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ACROSS THE ISLAND

M W F Revival Seen Unlikely

BY NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial-Farm Editor

The Maritime Winter Fair will not be revived, at least not as a purely agricultural event, if I evaluate correctly the combined opinion of some of the Maritime's top livestock men and other agriculturalists to whom I've talked at the Big Fair this week.

I haven't space for details but the consensus seems to be that it's just not practical to ask the three Maritime governments to put up approximately one million dollars to revive a fair that was not paying for itself when it was running.

One top livestock man told me "it has been dying for 10 years before fire destroyed its buildings in 1958." There will be other opinions, perhaps, but that's the idea I received from the men to whom I talked, and they included a cross section of Maritime agriculturists including, of course, some of our own people.

Senate Rumors Favor Boswell

SINCE THIS is Exhibition Week, it's probably a good time to say I hear my old friend Keith Boswell has the inside track for that Senate appointment. I don't claim to have inside knowledge of Conservative party strategy, but the information came to me as reliably as that sort of thing can come.

It would be a happy appointment in the minds of many cattlemen, for Mr. Boswell has come up the hard way, and has had many obstacles to hurdle. I hope you'll forgive me, Keith, if I tell just one or two of the many stories you have told me over the years.

It was back in the early 1920's, perhaps in 1922, that he lost his entire herd of Dual Purpose Shorthorns, about 20 head, when his barn was destroyed with all of the crop on December 3.

Also lost in the fire was a Percheron stallion he valued at \$1000. He had had him insured for \$800 up to a month or so before the fire but had let the insurance run out at the wrong time.

MR. BOSWELL came back with Ayrshires, and he has come a long way. I have seen the Victoria breeder enthuse over many a victory in the last 20 years or so, but I don't think I ever saw him happier about a win than the Senior and Grand Championship he scored Wednesday with the granddaughter of his alltime favorite, Lealands Royal Victoria, a cow that was in his herd for nearly 20 years and brought a lot of fame, as well as much needed prize money and sales.

One other story and I am through. I recall my friend telling me once that he had two members of his family going to University one fall and he hadn't a dollar to give them up to the day before it was time for them to start their term. But a big American car drove

in the yard that afternoon, he sold \$1,400 worth of cattle in the next few hours, and the students left on schedule.

It would be a fine recognition of this Island farmer, and his splendid family, if his party did see fit to recognize him.

Horses Bring Big Prices Now

THERE WERE some splendid horses this week in the show ring here and I'm told horses are bringing the highest prices in history. Talking with horse judge Archie MacMillan, this week, and several other top horsemen, I was told that good draft horses are bringing \$350 to \$400 each, and sometimes higher. Mr. MacMillan told me of a Truro man who brought in a carload from Ontario that cost him \$500 each, including transportation costs.

My memory tells me that \$300 was the best price I ever heard of for a draft horse, and I only recall two horses in our Rose Valley locality that ever brought that much. It took a really good horse to bring \$200, but the \$300 price was for particularly good animals, or perhaps for a horse needed to complete a matched team for a special customer.

It's not much more than 10 years ago that I saw really good draft horses going at auction sales for \$40 to \$50.

How Is This For Quick Moves?

I THINK Heber MacPhail must have set a record for quick moves when he sold his New Haven farm, with stock and equipment, one afternoon and bought his new home from Daniel Gass that same evening. That's moving really fast. Mr. MacPhail told me about it this week as we chatted at the exhibition.

Mr. Gass has built a new home across the road and just a little closer to Charlottetown. I visited him recently on my way home from one of my trips, and was glad to find he and Mrs. Gass are going to have a beautiful little home, tailored to meet their needs.

Blackbirds Ruin Barley Field

STILL RECALLING people I met at the big fair, Alex Hamilton, New Perth, told me that blackbirds have practically ruined some of the grain fields in his area. A field of his barley was completely ruined by the black pests, said Mr. Hamilton who hesitated about estimating their number, but said the sky is darkened when they lift from the ground.

Beef Judging Competitions

I SUGGEST Canada Packers are doing a worthwhile thing for the beef cattlemen in the judging competitions they're sponsoring at our fairs this year. They had people judging a half dozen steers at the fair here this week, and leaving slips with their placings. The steers were slaughtered yesterday and will be judged on the rail this

morning by Harold Hertz, government grader. Results will be announced in these papers so judging contestants can check their skill against what the grader found when the carcasses were available to him, and that's the last word in any livestock grading.

Mr. Fraser tells me they'll be putting on similar competitions at our other fairs here. The purpose is purely educational, so the more people that enter the better, and there is no cost.

Blacksmith Shops Disappearing

A TRIP last Saturday to the Eastern tip of the Island included a visit to Stewart MacGregor's roadside blacksmith shop in the Kingsboro area. He tells me that he thinks his shop and the one owned by Charlie MacDonald in the South Lake area are the only two blacksmith shops between there and Charlottetown on the main road section at least.

This is sharp contrast to the time when they dotted the countryside, and I'm wondering what people will do when they finally disappear, because good blacksmiths can do a lot of necessary and useful jobs for a farmer.

East Point Quartet Coming Back

INCIDENTALLY Mr. Musical Festival President Fred Large, I believe there is a good chance of getting that East Point Baptist Church male quartet back to your festival next year. They appeared once in the middle Fifties, and got such a blast from the adjudicator, they never returned. I heard the blast: in fact I'm sure a performance by a choral club of which I was a member threw the adjudicator into such a temper, he was still mad enough to take it out on the East Point people who had nothing at all to do with our performance.

Perhaps I had better explain that it was the Hillsboro Choral club, a veteran group with an excellent record, that got away to a bad start on the Drinking Song, never recovered and gave a completely poor account of themselves in the opening number on the night program.

HE GAVE the club a mark of 80, which I thought was too high, for the performance was rather awful. But the boys felt much better several hours later when they performed in two numbers for Dr. Leslie Bell who gave them some of the warmest praise I have heard at a festival, and awarded them marks of 87 and 88.

I talked with Mr. MacGregor who is a member of the Eastern quartet, urged him to have his group come back and assured him that most adjudicators are kind and considerate. If the group does return, they'll be sure of a welcome.

Hay Bale Stacker, Barn Cleaner

I MET this week an old friend Donald A. Matheson of Shamrock (no relation) who told me his son "Junior" (his name is also Donald) has built a machine that stacks bales of hay on the ground in a manner they won't leak rain, and has also built a machine for loading the bales on the wagon.

The father, whom I've always known as Dannie, has invented a barn cleaner for use in stables. I heard about it recently in Breadalbane, which is close to his home, and he told me it works really good, when I asked him this week.

DANNIE HAS never had any vocational training, but he does bricklaying and plumbing and many other kinds of work, I believe. These people seem to have a natural ability at this sort of thing.

I never tire of hearing about and telling the stories of P.E.I. people whose unusual ability has developed careers for them. Next week I hope to tell you about a young man I visited recently who is doing a most unusual job in building and designing equipment with very little to work with, except his own skill and natural ability.