

A P. E. I. PASTOR WRITES ON THIS "TIGHT LITTLE ISLAND"

Rev. R. O. Morse, Summerside, contributes the following under his signature to a Halifax exchange:— The writer has been resident of Prince Edward Island for one year. During this time he has visited nearly all parts of this interesting island. A few observations touching the island and its life may be of interest to the readers of your "great journal of the home and fireside".

Prince Edward Island is an excellent agricultural community. Very few of its million acres are unfertile for cultivation. Probably nearly two-thirds of the acreage of the island is actually under cultivation. A typical P. E. Island farm forms an interesting subject for observation. The island has long been noted for its production of potatoes and oats. These are still the staple products. Yet since the advent of the potato bug, the potato figures less extensively in the plans of the P. E. Island farmer than it formerly did.

The soil and climate of P. E. Island are admirably adapted to the growth of grains. The best oats of the continent grow here and in the largest crops. During the season of 1910 there were twenty-three varieties of oats grown on the experimental farm at Charlottetown, and in twenty-one of the twenty-three varieties the P. E. Island experimental farm lead all the experimental farms of Canada in production.

The island has long been noted for its fine horses. This is as true today as ever. It is seldom that one finds less than four horses on a P. E. Island farm. Ten or twelve are not uncommon. But the type of horse has changed. The demand today is for the heavy draft horse and this demand is being met by the P. E. Island farmer. But if any of your readers think that the speedy horse is a thing of the past on P. E. Island a visit to the island might soon undeceive him.

The culture of fruit has not grown to large proportions yet on Prince Edward Island. But the evidences of the present season point to the possibility of great things in the fruit line yet. A great mistake has been made in the selections of the varieties of apples planted in the past. There are too many of the soft varieties and too few of the standard fruits. The apples raised on Prince Edward Island are variety for variety, better in keeping qualities than the same variety as raised in the Annapolis Valley. I have eaten Ribston Pippins, at a date when the Ribston Pippins of the Annapolis Valley is entirely gone. With suitable adaptation of variety, there are great possibilities of apple culture in Prince Edward Island.

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and. At the recent exhibition held in Charlottetown, about forty varieties of apples were on exhibition. The most of these were of a very excellent quality. An interesting feature of the farming life of the island is the seed fair, held in March. At this fair, the farmers bring into competition the finest specimens of their products. The meetings are also made highly educational, as addresses and discussions concerning various phases of farming are carried on by experts. It would be well for some from the Annapolis Valley to attend these fairs. The Nova Scotia farmer has some things to learn from his brother of Prince Edward Island.

A beautiful feature of the farm life of P. E. Island is the groves preserved about the house and the buildings of nearly all the P. E. Island farmers. This grove is usually of hardwood and lends great beauty to the scenery as well as affording excellent shelter from the winds of winter. A new industry is assuming large proportions on P. E. Island. It is that of fox farming. Fabulous stories are told of the wealth amassed by those who were earliest into the business. The price of a pair of black foxes for breeding purposes has now reached the sum of \$5,000. It is probably during the present season \$100,000 within the true limits to say that have been invested in this industry in and about Summerside. A visit to a fox farm is one of exceeding interest. Fortunes are being made in this industry. Fortunes may be lost in it some day.

The schools of P. E. Island are fully as much in need of a reformer as those of Nova Scotia. P. E. Island is noted for the stream of scholars that has been sent forth to other parts. If this exodus of the best blood of the island does not continue, it will not be the fault of the schools. The idea seems to prevail that since P. E. Island is an agricultural community, therefore, the thing to do is to educate away from the farm. If this is the object of the educational system of P. E. Island, surely the schools are admirably adapted to secure this object. Why leaders in educational life will persist in educating the young people away from the life of the community is a mystery to the average man.

Judging from the schools attended by my own children, I must say that the work of English and its allied branches is much more thoroughly done than such work is done in the schools of Nova Scotia. But in mathematics and in introduction to the sciences the schools of Nova Scotia are far ahead of those of P. E. Island. The salaries paid to the teachers in the public schools of P. E. Island are shamefully low. With such salaries, it is no wonder that the schools throughout the province are in the hands of very young teachers. So long as the people continue to pay such salaries, they need expect nothing else than that the teachers will leave for greener fields, in their profession, as soon as they have earned the money with which to pay for the ticket taking them there.

All of the Maritime Provinces seem to be greatly in need of an educational genius who will bring the life of the schools into proper articulation with the life of the community. The idea that the schools should educate away from the life of the community has prevailed far too long and greatly to the detriment of the life of the province. Fishing prevails to considerable extent in Prince Edward Island, but the writer has come into contact with it but little during his year's residence here.

The people of the Maritime Provinces need to know each other better. The people of the counties of Nova Scotia bordering on the Strait of Northumberland may readily come in to touch with the people of Prince Edward Island. But the people of the western counties of Nova Scotia are, as a rule, as great strangers to P. E. Island, as they are to Sweden. This ought not to be. A mutual acquaintance should be cultivated. By so doing, the people of each part would learn that there are splendid people in the other part. Such a mutual cultivation of each other would result in heartier co-operation among the people of the Maritime Provinces than they are today. R. OSGOOD MORSE.

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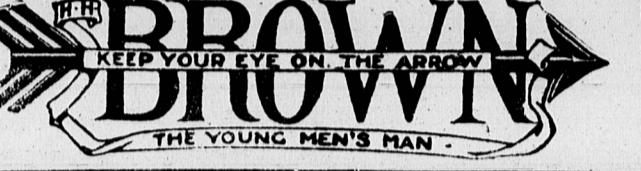


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