

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Island High School Program Is Varied

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial-Farm Editor

A VISIT to perhaps a half dozen Regional High Schools left me wondering what our forefathers would say if they could come back long enough to see some of those well equipped buildings and talk to some of the principals and teachers as I did in a couple of trips recently.

I don't know what my grandparents would think or even my parents, if they could come back for a look at the modern version of a rural regional high school, but I do know that their grandson and son was impressed. There's no more comparison between those schools and the one I attended in Rose Valley, for example, than there is between many of the other things of my boyhood days, and the present.

Without attempting to assess the educational competence of the new institutions—I found the principals as proud of their system as most people are of the splendid buildings that house them—I was struck most forcibly, believe it or not, by the fact that Island high school pupils now have this educational opportunity available to them as close as their own gates, or the corner, or some other spot, just up the road a bit.

High School Opportunities

IT'S THAT close because school buses pick up the pupils there, take them to the high school and bring them back again in the evening.

If any reader is not impressed by that fact, it means only that he or she didn't live through the days—and they're not so far away in time—when hundreds of rural pupils never were able to go past Grade 10, because their people couldn't afford to send them to Prince of Wales College, or to St. Dunstan's high school. Now a high school education is available for free. Of course nothing is free, we have to pay for it, but it is free to the pupil who resides in a participating district so far as any immediate cash outlay is concerned.

I had already seen something of the facilities available at the Charlottetown Rural High School—I've worked there on counselling projects—and several times I've been in several other high schools. This time I visited and talked with the people who direct the programs in Morell, Souris, Kensington, O'Leary and the Evangeline High School at Abrams Village.

Principal Charlie McIsaac—he comes from Westmoreland, near French's Carding Mills where we took our work when I was a youngster—showed me around at Morell.

Program Seen Well Rounded

I WAS struck by the well rounded program that's available at those regional schools. Morell won the Kings County debating league last year—Mr. McIsaac is president—and "we have to have an Island league in future," Mr. McIsaac said. They've won the Provincial Senior B basketball title at Morell for two years, I believe, and "some of our best students are on our basketball team," reported the principal, who is sold on the all-around approach to a youngster's education.

I know there are people who oppose the idea of physical education being taught in schools. It's natural for a farmer, or someone else who works hard physically, to discount the value of physical education exercise, because he finds it difficult to get enough physical energy in last through his day. That reaction I can understand. I was born and raised on a farm. I was taking a man's place when I was still a mere stripling in years. But later in life I came to appreciate the value of physical education properly taught. It builds physiques and strengthens muscles that do not get proper development on a farm or at other labor, and my farming was done in the days when almost everything was done by manpower, and horse power, and I don't mean the horsepower that comes in tractors or electric motors. I believe they're looking forward to adding a course in agriculture at Souris next fall.

Commercial courses, home economics and classes in family living, preparation of food, selection of suitable clothing are some of the other useful skills and aptitudes that are being developed in some of those schools. At Souris, for example, Mother St. Augusta has her master's degree in family living education and her bachelor's degree in food science. Adequate library space is provided and in several schools this development is well underway.

Not surprisingly some people oppose what they call "those new-fangled ideas." They contrast them unfavorably with what our parents called "the three R's" but Principal Albert Fogarty at Souris is sold on the value of this type of training.

Guidance Counselling Coming

NEXT YEAR he hopes to add a full time guidance counsellor. Special attention is planned for the graduating class. A few days ago M. F. (Matt) Hagen told me that he is doing guidance counselling already for the students attending the Charlottetown Regional High School. It thrilled me to hear of this development for I recall distinctly the tremendous need we felt back more than 30 years ago when students entering university needed advice of that kind so desperately. But there just wasn't any such counselling available then. Nobody was interested enough to provide it.

It was a particular pleasure to meet an old Prince of Wales classmate, Jim Murphy, at Kensington where he is principal of the regional high school. The value of milk is stressed at the Kensington school and Principal Murphy told me he does not allow soft drink vending machines in the building. There is some talk, I understand, of extending the milk program next year.

