



Family man Herb Trawick frolics with children, Herb Jr., Timi and Toni, at home, but his rugged behavior on gridiron (right) is no child's play.

## The gentle

For eleven years

hammering Herb Trawick has been barreling

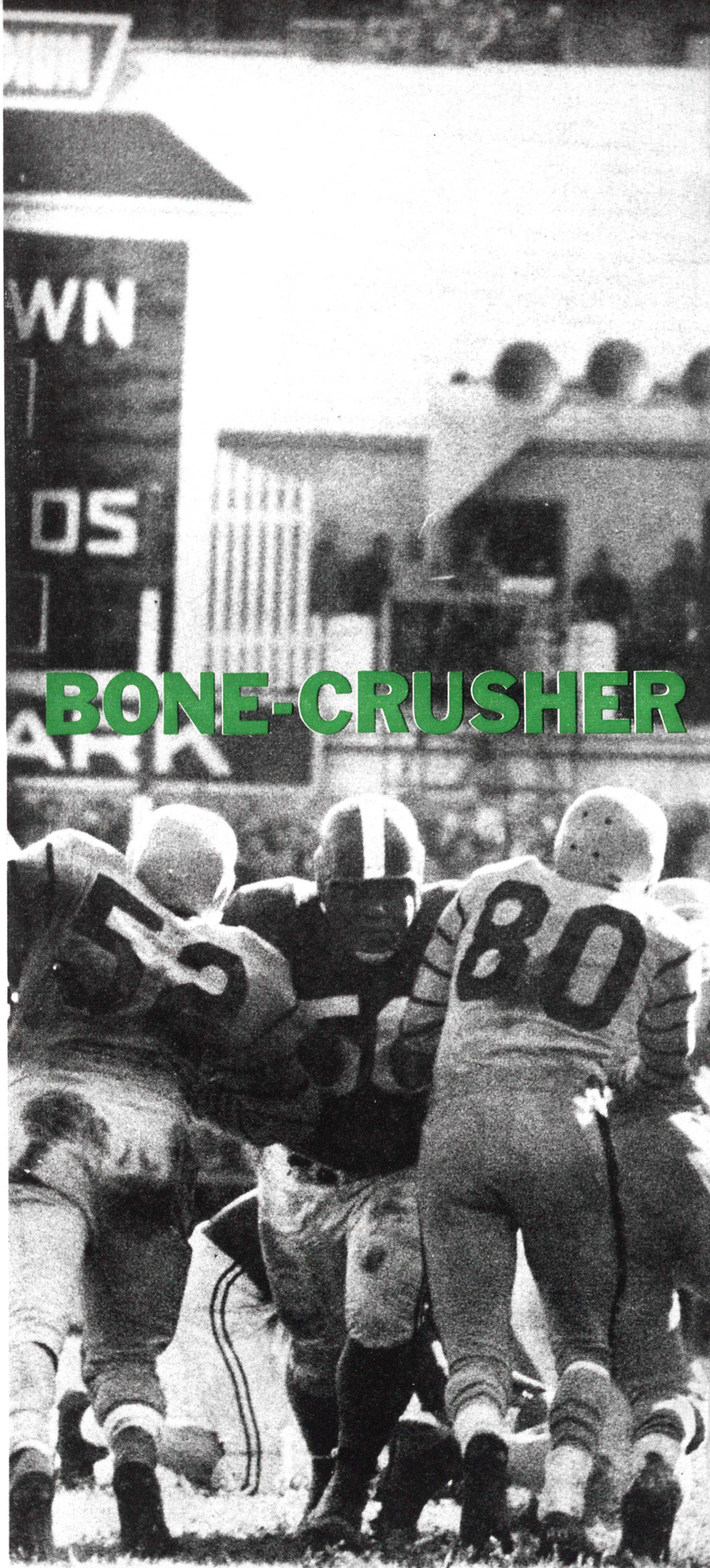
out of the Montreal line

like a blockbuster with manners.

He's a perennial all-star

in a rough game — but

sometimes it's rougher off the field



## BONE-CRUSHER

On a warm and hazy autumn afternoon in 1951 the air around the Montreal football stadium was being rudely stirred by the cries of wounded players belonging to the home-town Alouettes and the visiting Toronto Argonauts. The Argos were Grey Cup champions who had succeeded the Alouettes on the national pedestal in 1950, and the Alouettes were disturbing the peace in an effort to prove it was all a mistake.

