

In The Home That Stamps Built

By BEN METCALFE

This is the house that stamps built. . . .

If you look up "Stamp Dealers" in the Winnipeg phone book you won't find it listed, but if you go out to East Kildonan and ask where 870 Kildonan Drive is, people will say,

"Oh, yes, Mr. K. Bileski, the stamp man."

And lying among the elms on the banks of the Red River you will discover Studio 'B', the nerve centre of one of the world's most famous collector-dealers, whose business amounts to millions of dollars annually.

Millions of Dollars

Built like a costly air-conditioned residence, Station 'B' stands behind the Bileskis' real home and was actually designed as a store and export office for the family business.

Within its panelled stone walls are millions of stamps of all values, 100,000,000 would be a conservative estimate thinks Mr. Bileski. They are everywhere in its five main rooms and give an impression of complete chaos. But obviously there is a system built on years of experience.

There has to be a system where millions of dollars are involved but sometimes 'K', as he is known throughout the stamp world, has to take a chance. Usually the gambles pay off in huge sums, and a birchwood motto in his office remarks,

"Even a turtle has to stick its neck out to get anywhere . . ."

Former Teacher

K. (for Kasimir) Bileski started life as a teacher in Saskatchewan back in the 20's but his love of philately decided him to pull up stakes and head for London, England, with a modest capital.

He spent seven years there building up a New World trade.

The quiet, modest Canadian Ukrainian became a familiar figure at London's famous auctions, sitting in a corner, minding his own affairs, buying lot after lot with the raise of a finger or the lift of an eyebrow.

When he knew that he was established, he returned to Canada, to Winnipeg, where he and his young wife bought the picturesque two-acre site on the Red River and began to make philatelic history.

It was 'K' who bought the gems of the Bermuda Prize Court Sale in 1949, an accumulation of hundreds of millions of stamps found in enemy cargoes during the war by British warship crews . . .

It was 'K' who bought the \$64,000 Beaconsfield collection . . .

It was 'K' who bought every envelope — over 500,000 — addressed to the International Red Cross during the war . . .

Makes Comeback

It is 'K' who owns one of Canada's most valuable stamps. Only

two of them are known in Canada — one of the first Dominion issues — 2c green on wove paper worth \$4,000 — although he believes there are at least 100 in existence and is ever on the watch. "Any collector may unknowingly possess one," he says longingly.

"Station B" was begun in 1947 and suffered a few setbacks during the floods of 1948 and 1950. But today only the landscaping remains to be completed. Already it is the perfect site for a business whose motive is something rather different to mere profit.

From the wide, sloping, sun-shot windows the Bileskis and their three children look out on a whole world, the world of philatelists that will beat a path to their door for a rare piece of colored paper.

West Is No Longer Land of the Young

Western Canada, traditionally the homestead of the pioneer settler, is no longer a young man's country.

H. G. Page, of Ottawa gave delegates to the 40th annual meeting of the Canadian Public Health Association this word today.

He is chief of the vital statistics section, health and welfare division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, and he said:

"The west, a land of the young, now is feeling the bitter brunt of rapid ageing, a process which the older eastern provinces experienced a generation or more ago."

Mr. Page, who discussed "The Changing Pattern of the Canadian Population," made these points:

• Advances in medicine are saving the lives of children and young adults, and drastic reductions in death rates are one factor in the increasing number of aged persons in the population.

• In Canada as in the United States, falling birth and death rates and immigration of 30 years earlier have combined to produce a rapid increase of old persons.

Aged Increase

"The proportion of the Canadian population over 65 has increased from 4.1 per cent in 1881 to 7.8 per cent in 1951," said Mr. Page.

population is up slightly more than 2½ times. In no other age group has the increase been so impressive."

In Manitoba, persons more than 65 increased from 32,000 to 66,000 between 1931 and 1951, or from 4½ to 8½ per cent of the total population.

In Saskatchewan, the increase in this age group has been even more marked; from 31,000 to 67,000 between 1931-51, or from 3.4 to 8 per cent of the province's population.

