

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., Nov. 24, 1961

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Change Traced For 90 Years

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I TALKED recently with Bedeque's Thomas Moyse, 97 who went back close to 90 years to trace the development of farming methods and equipment. This grand old man who could easily pass for at least 20 years younger, recalled for me the time when the plow and the spike-tooth harrow were the only cultivating implements. And almost everything else on the farm was done by hand.

His physique is good, his carriage erect, his memory clear, and his mind so keen it was a pleasure to chat with him for several hours.

Mr. Moyse agreed there has been a tremendous change in farm machinery and equipment since he was a boy, and added "even I would be lost with the machinery of today," as he observed that he had retired in the middle Thirties.

Introduction of the disc harrows, or cultivators, were a major advance in farming and that was many years ago.

HE RECALLS the first reaper, where one man threw off sheaf sized bundles and the other drove. Later a one-man reaper threw off its own sheaves. But men still had to bind them by hand and Mr. Moyse, and a good man with him, could keep up to the machine binding sheaves, unless the grain was very heavy. It normally took four men to do the chore.

Prior to that, men cut grain with scythes. "A good man" could cut an acre a day and four or five men working together "made fairly good progress."

Mr. Moyse recalls the first binder in the 1870's and he surprised me by saying they had a hay fork for unloading by horse power also in the Seventies, though the hay carrier came much later. Both are practically outmoded now, with the advent of the baler and associated equipment.

THE OLD iron plow - a single-furrow walking job, was followed by the gang plow that turned two furrows, and is still used in some places. Spring tooth harrows were appreciated when they were developed.

The horses got the best feed in those days, for they were used on the farm and for transportation. "They were also a source of revenue", observed Mr. Moyse who recalled that they brought 30 pounds Sterling. A pound was worth \$4.87 in those times, though it is worth approximately \$2.90 now.

A good cow brought \$25 - they went even lower - and the same cow would bring \$200 and more today we agreed.

Father Killed By "Horse Power"

MR. MOYSE'S father, Fred Moyse, was killed by an old "horse-power mill" when the son was 20. The belt came off and the mill ran wild with the horses. The big fly-wheel broke when the elder Moyse applied the brake too heavily, and death was almost instantaneous. Thomas Moyse stopped the mill by jamming a heavy stick under the revolving floor on which the horses were racing.

Incidentally there is a one-horse mill in the museum at Birch Court here that was donated to the Experimental Farm's museum by Tom and Miller Sanderson, North River.

Mr. Moyse was talking about a two-horse machine that was in common use. They were used to run a threshing machine and sometimes to saw wood.

RECALLING that good horsemen insisted on black oats for horses - they wouldn't give you two cents for white oats at one time - I asked Mr. Moyse for the reason. There is of course the claim that the black oat had more meal and less hull, but my host recalled that the white oats then were round and plump, and that some horsemen claimed the horse swallowed them without chewing, so they went right through him, with no nourishing result.

Stall-fed beef brought \$3.50 a 100 pounds on the hoof, shipped from Summerside en route to Saint John. They were fed hay, roots and cracked grain, Mr. Moyse told me.

Fat pigs were in demand, the bigger the better. He recalls that they got five and three eight cents a pound for one that dressed 465 pounds. I don't know what was the heaviest, but I recall a Rose Valley neighbour killing one that weighed over 500 pounds. We've come along way since then in bacon production

### Long-Horned Durham Popular

THE "LONG Horned Durham" was a popular cow then. "They were good, large cows. We liked them," observed the veteran of farming days who surprised me greatly when he said "the Shorthorn cattle wouldn't give enough milk to feed their own calf." I had always thought that was a modern complaint of the so called Pony type Shorthorn we developed a decade ago, and have been breeding away from in more recent years.

Milk was poured into flat tins from which the cream was poured off, or skimmed, when it came to the surface. A Charlottetown man, Fenton Newberry, built the first factory in 1883. A Bedeque company several years later bought the plant which made cheese in summer, milk in winter. It had the first mechanical separator in the area. MR. Moyse couldn't recall when privately owned separators came into use. The old factory is used now by Campbell and Burns for their processed food plant.

Butter sold for 14 to 16 cents per pound and was traded in the stores for goods. There were few cash deals in those days.

A NEIGHBOUR still churns enough cream to get his own butter, and he gives the buttermilk to Mr. Moyse who said smilingly "You can say that drinking buttermilk is the reason I have lived so long."

I agreed with him that buttermilk is wonderful stuff. A friend, Ethel Molyneaux McLure, gave me a glass when I called on her in Breadalbane in the 1953 election campaign, and she still insists that's why I was elected.

But I forgot to ask Mr. Moyses if he ever ate or heard of "Stapachk". It's a Gaelic word and my spelling is only phonetic. Frankly, I never saw it spelled out, but it's made of thick cream with oatmeal stirred into it to a fairly thick consistency. Many's the time I took a cup of cream off the top of the jar for a treat, when I was a youngster.

IT WAS rated a real treat in the old Strathalbyn area where I grew up, and yesterday Mrs. Percy Downe, the former Katie Cameron of Springton, agreed with me here that it was wonderful stuff. I'm sure people in many Island areas will recall it.

The farmer grew his own wheat for flour, although he usually had to buy a barrel in summer to keep him going until he threshed his first wheat in the fall, Mr. Moyses told me.

The first road machine came into use in Premier Fred Peters' day - 1891-97. It was pulled by four teams of horses, he recalled.

### Soloist, Lay Preacher, Craftsman

A "MAN of parts", Mr. Moyses sang in his church choir "from 19 to 90", and was soloist for many years. He was a Sunday School teacher for much of his lifetime.

A lay preacher in the old Methodist church and later the United Church for 60 years, he has preached in churches from Alberton to Souris.

Just as we were leaving - Mrs. Matheson was with me - Mr. Moyses's daughter, Mrs. Edna Jenkins, showed us a hand-made, folding arrangement that my better half called a multiple sandwich tray. Ingeniously made from Island hardwood, it showed all the skill of a master amateur craftsman.

It was one of the many things he had made with his woodworking skill after he had "retired". For a few seconds I hoped we could buy one for our home at Southport for it is unusually interesting to design. But, we found, failing eyesight had forced him to quit such fine work although he still enjoys looking after his flowers and his garden.

As I was leaving I asked him what has been the greatest change in all those wonderful years.

He had been to North River one evening a few days previously with some neighbours to attend a temperance meeting. "As I was eating lunch at home later that evening, and thinking back over the rapid, comfortable drive on velvety smooth roads, I thought that that must be the greatest change of all," this fine old gentleman told me.

You are surprised, I imagine, as I was at first. But you would have to consider the comparatively primitive means of travel in his youth, to fully appreciate the change to which Mr. Moyses referred.