Billy Bass, the Argonaut fullback, stood under a punt. When he caught the ball he was hammered to earth by the dark hurtling form of Herb Trawick, two hundred and forty-eight pounds of Montreal lineman who had obviously decided to become an undertaker that very afternoon. Bass lay still after the collision, and weary trainers at the Argo bench headed onto the field with a stretcher. Trawick, who'd started to rejoin his Montreal teammates, turned back to Bass and bent over him.

"C'mon, Bill, get up," he said, cradling an arm under the Toronto player's shoulders. "My wife bought a roast and we're expecting you for

three seasons in which he has not been named on the annual poll of Big Four football reporters and broadcasters conducted by the Canadian Press. There is no such thing as a poll to determine an all-Canadian team, but in the annual samplings of press-box opinion in the west, and in the east, no player has a record comparable to Trawick's seven successes in the eastern Big Four.

There are more graphic illustrations of his enduring prowess. He had already been an all-star on four occasions when Indian Jack Jacobs entered Canadian football at Winnipeg, and he was again endowed with all-star recognition the year *after* Jacobs retired from the Blue Bombers, a beloved and veteran quarterback. Jackie Parker, Edmonton's great quarterback, was a boy of thirteen with a ruptured appendix when Trawick first became a Big-Four all-star, and it was not for another eight years that Edmonton's famed split-T offense was even introduced in this country (two years later Trawick was once more named an all-star).

During Trawick's first eight years he was a

sixty-minute performer, playing the guard, or inside, position when the Alouettes had the ball, and switching to tackle, or middle, when the enemy got its turn to dispatch human missiles into the line. During the last three years his playing time has been cut down to around thirty-five minutes a game by coach Douglas (Pea-head) Walker, who employs Trawick as an offensive guard with the heavy responsibility of providing protection for Sam Etcheverry while the Alouette quarterback seeks out a receiver in Montreal's devastating passing attack. Trawick nowadays is used defensively only on goal-line stands where his bulk helps plug the middle of the line.

Sometimes his endurance confounds even his own teammates. In last year's eastern final, so fiercely contested that Montreal's departure for the Grey Cup final in Vancouver was delayed forty-eight hours while five players received the benefits of an extra two days in hospital, the Alouettes barely squeaked past the Argonauts. Afterward they sat in weary triumph in their dressing quarters. First **continued on page 80**

## of the Alouettes

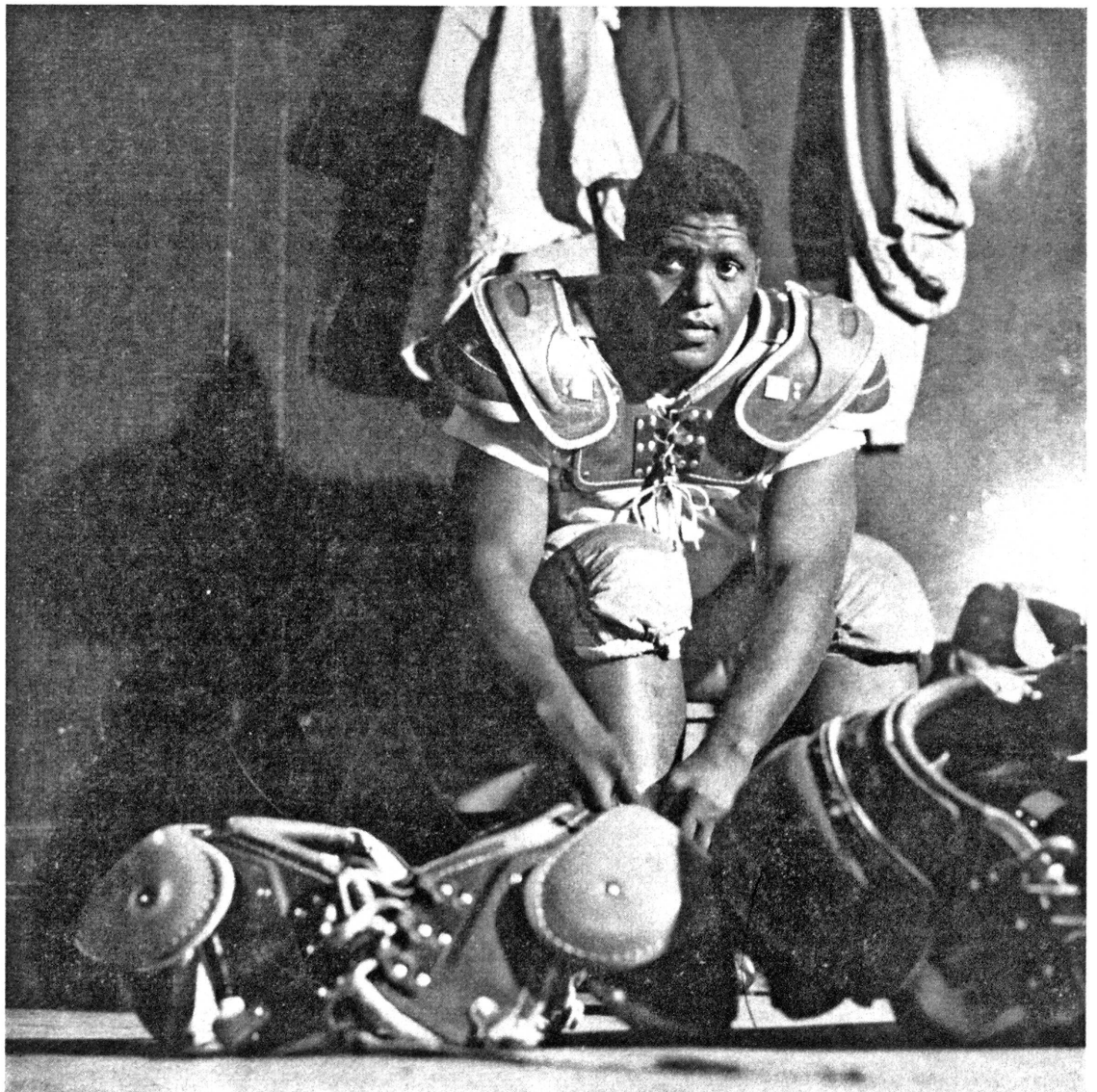
dinner at our place right after the game."