Illness disrupted the teaching staff the day I called and I didn't feel like taking much of Jim's time, for he was unusually busy.

Principal Earl Jelly did the honors at O'Leary where he was one of the men involved in backing the first effort in the province to develop a regional high school, he told me. Evangeline was the first district to get into operation. The problem of winter road travel was one of the arguments used by those who feared the regional school idea wouldn't work. But Mr. Jelly told me, for example, they lost only three teaching days at O'Leary last winter. It was one of the better ones for highway travel, but even the worst winters since the regional school system was established did not offer insurmountable problems.

Evangeline Students Are Bilingual

AT EVANGELINE I met and actually talked with the students in several classes. I was happy to learn the school is completely bilingual. The students write essays in both English and French, the principal, Sister Marie Jeanne d'Arc, told me, though English is spoken in the class room much of the time. French is the native tongue of most of the students there, but there are some whose mother language is English.

There were classes for retarded children in one or two schools—Souris was one of them—with a specially trained teacher. So the effort is to serve every need that develops, in so far as is possible.

I'll go along with those who complain that too much money was spent on some of the buildings. I'm old enough to feel that some of the modern grandiose goes a bit farther than is necessary. But I'm happy to see the improvement in the facilities for education, and in the provision of more easily available high school instruction. The establishment of the regional high school system means no boy or girl is robbed of a high school opportunity because it costs too much.

I know that the parents, indeed all of the taxpayers, are paying for it. My own school taxes at Southport, for example, are slightly more than twelve and one-half times as great as they were when I moved to the district just 20 years ago. That doesn't mean that taxes have increased that much, for there have been additions and improvements to our property, but the tax increase has been great.

Our family is now beyond the district and regional high school stage, but we're not kicking about the cost. So long as educational opportunities are being improved, and improvement is being made towards the goal of equal educational opportunity for all, I'll go along with the development. There's no comparison between today's facilities and the ones my generation experienced.

My thanks to Supervisor Wilson Ross who arranged for my tour of regional schools—sorry I couldn't have seen more of them—and to the principals and other people whose friendly co-operation made my experience so enjoyable.

IN NO DANGER The businessman, who arrived from the Chinese capital Tuesday said everything he heard Communist party chairman during his month-long tour in Mao Tse-tung is in a secluded China indicated Mao was "in summer resort, devoting much fair health, perhaps not in excess of his time to writing, says a excellent health but certainly not Communist businessman, in danger of death."

Action Of Potato Growers Comes As Tough Puzzle

By J. LINCOLN DEWAR

At the three county meetings called to elect producer members to the Potato Board less than one hundred registered growers attended. At one meeting six growers responded and elected two persons. While it might be said that it was a very busy time of the year, this is really just an excuse, real interest would have ensured better attendance. It has been stated that the growers do not understand the board or what it is trying to do, this also can be hard to accept as an occasion can be recalled when thousands of growers turned up at a meeting in the Forum when potato board policies were an issue.

The third reason that potato prices are high also hardly holds water. There must be at least 50 farsighted potato growers in Queens County who realize that the sun doesn't always shine.

In so far as the producer representatives are concerned the Potato Board is legally constituted, it has wide authority and while it can rule it really doesn't have the consent of the governed. When a 100 persons vote out of a possible 5,000 then we must admit that democracy is operating in default.

To the members of the board who have been elected or re-elected we extend congratulations, the winning of any election always carried with it certain honor and credit. There has been and will continue to be real opportunities for the board to serve the industry. However, we must again confess to being very puzzled at this juncture and to wondering just what is really going on in the minds of potato growers.

EDUCATION

For many years in our history the opportunity of obtaining higher learning was denied many of our people. There was a number of reasons, poor schools, lack of finances, and lack of understanding of the value of education. The result was that many people who had a minimum of education tended to downgrade "book learning" and held in contempt the accomplishment of bookish people. The men who felled the forests, cleared the land and sailed the seas prided themselves on their physical ability and their capacity to deal with the forces of nature.

