



FIELD NOTES —

from the fence —

From the Editor

Our compliments, and our modest \$5 prize, go to Lynn Brown, of Orono the only contestant in our limerick contest whose submission was printable. This says something about the relationship, in poetry, between the meter and the subject. Just as a strong martial beat is right for "Horatius at the Bridge", a measured one for "Recessional", and one of slow intricacy for "On Such a Night as This", so the one-two-three-four-Bang rhythm of a limerick is just right for the irreverent and the salacious.

With which observation we will say farewell to the Young Man from Belgrave, the Old Man from Devizes, the Argentine Gaucho called Bruno, the Young Lady called Maud, and the whole merry crew.

* * *

When we differentiate between people, we use the most obvious indicators — colour, language, religion, politics, and so on. But these are clues about background. Far more important are such considerations as — do you wake up in the morning silent, or even grouchy, or are you full of energy and good cheer? And, at the end of the day, do you start to nod at 9:30, or do you think of the pillow as an enemy?

Another such division separates those of us who are exhilarated at the arrival of autumn, and those who, at the first frost, find their spirits plummeting. To us, even the most glorious fall colours have, like a gorgeous funeral shroud, something of sadness. Not for us the joy of a crisp autumn day — we look wonderingly at the nip-in-the-air buffs beating their chests, and think — don't they **know** what's in store, once the equinox is past?

Winter, that's what's coming. YOU may see, in every winter landscape, a pristine fairyland, and marvel at the snowflake and frost patterns. YOU may long for blizzards, so that you can hurtle down Suicide Hill on your Jean-Claude Killys. YOU may get your jollies by bending, as if sculptured by an Inuit, over a hole in the ice, waiting for a finicky fish.

But winterphobes are always con-

scious of the fact that human blood is best at 98.6° F., and that, if it gets down to 90°, you are probably dead. (37° and 32° C, for those who have already driven F from their minds). Besides, we all know what cold can do to brass monkeys. We are not turned on by the majestic progression of the seasons — inexorable is the word we would use. We would prefer a Canadian climate with a seasonal variation of, perhaps, half a degree, with, instead of howling gales whipping through pine trees, zephyrs gently stirring the palm fronds — not enough, of course, to make the coconuts drop down on the contemplative Canadians below.

We know that this is almost subversive. I mean, cold is indispensable to the Canadian identity. Cortez, upon his peak in Darien, was perspiring, whereas Cartier, far to the north, was trying to keep warm without actually setting fire to his breeches. Anyway, surveyors, like voyageurs, have a long tradition of being at home in the snowdrifts. There's something ennobling about this free-for-all with the frost, and besides, it kills off the mosquitoes, and firms up the swamps.

But to winterphobes, the blackest day of the year is the autumn equinox.

Checking Your E.D.M.

BY TUDOR JONES

The editorial in the July 1975 issue of "Survey Review" remarked that whilst there is some merit in comparing an EDM instrument against a known distance to detect a gross inadequacy such a procedure is unwise when an absolute standard of length is needed; if only for the reason that such instruments produce length as a by-product of a frequency which can be measured quite simply and more accurately against a readily available frequency standard.

They point out that although the earliest EDM instruments did not suffer from serious frequency troubles, because they employed oven controlled crystals, the newer crystals, with no ovens, give cause for concern as significant frequency drifts have been reported.

In their opinion the effort expended in setting up test base lines would be more effectively directed towards the design and creation of suitable laboratories and the purchase of the necessary equipment to do the job properly.

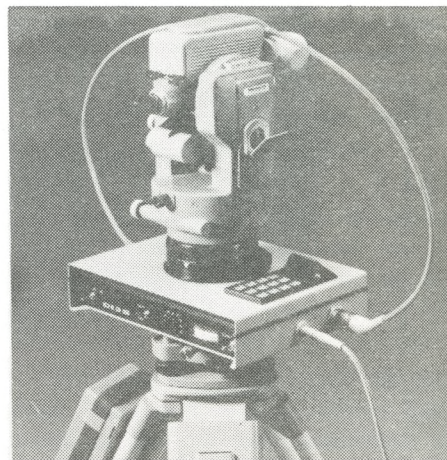
An editorial in the February 1976 supplement to The New Zealand Surveyor "News and Views" appears to endorse this opinion. They go on to say that their Department of Lands is now ad-

vocating the monthly testing of EDM equipment.

In a letter to the editor from a New Zealand surveyor, the writer agrees that the crystal frequency is an important variable affecting EDM calibration, but also enquires about checking optical plummets, instrument and reflector mountings, barometers, etc. He claims that a direct check on a known base line includes all variables in the test.

At this time we tend to agree with the surveyor from New Zealand, and advocate that you check your EDM equipment frequently on a known base line. Remember that just because an EDM gives an answer, that answer isn't necessarily correct.

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CLASSICAL CORNER

Nobili Demis Trux

Sibili si ergo,
Fortibus in ero
Nobili demis trux.
Sevat senim?
Causendux.

Who wrote these sonorous phrases? Virgil? Cicero? And what is the undoubtedly profound meaning?

For answer see page 36