Bass, who attended college in Kentucky with Trawick fifteen years ago, would have accepted the invitation, he recalled recently, except that he had a broken bone in his back. Trawick went down to the train to see Bass off for Toronto and expressed the hope he'd soon be feeling better.

Trawick has been knocking people down and helping them up for eleven seasons with the Alouettes, earning thereby a reputation as the most amiable menace in Canadian football. His eighth of a ton is lumped on a wide heavy frame of five-feet-ten. He has massive legs that resemble two small halfbacks as he bowls across the turf. His generous middle is surmounted by a chest the size of an icebox. His features are handsome on a head nestled low over thick shoulders. The gentle side of his nature is reflected in soft dark eyes, a deep quiet voice and an easy chuckle. At one time he could rumble a hundred yards in 10.5 seconds, and the impact was often awesome when he collided with someone along the way. Once in the late Forties when Joe Krol and Royal Copeland were making the Argos tick with their passing combination, Trawick nailed Krol behind the line of scrimmage just as he was throwing.

"I've never been hit harder," Krol recalls, "and then the son-of-a-gun had the nerve to stick out his hand and help me up. I just wanted to lie there. I told him to stop doing me favors."

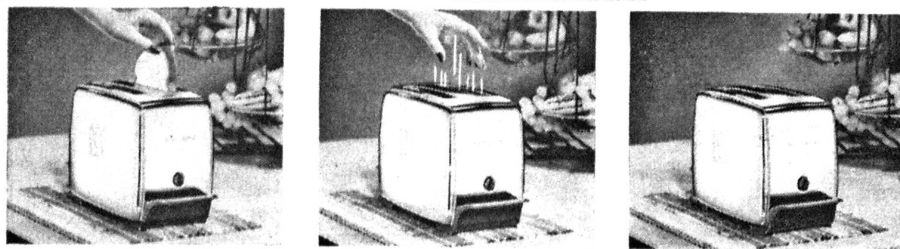
Trawick, who will be thirty-five next Feb. 22, has slowed down some in recent years but he still was named on the Big Four all-star team last season as an offensive guard, or inside wing. In fact, no player in the country has earned all-star recognition as often as Trawick, who was the first Negro signed in eastern Canada's Big Four league. During his eleven seasons on the Larks' line—a record of durability matched by no other American import, and by barely a sprinkling of Canadians—there have been only



Team captain Trawick is also Montreal's most durable player—he's missed only three games in his eleven years. Teammate Tom Hugo once suggested: "Herb, when you die you better give those old bones to science."

