

Farm Efficiency Lacking In Russia

By NEIL A. MATHESON

I talked a few days ago with Keith Kennedy, Charlottetown who has something more than 10,000 baby chicks brooding now for a production flock he expects will be approximately 90 percent laying production which means 9,000 eggs or more a day. Mr. Kennedy has produced 90 percent with the last flock, he achieved 90 percent with his previous flock and looks for a 90-percent production from this flock when it is ready to lay, probably about April. There may be the occasional day when "I'll probably be getting 10,000 eggs", he said. He has something between 10,000 and 11,000 birds.

Keith last year reduced his labor cost for handling eggs by 70 percent when he brought in a new cleaning and candling equipment.

The equipment -- it's very expensive -- will handle 15 to 16 cases an hour. There are 30 dozen to a case so he uses the equipment only for a couple of hours each day. Imagine the labor that would be involved in handling 9,000 to 10,000 eggs each day by hand.

The 10,000 laying hens are handled by "two chaps besides myself, with the new equipment and there are times when there isn't enough work to keep the two men completely busy", Mr. Kennedy told me.

That reminds me of an observation he made of Russian efficiency, or the lack of it, which he saw during his recent trip to Moscow and the world poultry congress, which I'll be referring to for the rest of this column.

400,000 TURKEYS

They saw one collective farm where there were 400,000 turkeys being raised. There were 300 persons looking after the turkeys. Yet in Sussex Canada Packers plant produces 150,000 turkeys a year, and the job is handled by four people. That gives you an idea of the efficiency comparison.

It works out to the fact that a little more than 12 workers would handle the 400,000 turkey jobs if you could split people into fractions.

Before I get further into the serious business of agricultural comparisons, I think I'll tell you of a humorous incident -- at least it's funny to us though, it wasn't to Keith -- that occurred while travelling in Russia.

The Canadian girl -- it consisted of 22 men and 11 women -- were making an overnight train trip from Moscow to Kiev. The Russians insist that every bit of available travelling space be filled, and that leads me to my story.

Each sleeping compartment in the Russian train accommodates four people. The first eight Canadian women picked fitted nicely into the first two compartments. That meant, though, that there were only three women left. But the Russian conductor insisted the four-person compartment be filled.

"I'll never know why they selected me as the man who had to fit into that compartment with three women," says Keith, but that's exactly what happened. And that's only one of the many unusual incidents he'll always remember about his 1966 trip to Russia.

PRIVATE PLOTS
People working on collective farms are given a private plot it would average perhaps 0.25 acre -- and on this they grow what they want and keep the produce, or dispose of it as they wish -- they can sell it. This is a sort of sugar coating of private enterprise to put on the pill of the collective Communism inspired way of farming.

In the Soviet Union there is no form of private enterprise allowed at all, except for this business of the small plots.

This failure of collective farming reminds me of something I learned as a very young lad when people worked on the highways. Because they were working for the government, people felt they should not work hard. Even the farmer who was terrific to work at home slowed down in his road work. Indeed a fellow who didn't slow down was frowned upon severely by his neighbours.

The same sort of thing works on the collective farms, Keith suggests. The chap who might be inclined to do a really good day's work, sees his neighbour getting along just as good by taking it easy. And the pattern spreads.

There's something about the relationship of a person to the land that doesn't bring out the best in him, when you don't own the land, and do not own the produce that your work helps to create.

The same is true of the factory worker here. When he comes home in the evening he puts his feet up on a footstool and watches TV. But the chap who is working for himself is constantly trying to figure out how he is going to double his output, and increase his profit.

The plots worked by the workers themselves, for their own use, represent four percent in actual figures of the total cultivated land in the Soviet Union, and it accounts roughly for 50 percent of the total production, Keith suggests.

The statement seemed so improbable, I questioned Mr. Kennedy about it further. It's generally correct, he explained. They produce one-half the production of

cattle, 25 percent of the production of hogs, 65 percent the production of potatoes. Naturally they don't grow grain on this one-acre plot business. But they grow poultry -- this is where the main bulk of the poultry comes from, Keith added.

On a broad, overall basis about 50 per cent of the production comes from those private plots, he reported.

FREE MARKETS

They can sell this on the free-market. These markets are the most interesting I have ever seen. The producers argue and barter with the buyers at a great rate. The markets are very much like what we had in the old market building and on market square, he added.

In the State stores, the price is set. In the free market the price is controlled somewhat by the supply and demand.

One of the more humorous incidents Keith saw involved a city woman who went in to buy a chicken. The chap had four, three of them alive and the other dead. The argument concerned whether the dead chicken had died, or whether it had been killed. Of course the seller insisted he had killed the chicken.

Finally the lady purchased one of the live ones. Then she stopped the live chicken into her shopping bag, or top of the other purchases she had made previously.

Keith saw the people in the fields where they were growing tomatoes "and the weeds were over their heads. You couldn't see the tomatoes for the weeds," he observed.

There was really good growing land, with a lush green growth. But there were more weeds than tomato plants in it. This was seen in the way to the collective farm and the collective farm was obviously a show place.

"But they couldn't show us any chickens. Nearly all of us on the tour were in the chicken business, but they couldn't show us any chickens farm," he observed reproachfully.

