the immaculate nursery, would quicken the emotions of the veriest Scrooge. As she scoots across the nursery floor in her scooter she gives the impression that she knows she now weighs 21 pounds and she isn't going to be imposed upon.

Have Gained 109 Pounds

Those five lovable little ladies look so much alike that I couldn't tell them apart. One of them seemed more intent than the others playing pat-a-cake with Hon. Mr. Croll and myself; when I asked Nurse Leroux which one she was, she, who has been with them from the first, had to look a second time before she replied that it was Cecile. The "quins" resemble closely most of the other five children who live with their parents across the parking area about one hundred yards distant.

Dr. Dafoe weighed the children and the figures he handed to me were:—Annette, height 31 1/4 inches, weight 25 pounds 10 ounces; Yvonne, height 31 1/2 inches, weight 25 pounds; Cecile, height 31 inches, weight 24 pounds; Emelie, height 31 inches, weight 23 pounds 4 ounces; Marie, height 30 1/2 inches, weight 21 pounds. The combined increase in weight over the two years is almost 109 pounds; they all display pretty teeth, their hair is dark auburn, they are dressed exactly alike. Their names are the substantial ones in common use in that rocky French-Canadian countryside, all except of Yvonne who bears the name of the nurse who was called from Callander at that eventful May morning two years ago; she expected to care for one baby, she found five and the means hurriedly adopted to conserve the lives of those squirming quintuplets amid surroundings so humble would fill an interesting chapter in the fascinating story of this northland. For Miss Leroux Dr. Dafoe always has high praise.

Yvonne, the largest at birth, is outdistanced a little in the weight chart; She's a precocious little lady who rolls her eyes at the visitor. Annette, Thursday's winner in the weight contest, and who also cut the first tooth was also the first to learn how to climb over the side of her crib unassisted. Cecile has a pensive look and seems more tractable than the others. Emelie is a tomboy who seems to have a great fascination either for the camera or for Fred Davis, famous photographer who has been making pictures of the tots since they were three days old. Emelie is a little busy-body who keeps the nurses busy prodding her from under the cots and tables. Marie, always the smallest, always the most concern of Dr. Dafoe is now as active as any of them; in the many minor altercations she can always give as good as she gets.

The Simple Menus

Although Dr. Dafoe says the quintuplets have still to gain considerable of what they missed by a premature and unusual birth, to the ordinary visitor they appear to be healthy, active and robust a little beyond the normal. In the hope that it may assist child welfare generally, Dr. Dafoe prepared for The Citizen this list of the daily diet for each child.

Breakfast, eight o'clock—half slice bacon, one egg, small piece of toast, gruel and arrowroot biscuit, milk.

Dinner, 11:40—Whole asparagus and butter, thick asparagus soup, tapioca pudding, milk, bread and butter.

Supper, 6:10—Oatmeal, bread and butter, milk.

The children awake between 5:30 and 6:30, there is the strictest routine throughout the day and they are put to bed at from 6:45 to 7 o'clock. There are, of course, rest periods and liquid nourishment during the day.

First Word was "Mamma"

The mother of the famed quintuplets visits them daily; she is free to go to the nursery at any time and my observation was that everything possible is being done to encourage the children to know and love the mother who sometimes would seem to gaze wistfully from her home across the way toward the unusual surroundings that constitute her babies' home. The little girls clap their hands gleefully when she appears, they can lip the word "mamma" and they sometimes become pensive when she departs.

Both Judge Valin and Dr. Dafoe assured me that if the parents could be induced to appreciate the advantage of closer co-operation with the guardians there is probability that at no very distant date all ten of the Dionne children could play together could understand and feel the common bond of their relationship, could in fact, all be educated together in a little school established in the nursery. But the father is still obdurate, he claims the right to do as he will with the children.

It is pretty common knowledge that the guardians offered to erect for Mr. and Mrs. Dionne a substantial home, to establish a large parking area to erect a souvenir booth and to arrange a special commission on all contracts. It is assumed that Mr. Dionne could thus acquire independent wealth, but after considering the matter for twenty-four hours he wrote Hon. David Croll declining the offer.

However, on Thursday, the guardians presented the parents and their first five children with a birthday present of \$1,000.

A Remarkable Nursery

The Dafoe nursery is the last word in meticulous cleanliness and orderly care. The kitchen, the plumbing, the rest rooms and baths all impress you at once; gleaming nickel plate, spotless enamel, cork matting, everything that could make a place spotless and inviting and from great, mysterious parcels today were produced gifts from India, from Japan, from the United States, in fact from several far-distant countries, many from Canadian firms and admirers—five of everything and everything identical.

The nursery building is now too small, additions are being planned and under the direction of Dr. Dafoe the entire property is being improved and beautified, mainly with a view to the comfort, care and seclusion of the famous little girls. It is expected that at least half a million tourists will visit the premises this summer and the aim of the guardians is that the children may be seen by everyone without their attention being attracted by the crowds. Hon. Dr. Croll, Dr. Dafoe and Judge Valin are handling a difficult situation diplomatically, carefully and well.