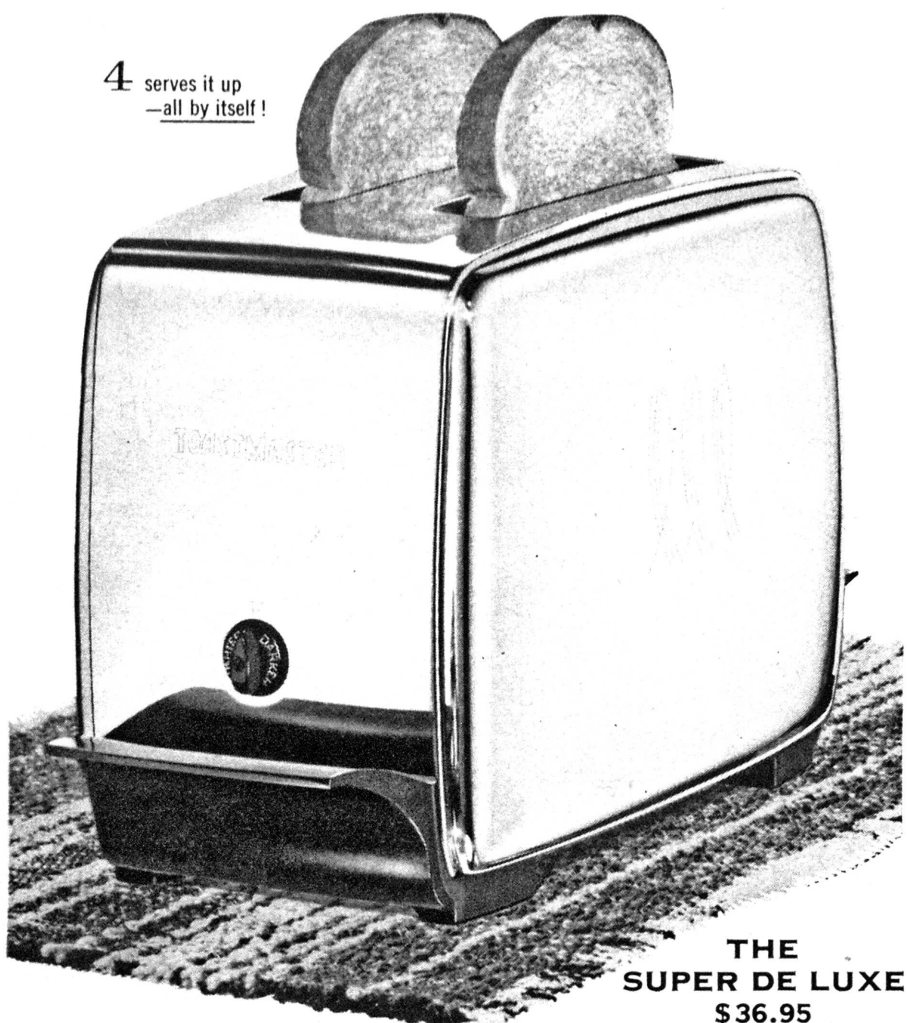
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## The gentle bone-crusher of the Alouettes

Continued from page 27

**"I have never run into discrimination on the field — although it's the only place I haven't"**

man into the shower was Trawick, humming his favorite song, a Negro spiritual with an appropriate lineman's title, I'll Not Be Moved. Tom Hugo, the team's centre, couldn't suppress a tuckered grin. "Herb," he said, "when you die you better give those old bones to science. I'm ten years younger and, man, I'm tired."

Trawick's irrepressible bounce on the field has endeared him to Montreal fans. He has a habit, when the Alouettes are kicking off, of jumping straight up and down as the Montreal kicker starts forward to boot the ball. This brings a rising roar from the crowd that reaches a crescendo as Trawick churns downfield under the kick and barrels his bulk at the player who catches the ball. Through most of his years with the Alouettes he's been the first man down the field and the first to take a shot at the runner. Then he leaps to his feet and dashes into Montreal's choir-type huddle, slapping teammates encouragingly across the shoulders or on the buttocks. Out of recognition for his enthusiasm and spirit the players elected him captain two years ago on the retirement of Virgil Wagner, a nine-year veteran from Illinois. For their part, the customers twice voted Trawick the most valuable player on the club in season-long balloting for the Calvert Trophy.

