

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., May 25, 1962

ACROSS THE ISLAND

P.M.'s Promise Poses Problem

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial-Farm Editor

PRIME MINISTER Diefenbaker's announcement on compensation for low potato prices has complicated the task which faces a committee named here to deal with appeals from several Island localities. The demands come from the area around Souris and the area around Montague and Murray River in Kings, and the area around O'Leary in West Prince, although there were also strong indications from the East Prince area that growers there desire assistance.

The committee representing the areas officially demanding help, the Potato Producers Association, the Federation of Agriculture and the provincial department of agriculture meets Monday, I am told, to consider the problem.

I have no inside information on the development, but I would expect that the Prime Minister's statement here last week will widen the demand for assistance.

He said in part: "Those who depend on potatoes shall not be required to face difficulties brought about by large surpluses elsewhere" and added "there will be more of this in a few days."

I KNOW from talks I've had with men like Malcolm Bradshaw and Rowan Sherry in the Searletown-Albany area, for example, that they and at least some of their neighbours - I don't know how many - are demanding some compensation for low prices. There will likely be many others, now that the Prime Minister has put himself on record so definitely.

If the demand is as widespread as I expect it may be, I'm wondering what standard the government will use to determine the extent of compensation payments. Perhaps Agriculture Minister Alvin Hamilton can enlighten us when he comes here next Wednesday to sign the agreement on Crop Insurance.

Junior Club Winners In P.E.I.

A FRIEND told me recently we neglected to record the names of Junior Club winners from this province in the All Canadian Holstein judging competitions released some time ago. I have to thank my long-time friend Cecil Stewart of Hampshire, secretary of the P.E.I. Holstein Breeders Association, for making the names available and here they are with belated congratulations.

Five tied for first place in the P.E.I. standings with 126 points were Alan Godfrey, New Wiltshire; David Thompson, Dunstaffnage; Albert Cormier, Richmond; Earl Boswall, Dunstaffnage and Paulette Jones, Pownal.

Tied with 122 points were Ivan Cormier, Richmond; Heather and Janet Jones, Pownal; Wayne, Helen and Carol Dickieson, New Glasgow. The top winner in Canada scored 132. The possible was 140 points.

Old Agreement Was Strict

MY BARBER, Gordie MacLean, brought me this one which indicates how strict the apprenticeship agreements were here in other years. The young man was required to serve faithfully, carry out all his master's commands, protect him from damage at all times and serve warning of impending danger to his person. He was unable to marry unless with his master's consent. He could not "play at cards or any other unlawful games whereby his master might suffer loss." He was not "to haunt taverns or playhouses."

The master in this case had to teach the apprentice the art of curing or tanning leather and provide "food and sufficient meat, drink, washing, mending and lodging" and pay thirty pounds for five years. There was a penalty of 50 pounds if the master broke the agreement.

The old document found in the home of Stewart MacKinnon at Highfield, is 112 years old and was signed by William Benjamin Dawson, tanner and Donald MacKinnon, the apprentice, who was the son of Hugh MacKinnon.

When Industries Dotted Island

LACK OF industries has often been stressed as one of our biggest problems in this province, but small industries were scattered all over this province in the days that are gone, and not so terribly long ago at that. I talked about the development to a few of my old Rose Valley neighbours some time ago.

Rose Valley was chosen because I know that area best and remember enough of the stories of my youth to ask more or less sensible questions about the past. But I believe, from what folks in other communities tell me, the story I'm going to tell about Rose Valley could be told about scores of other places across the province.

There was a woodworking plant, a carriage shop, a brickyard, a forge and several limekilns, for example, within a one-half mile radius of the area where the church, the hall and the school still exist. And there was a tanner at Springton just up the road a few miles.

I RECALL the man they used to call "Tanner" MacDonald when I was a boy but that was long after the shop had closed.

The brickyard was going when I was a boy and I can recall sneaking glances out the school window at the horse travelling around in his circle, working the clay mixed to make the bricks.

Malcolm MacKenzie was the senior member of the family then and his sons John W. and Norman working with him made as many as 1,000 bricks per day. Malcolm MacKenzie who is deputy minister of education is a member of the family. "Tanner" MacDonald was the grandfather of John W. MacKenzie and Malcolm, the education deputy minister.

Up To 35,000 Bricks Annually

SLABS THAT furnished fuel for the kiln in which the bricks were dried, came from nearby Dixon's Mill which was run by water power at the time. The mill was later changed to steam and the slabs were burned to fire the engine. That, I gathered, was the beginning of the end for the old brickyard, as regular firewood fuel added materially to the cost of the operation. The last bricks made were in the 1915 -16 season.

The MacKenzies made 25,000 to 35,000 bricks annually in the months between spring seeding and haying. They brought 60 cents to \$1.25 per 100. Those bricks were made of clay, not the concrete mix type that is so prevalent today. And there is plenty of the brick clay in that area. The MacKenzies drilled through 142 feet of the brick clay several years ago, when they built a new house, before finally getting a satisfactory water supply at 170 feet.

They dug the clay by hand in the evening, dumped it into the mixing pit and soaked it with water overnight. The horse-drawn capstan arrangement (much like that on an old fashioned stumping machine) did the mixing - the horse went around by himself. The clay came out of the pit like dough and was hand moulded.

I TOOK one of the old moulds, and a brick, to the farm museum which Robert Parent is building up at the Experimental Farm, and anyone interested can see them there.

Some of the MacKenzie brick are in the chimney of the Parochial House at Summerfield, I was told. The mortar used then was made from clay and lime. "Did it last?" I asked the MacKenzies when I visited them, and they pointed to the chimney of their old home, which is more than 100 years old, and the chimney looks to be sound as a dollar.

I am unable to tell you much about the other small industries, though I was told last year the windows of the Rose Valley church were made in the old woodworking plant and, of course, I remember Allan MacDougall's blacksmith shop clearly although forges are becoming almost extinct now.

Dollar Bill Used For Autograph

SPEAKING OF dollars, I saw a man hand Tommy Douglas a dollar bill to autograph, when he stopped briefly on Market Square here Wednesday afternoon. I had never seen that done before and neither had the genial Mr. Douglas.

Incidentally I have never met a man anywhere who is more genuinely friendly, or easier to like, than the same Mr. Douglas. That was the opinion I formed when I first met him back in the middle Fifties, and it becomes more deeply impressed every time I have the privilege of meeting him.

Hon. Howard Green who was here on Tuesday and Paul Hellyer who will be in Montague on Saturday, for example, are both just about as friendly as one could imagine. But, so far as I am concerned at least, it took a bit of knowing them before I was impressed with their friendliness. I could say the same thing about many more of the national figures I am privileged to know - I merely used Green and Hellyer because

one is a PC and the other a Liberal - but the Douglas personality made an impression the first time we met.