Close-Up of The "Country Doctor"

I felt a little strange as I stood there, gazing at the brightly polished brass plate that bore the name of Canada's most publicized physician, "Dr. A. R. Dafoe".

I pressed the little push-button in the center of the door of that modest brick home and almost immediately the door was opened by a man of small stature, with no coat or vest and with suspenders vividly conspicuous. He had rather a quizzical smile, a shock of iron-grey hair and a

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funny little moustache not unlike that of Charlie Chaplin, except that it was white and there was slightly more of it under the left nostril than the right.

He was Dr. Dafoe, whose name has been on the lips of countless thousands throughout the past two years, the man who did what no other physician in the history of medical science had done and then in the dawn of that epochal morning of May 28th, 1934, drove home over the crooked and rough road from the humble domain of the Dionnes and entered in his desk diary the characteristically simple reference to the night's proceedings, "Olivia Dionne 5F", just an ordinary professional notation that five female babies had been born to the wife of Olivia Dionne.

He agreed that quintuplets are born only once in 57,000,000 births, that in the past 500 years only 32 cases have been authentically recorded of the birth of five babies at once and that not in a single one of these cases previous to the coming of the Dionne babies, have both mother and children lived more than a few hours. His simple answer was, "I know, but what of it?"

Has Given Up Active Practice

Dr. Dafoe has been in Callander practically throughout his entire medical career of 29 years, he has brought almost every child in that community into the world in that time, he has attended at more than 1,400 births and despite the fame that has come to him he is still the personification of the "country doctor" who at the close of day experiences delight and relaxation among the flowers of his garden, enjoying the aroma of a cigar that looks rather large for a man so little. He's the most human sort of human being, he has given up a large practice that he may devote his entire time to his beloved quintuplets, he will not deviate one iota from the strict routine of the hospital, he will disappoint thousands if he need be, refusing to allow the little girls to be seen except at the prescribed hours and under prescribed conditions, because "those kiddies come first, always".

The quintuplets know Dr. Dafoe he stood beside me in the nursery and could identify them without a second glance, his face beams with affection for them, they look up into his eyes and lip in their native tongue the word "docteur", and then it becomes easy to understand why his constant creed is "Those kiddies come first, always".

He seemed to forget that he was busy as we sat there in his little office that boasts a leather couch. He smoked on, went to the door and said "Go ahead, shoot!" when a tourist from New York asked if she might take a snapshot of him. He told me his mail averaged about 400 letters a month; he receives letters from childless people in far places requesting that some of the so-called charmed stones from Corbett be sent them; sometimes they enclose money, which he promptly returns.

Apart from the progress being made by the five little girls, perhaps Dr. Dafoe's greatest satisfaction is over the awakened interest in child welfare. From almost every country in Europe and from all parts of the American continent he has received letters from mothers, societies and scientific agencies requesting that he give to them the formula that has made this near-miracle of the rough northland possible. He willingly and freely grants every such request.

Middle Hainesville

May 30—The weather continues wet and cold and seeding and planting is greatly retarded by the weather.

Rev. I. E. VanWart and Mrs. VanWart have moved from Hartland, N. B., and are occupying the parsonage on this field. Rev. VanWart is a former pastor, and his many friends are greatly pleased to have him once again in our midst.

Our teacher, Mrs. F. F. Fowlie, nee (Miss Minnie Williston), of Northumberland County, spent the holiday in this place. Since taking charge of the school her only son Theodore has had to undergo an operation for appendicitis at their old home, however, last report he was progressing very favorably.

Dr. and Mrs. H. R. Dean of Sussex spent the 24th in this place taking dinner on Monday with Mr. and Mrs. Hedley Jones and family.

Mrs. William Reynolds and family and Mr. and Mrs. Zemro Howland and son Oswald spent the 24, in this place.

Mr. and Mrs. Everett Haines and family of Devon were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. Sterly White.

Rev. I. E. and Mrs. VanWart and Mr. Harry Jones of Woodstock were Sunday night guests of Mr. and Mrs. Hedley Jones.

Mr. and Mrs. R. K. Jones and family spent Sunday at Monte Cello, Maine with his sister, Mrs. Wm. Burt.

Mr. and Mrs. James Whitehead and Mrs. George Whitehead made a flying trip to Fredericton Friday.

Dow Settlement

Douglas Johnson had the misfortune to run a spike nearly through his foot one day last week.

Mona McLellan was guest of her grandmother, Mrs. Sandy Moody, Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Sterling Cummings were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Lister Ritchie, Hawke's Bay, Sunday.

Miss Leota Cummings was guest of Elsie Dougherty Sunday.

Frank Tompkins was calling on Sandy Moody Thursday. Mr. Moody has been ill for a long time.

Kathleen Grant spent Friday night with Ella Graham.

Robert Kirk, director of this school is getting along very well with his pupils.

A man was driving homeward, he was driving in the rain. He tried to cross the railway at the same time as the train and now he is in the cemetery.

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