Even the kids like him, and Trawick always has time for them. Many players can't be bothered as youngsters stuff everything from abandoned cigarette boxes to old receipted bills in front of them for autographs, but Trawick always patiently writes his way past the last gap-toothed moppet. This has made him a favorite.

But there are times when even a star can be set back on his heels. Trawick was standing in the lobby of the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa recently, just a few hours before the Alouettes were to meet the Ottawa Rough Riders at Lansdowne Park. The inevitable horde of autograph hunters was ferreting out its heroes, when one small boy confronted the massive Trawick and stared stolidly up at him.

"You with the football team?" he demanded.

Trawick was a little startled that there should be any doubt.

"Why, no," he said, his dark face breaking into a grin. "I'm with the government."

On the field the really remarkable thing about Trawick over the years has been his speed, and it's only recently that the years have begun to make inroads into his catlike quickness. He takes short mincing strides on tremendously ticky thighs and calves, and with an incongruous agility seems to roll across the ground as he pulls out of the line to lead the blocking for a ball carrier. Hec Crighton, one of eastern Canada's foremost football authorities for the past twenty years, first as a referee and recently as an administrator, says the Trawick of the late Forties was "the finest blocker I've ever seen, past or present, and, for a man of his size, the cleanest and crispest."

Trawick helped sell football to the French-Canadian fans of Montreal who

had scant interest in the game when the Alouettes were formed in 1946, Trawick's first year. Leo Dandurand, one of the original owners and now the club president, relates that the combination of Trawick and former halfback and captain Virgil Wagner "helped us put the thing over."

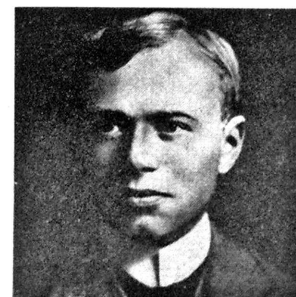
"The fans howled when Herb bounced down the field under the punts," says Dandurand, "just as they roared when Jackie Robinson stole a base."

Robinson, the first Negro player in organized baseball, was sent to Montreal to break in after he was signed by Branch Rickey, then general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, who owned the Montreal franchise in the International League. That was in 1946, the year Trawick became the first Negro to play football in the Big Four, and the two of them spent long hours together, mostly trying to work out Robinson's problems in baseball.

"I've never run into discrimination on the football field—although I must say it's the only place I haven't," muses Trawick. "Jackie ran into it everywhere, probably more of it on the field from other players than off it. He's prematurely grey now, and I think you can attribute it to that first year when he was carrying the whole load himself."

Trawick had never played football against white players until he reached the Alouettes. His school, Kentucky State, an all-Negro college, once challenged the University of Kentucky team but the challenge went unanswered. At first he was apprehensive of his reception in Montreal, but his fears were soon allayed as the fans began to whoop it up for him. In fact he had almost forgotten that there might be prejudice in football until an incident cropped up three seasons ago in an exhibition game against the Calgary Stampeders.

The Calgary fullback John Henry Johnson, a Negro now playing for the San Francisco 49ers, was giving the Alouettes fits with his strong running. A



### Who is it?

Although he's a Canadian from away back, he's always telling the British how they run their own business. Turn to page 82 to see who this youth grew up to be.

southern import sitting on the Alouette bench was dismayed by the manner in which Johnson was ripping through the Alouette line. Trawick was just returning to the bench from the field when he overheard the import call to another player sitting along the bench, "Man, if we don't stop that nigger we're gonna get licked."

Trawick stopped dead. For an electric instant he wondered if such remarks were commonplace, if they were usually saved for his absence.

Coach Peahead Walker, himself a drawing southerner, strolled over to the player.

"Son, we don't talk that way here," he said. "We're just havin' a nice little game of football."

Off the field in this country, Trawick says, he has been confronted by no social discrimination; he can't quite say the same thing about what he calls "economic discrimination."

Some players have been given lasting and remunerative jobs in business by the football club. The job he was given in the off season was that of doorman at a Montreal restaurant. He and his wife Jean, whom he'd met at Kentucky State and married after the war, lived carefully and saved their money. Not wishing to remain a doorman — "I *am* a college graduate," says Trawick—he invested in various enterprises. He and a partner went into a shoe-manufacturing business and did well for a year. They'd placed their products for national distribution with Simpson's and Eaton's, but then friction developed between the partners. Trawick decided to sell his share of the business, but he couldn't get a price he deemed fair. Then the business went bankrupt and he lost seventeen thousand dollars.