Changing Pattern

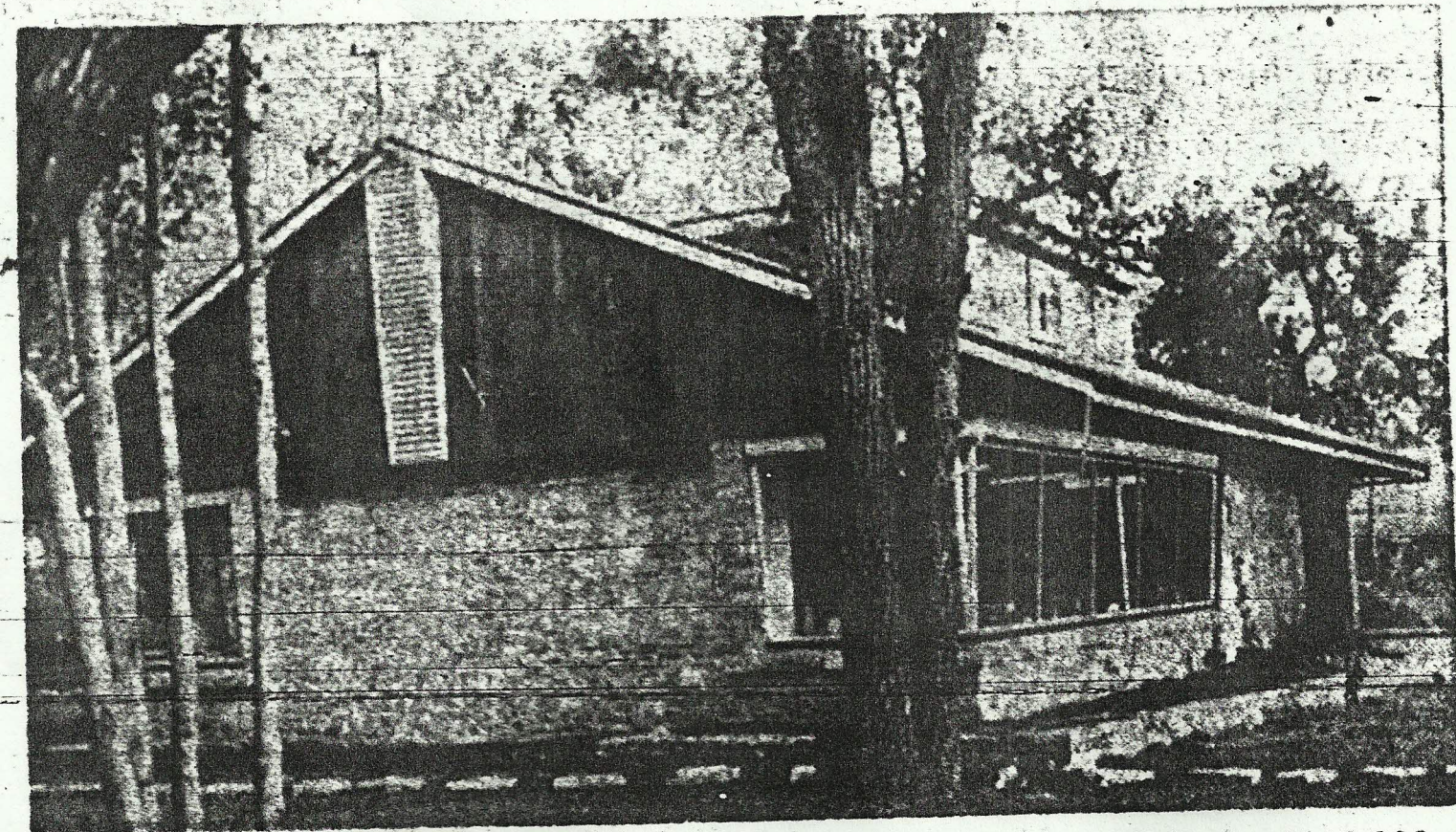
British Columbia, a mecca of retired persons, now has 125,000 oldsters, almost 11 per cent of her total population. In 1931 she had 38,000.

This changing pattern has created the problem of caring for the chronically ill, Mr. Page said. The problem is not one which occurs in under-developed countries. In a short time, the care of the aged will amount to between 75 and 85 per cent of internal medicine.

Three-quarters of the male children born today can expect to reach their 58th birthdays. A girl born today can expect to live to be



WORTH PLENTY: Kasimir Bileski — 'K' to the thousands of stamp collectors everywhere — looks over a fractional but highly valuable part of his stock in Studio B.



MILLION DOLLAR BUSINESS: Here is the house that stamps built, the \$110,000 home overlooking the Red River on Kildonan Drive, where 'K' Bileski operates a multi-million dollar philatelic business known to thousands of collectors and dealers throughout the world.