For 150 years farm people have paid taxes for education but in very few cases have they been concerned with the fact that practically none of this money was ever spent to educate people for farming and in the way of life which produced most of our wealth.

For many years the economic situation, the type of farming and the requirements of the family may have made formalized education for agriculture of minor importance. Now however, we have come to a situation agriculturally which demands both it and the people who are more in the way of farm education, business capacity, planning and management skills. We know that many people will disagree with this statement we are nevertheless forced to the conclusion that not only do many rural people have a poor opinion of farming but also that the town people see very little about it to admire or respect.

If this state of mind exists, why it is so is worth considering. Is the farmer himself responsible partly because he has delegated or just left to other people the responsibility for organizing and planning in agriculture, in many cases to people who really do not understand the problems or have little real interest in them.

Certainly when fewer than 100 potato growers turn up at important meetings the industry certainly does not create the impression of being vitally concerned in something which should be the farmer's interest and responsibility.

There is more to good farming than straight furrows, fine livestock and good crops. The status of agriculture and recognition of those involved all have a relationship to the development of policy which will promote agriculture. People who are satisfied to be doormats need not be surprised if they are trampled upon.

More than leadership is required to improve many of the unsatisfactory conditions which exist, what is required is the interest and support and the involvement of large numbers of people in working for a better situation and for the recognition of an industry without which the province would not cut much ice in an economic sense.

CHURNING CREAM

After talking to a number of dairymen who have come to the conclusion that there are cream shippers who do not know that they will be treated on Government payments in the same way as the shippers of milk. They will receive the same deficiency payment calculated on the basis of butterfat converted into milk and will also receive the lump sum payment based on and adjusted to cream converted into milk. Both these payments will come directly from the Government.

For cream shippers payments from the plant will be on the basis of 64 cent butter.

IMPROVEMENT

Our last newsletter pointed out the need of moisture, it did come during the week but the thermometer still continued in its frigid state. Frost last Thursday morning and 40 degree temperatures have been common.

It now appears that we will enter the month of June with practically no leaves on the trees. Without qualifying as a real pessimist may we point out that the leaves which haven't yet appeared will start falling in less than four months time. These two facts seem to suggest that there is a great deal to be said for the steady beauty of the coniferous tree which while it doesn't produce riotous beauty at any time does not for eight months of the year resemble the starved spinnaker.

RESPONSIBILITY

The importance of agriculture in this province suggests that agriculturally which demands both it and the people who are involved should generally be held in high regard. While we know that many people will disagree with this statement we are nevertheless forced to the conclusion that not only do many rural people have a poor opinion of farming but also that the town people see very little about it to admire or respect.

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Fulton Admits Formula Changes May Be Needed

QUEBEC (CP) — Davis Fulton, whose work helped bring the Fulton-Favreau formula for constitutional amendments into being, said here changes in the plan may be necessary.

He said there have been "lively controversies" about the formula not only in Quebec but across the country.

"The formula can be applied only if it is the fruit of unanimity," he said.

Mr. Fulton, who was justice minister in the Diefenbaker government, made his remarks in a meeting of the Young Progressive Conservatives of Quebec City. He recently announced his resignation as British Columbia Conservative leader to return to federal politics.

The formula was agreed on by present Justice Minister Favreau and representatives of the provinces last fall. The Quebec legislature is the only provincial legislature yet to approve it.

It provides for amendments of the Canadian constitution without reference of the matter to the British Parliament. It also calls for unanimous provincial agreement to certain amendments.

"I recognize full well that changes will perhaps be necessary (in the formula)," said Mr. Fulton.

"This is all the more true in that the formula now is already four years old."

Three Companies Plan To Drill Arctic Oil Well

CALGARY (CP) — Three oil companies say they will co-operate in drilling a test well this summer on an island off the Arctic Ocean coast of the Northwest Territories.

British American Oil Co. Ltd., and Shell Canada Ltd. say the well will be the first drilled in the Mackenzie River delta area.

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