He went back to being a doorman, saved six thousand dollars out of his football salary and tips, and bought a small restaurant. It was located near a couple of night spots called Rockhead's and Café St. Michel, which attracted people to the area. Then the night spots were closed down and Trawick's restaurant failed.

He tried professional wrestling for a year and a half, but it's his opinion that wrestling is a mug's game "unless you're a headliner." He averaged about a hundred and fifty dollars a week, but it cost him nearly that much in traveling, eating and hotel accommodations. It kept him away from his family for long periods too, so he gave it up to spend more time with his two daughters, Toni, who is nine, and Timi, six, and his young son Herb who is now eight months old. The family lives in Montreal where the two girls go to school. Toni, in fact, is becoming quite fluent in French.

Still casting about for the business that will mean security when football is finished, Trawick now has a firm that prints and distributes handbills and circulars.

He talks without rancor of these things, for essentially he is pleasantly mild and warm, and for all of the ferocity of his play, he retains these qualities even in the intensity of a big game. He revealed them in the 1954 Grey Cup final when the Als were overhauled in the stretch by the tattered Edmonton Eskimos and beaten by 26 to 25.

In the third quarter, with the Alouettes ahead by 25 to 12, their kicker, Tex Coulter, got one off that Edmonton half-back Oscar Kreuger caught near his ten-yard line. When he was submerged by Montrealers Red O'Quinn and Doug McNichol the ball squirted from Kreuger's grasp and was corralled by Trawick who rumbled gleefully into the end zone. But before he had crossed the goal line the umpire, Bill Nairn, had blown his

whistle. He ruled the ball was dead before Kreuger had lost it and that the touchdown, which would have given Montreal a runaway 30-to-12 lead, was indeed no touchdown. Alouette players angrily shouted at Nairn, but Trawick's reaction was masterfully understated.

"I think you blew the whistle too soon, Mr. Nairn," he said, and waddled away.

Leo Dandurand, the club president, recalls that he asked Trawick about the play when the game was over and Edmonton had won by a single point.

"He told me it was hard to tell how

the official who called it saw it," says Dandurand, still mildly incredulous.

Trawick saves all his steam for working hours and best illustrated the point one bright cold November afternoon back in 1949 when he made the play that cemented the only Grey Cup the Alouettes have won. That day they exchanged loaded pleasantries with the Calgary Stampeders who'd won the championship the year before and apparently were still thinking about it in the early moments. It was 11 to 0 before the Stamps realized a year had passed, and then they got

down to business. Near the end of the half they'd pulled up to 11 to 7, and were on the move again. Their quarterback, Keith Spaith, moved back near his thirty-five to throw and was selecting his receiver when someone turned out the lights on him. It was Trawick, who came crashing through the line, brushed past Spaith's protectors and thumped a shoulder into the quarterback's ribs. When that jarred the ball loose, Trawick used Spaith for a springboard to it, gathered it up, and went thirty-five yards to score. The converted touchdown gave the Stampeders a



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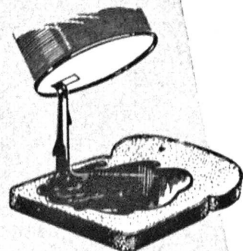


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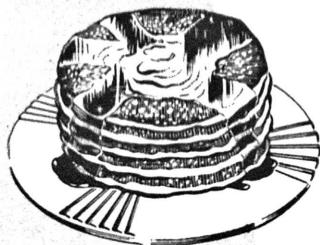
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## "Thirty-five is a good round number to quit at"

17 to 7 deficit at the half, and the Alouettes went on to win eased up by 28 to 15.

Trawick played that game with a split cartilage between the knee joints in his right leg, an injury he'd carried most of the season. He's had a number of reasonably serious injuries, yet he has missed only three games in his eleven years with the Alouettes, a matter of at least a hundred and sixty games, counting exhibitions and playoffs. He has broken four bones in his back and has had four broken ribs, as well as the usual lumps and bruises that are known in the trade as "ouches."

Trawick's uncommon durability is a source of mystery to him. He takes no special exercises in the off season to keep him in top condition. He often tends to eat too much—it's not unusual for him to eat half a loaf of bread deep with butter at a meal—and one year he reported for football training weighing two hundred and sixty-seven pounds, nearly twenty overweight. Probably the real source of his endurance was his childhood.

