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her mother, "What happened to her feet?" "Oh," she said, "that's where we had the salt herring tied to her feet to take the fever out." And there wer' two places. They used to split a salt herring, you know, tie half on each, the soles of the feet, supposed to take the fever down. Or they put them on both sides of their neck, and tied them around with a collar. And that was supposed to take the fever out. I don't know whether it cures it or not--I doubt it. But it was an old, old cure. And a lot of people used it. Anyway, the girl got better. By that time we had sulfapyra- dine. And I gave her that. And I stayed for some hours with her, until she began to show signs of breathing better. The house was hotter than hell, and full of cigarette smoke. I put all the smokers out? doors , told them to go somewhere else and do their smoking. Opened all the windows. She had lots of clothes on, so she wasn't cold. And we got her fresh air and stuff, and told her mother to do likewise, and keep the smokers out of there. She got better. (Did people ever feel that their medicine was better than yours?) When I went there first. Dr. MacLeod told me, "I'm not going to order too many pills." He said, "They're expensive. And you can order your own after you get a little money ahead. We'll order all liquid medicine. If they don't get something out of a bottle, it's no damn good." Well, he knew them better than I did; he grew up among them. And that was right. A lot of them wouldn't e- ven take pills. Throw them away. Even though they had to pay for them. But liq? uid medicine--the more horrible it tasted, the better it did them. So there was a lot of psychosomatic effect there. (Of course, they were used to things like sulphur and molasses.) Yeah, but that was very bland. They all used that every spring. I had it every spring when I was growing up, too. The school used to stink of sulphur so bad, hard to walk in. For a week or so, when every kid was getting sulphur and molasses at home. Oh yes, another thing they used down north a lot was dulse--seaweed. They just ate it. Washed it off with fresh water. They didn't bother drying it. (As a food, or as a medicinal?) Medicinal. They claimed it was good to get rid of pinworms. I don't think they ate it for food, although it was good food. (Did you think it was effec? tive for pinworms?) Well, I had to go by what the mothers said, and they said that the pinworms would disappear from the stools when they gave them a few days on dulse. So I have to assume that it worked. At that time, legally, you couldn't go in? to school unless you had smallpox vaccina? tion. A lot of them got away with it, be? cause nobody looked on their arm. And the government of Nova Scotia thought in the 1930s that most of the population in Hali? fax were immunized and safe from smallpox. A ship came in one day with a man in full? blown smallpox. They took him to Camp Hill Hospital. He was very ill there. They ap? pointed an orderly and a male nurse to look after him. The male nurse developed smallpox and died. The orderly developed smallpox and didn't die. And they discov? ered that neither of those two had ever been vaccinated, although both went through the school system. So they set up clinics and they used all the interns in the area, and all the public health nurses. And free vaccination for everybody. They figured there might be quite a few people, maybe 1000 among the



100,000 in the city, that hadn't got protection. Inside of a week, they vaccinated 44,000 people out of that population who had never been vaccinated. So that's how lax the system was that forced them to be vaccinated before they came to school. Down north there was practically no immunization at all. There was none except for smallpox vaccinations Dr. MacMillan did. He was county health officer. And he didn't get nearly all of them, because a lot of them didn't go to school the day he was going to come. So, Marie being a public health nurse, we decided the first year we were there that we'd better immunize these kids for diphtheria--that was the big problem at the time. So she got some help from a public health nurse and they organized all the schools. And nobody turned up--they wouldn't come to get the injections--nobody. Out of the 1200 kids that we knew were registered in the schools north of Smokey, we got 11. Eleven kids. We didn't know how to approach the thing, because it meant educating the people. Cape Breton at 200 Historical Essays in Honour of the Island's Bicentennial 1785-1985 Hardcover: \$24.95 (Limited Edition) Softcover: \$14.95 To order, send cheque or money order to: University College of Cape Breton Press P.O. Box 5300, Sydney, N.S. BIP 6L2 (9)