Trawick was born in Pittsburgh in 1922. His father worked in the steel mills and the coal mines of Pennsylvania, and his mother died when Herb was three. The only memory he has of her is a bleak one.

"I can just remember a casket," he says.

When he was nine his father died, and Herb was raised, along with another brother and sister, by his oldest brother Thomas and a sister Ruby.

### No Negroes allowed

He recalls that his father had wanted him to be a professional man, that he deplored sports, and that he was very strict. "There was never any swearing, in or out of our home, and there was no gambling. We weren't even allowed to say, 'My sister told a lie,' because we weren't ever supposed to lie."

He was always big for his age; when he was eleven he weighed a hundred and seventy. He used to walk three miles every morning to the dumping grounds to search for unburned pieces of coal that was used to dispose of the refuse. He'd pick up enough little pieces to fill three burlap sacks, each sack weighing more than a hundred pounds, and he'd load them on a wheelbarrow and walk them back the three miles to his house before school. This was the family fuel for the five Trawicks.

Later, when Herb got into high school, he worked during the summer holidays in the steel mills as a second helper at a blast furnace. The temperature was never under a hundred and thirty degrees.

He was a fullback at Schenley High School and won an athletic scholarship at Kentucky State University where he worked off his board-and-room costs by helping to build streets and roads around the campus. In the classroom he studied sociology and physical education, and on the football field, switched to the guard position by the university coach Henry Arthur Kean, he earned first-team recognition for three straight years on the Negro All-American college line-up.

Late in 1942, before graduation, Trawick entered the U. S. Army. One night, several miles from Camp Wheeler, Ga., where the Negro soldiers had been working on a road and were now heading back to camp, they were overtaken by a bus carrying white soldiers. The bus stopped, but the driver told the Negroes that they couldn't get aboard.

"Why not?" Trawick asked. "We've got our fare. We're in the United States Army."

The driver calmly pulled out a gun, aimed it at a couple of soldiers who'd climbed onto the steps, and told them to get off. Then he drove on to Camp Wheeler.

Trawick transferred to the medical corps, went overseas with the 183rd Combat Engineers and was stationed in England, at Fordingbridge, near Salisbury. He says the white officers warned the townspeople to be wary of the Negro soldiers. "One officer, so help me, told the people that we had tails," he recalls. The people of Fordingbridge held a dance and invited everybody. "They saw that a lot of our boys could sing and dance, and I guess they figured we must be human beings," says Trawick. "We had a good time at Fordingbridge."

After the war—Trawick also served in the Pacific theatre at Okinawa—he completed his college course at Kentucky State, and then went to Ohio State, in Columbus, for his master's degree. He still hadn't written his thesis when he got a telegram from Lew Hayman, then coach and general manager of the newly formed Alouettes, offering a tryout.

The Als got wind of Trawick from Bill Willis, a great Negro lineman at Ohio State, a Big Ten college that is one of the top football foundries in the U. S. Willis had decided to accept an offer from the Cleveland Browns, and with the Browns Willis became an outstanding lineman in the National pro league. He phoned Joe Ryan, the Alouette manager, and told him a fellow named Trawick from an obscure college in Kentucky could do anything as well as Willis could do it. In retrospect Ryan says now that Willis was probably right.

Trawick, who feels that "thirty-five is a good round number to quit at," and that this year will likely be his last, would like to go on living in Montreal when his football-playing days are ended. A year ago he took out Canadian citizenship papers and bought a three-bedroom home in Ville St. Laurent, on the northern outskirts of Montreal.

Now, with his career in its waning stages, this most durable of all-star performers isn't entirely sure that his father wasn't right when he advised him to try to become a professional man. The idea crept up on Trawick when his own son was born eight months ago.

"I hadn't thought about my dad's advice for years," he muses, "and then I began wondering about young Herbie. It was with a real start that I discovered I was thinking about him in terms of being a lawyer, maybe, or a doctor. From what I've seen, I think the best thing for an athlete is to find a business real early, buy a season ticket to the football games, but stick to that business."

"Of course," sighs the gentle bone-crusher of the Alouettes, "I've been playing this game since I was a kid in school. Maybe I'm just getting a little tired." ★

### ANSWER

to Who is it? on page 80

Lord Beaverbrook, the Canadian-born British newspaper publisher.



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