IRRIGATION

An irrigation unit seen on the way was interesting. Keith described it as "a great, ponderous cement over-head runway for a big crane, with big arms going out on both sides and it just went the width of the field. The field was a fair length but the irrigation effort only covered a little strip through the centre, with the spray."

About 90 percent of the field was not irrigated at all, the huge equipment simply went up and down this cement track. Mr. Kennedy observed in critical fashion. It was a gigantic affair. It was experimental work, the visitors were told, but it was so expensive to operate, it was incredible. This is particularly true compared to the efficiently operated irrigation systems operated here, he contrasted.

Keith found it interesting that about 40 percent of the people in the total labor force are engaged in agriculture. Here and in the United States we have about seven percent of the labor force in agriculture. Mr. Kennedy contrasted. They have 40 people out of 100 producing food, and still they can't do it. We have seven and we produce enough for ourselves, and a considerable quantity for export too, some of it to Russia, he observed.

Keith was unable to compare agricultural crop production in general, for he had not seen enough of the crops. But he figured that grain was perhaps one of their best crops, and the production would be probably close to our own. They have modern equipment and machinery to handle this.

They have lots of tractors, for example, but they seem to fall down in that they are not set up to service these machines and keep them operating properly.

One sight that struck Mr. Kennedy as unusual was that of the farmers hauling their own produce, from their one-acre plots, in huge hand-carried baskets. And they were hauling it on the beautifully glittering subways they boast of in Moscow, for example.

There were a number of things Keith liked about Russia. He was most enthusiastic about the kindness, the hospitality and the almost indescribable coziness of the Russian people. He was impressed, too, with the fine behaviour and good manners of the Russian young people.

I'll be telling you more about his trip in my "Across the Island" column on Thursday.

He was most enthusiastic about the kindness, the hospitality and the almost indescribable coziness of the Russian people. He was impressed, too, with the fine behaviour and good manners of the Russian young people.

I'll be telling you more about his trip in my "Across the Island" column on Thursday.



RECEIVES GIFT ON RETIREMENT

Flight Sergeant C.B. (Dex) Dexter, RIGHT, age 50 of Halifax is shown receiving a gift from WO2 Bill Flavin, President of NCO's Mess, CFB Summerside on the occasion of his retirement from the RCAF. Dex has completed 27 years of service and is married to the former Madeleine Laquerre, Trois Riviere, Que.

Announcement Next Week Concerning Gulf Garden Foods

Within a week a proposal concerning the operation of Gulf Garden Foods Ltd. is expected. Premier Alex Campbell this morning said he and Earl Hickey, provincial treasurer, met Saturday morning in Summerside with J.B. Harris, vice-president of Grace Shipping Lines of New York, and Jens Moe, chairman of the boards of Bathurst Marine Limited and Gulf Garden Foods.

"As a result of this meeting, the government expects a proposal concerning the Georgetown plant to be forthcoming in a few weeks," said the premier.

The closure of Gulf Garden Foods Limited was announced Friday, Dec. 2, by plant president, Cyril Davis.

NEEDS INVESTMENT

At that time, Premier Campbell in a statement to the press said: "one thing is clear, under present operating methods and financing, this company is not a viable industry. The future success of Gulf Garden Foods Limited will not only require substantial investment, but also a complete reassessment of the function and operation of ships and plant."

OUT OF WORK

In the vicinity of 300 persons are out of work as a result of the closure of Gulf Garden Foods Limited. This includes wage-earners at the plant and the crews of the dragger fleet.

It was learned from reliable sources yesterday that the government has asked for the names and address of Gulf Garden Foods Limited employees with amounts of back pay owing them.

The Georgetown plant "has long been experiencing a critical shortage of working capital and our negotiations have been directed towards assisting the company in its efforts to find a solution to their problem," the premier has said.

"Examination of the company's books by the auditors disclosed the need for immediate and substantial operating capital if the company is to continue in production."

PUBLIC FUNDS

"This company is already heavily financed with public funds and the government cannot conscientiously approve any further commitment of public funds which would only serve the immediate financial needs

of the company but not result in a permanent solution of them."

"The government views with alarm the findings of the external auditors that funds have been diverted to the Georgetown companies to affiliated companies, some of which are outside the province."

MAY BE SOON

Asked about the prospects for a re-opening of Gulf Garden Limited in the near future and how soon this would take place, the premier has stated: "it could open tomorrow if the government could have the financial co-operation of other parties involved."

"We are looking for definite proposals and a financial commitment as it is now clear that the Georgetown operation cannot continue to operate on future possibilities and expectations," Premier Campbell was quoted as saying two days following the closure of Gulf Garden Foods Limited.

SNOW REMOVAL

A number of the snow-removal units are equipped with two-way radios which will enable them to keep in touch with the government garages on the conditions of roads during snow storms.

The department of highways, which will have a large number of its machines confined to Kings County areas, released the following numbers of snow-removal vehicles: truck plows, 22; motor graders, 30; leonormou plows, 12; seven blowers; four loaders and about eight tractors.

Approximately 100-150 persons are employed during winter to operate the machinery.

Johnson's River Man Fined \$100

A Johnsons River man, Lawrence Patrick Koughan, was fined \$100 and costs or 15 days on an impaired driving charge by Magistrate James B. Johnston, QC, in Queens County Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Magistrate Johnston, also dealt with seven other cases.

Fines of \$30 and cost or 30 days were awarded to 2 men for unlawful possession of liquor and Glynis Ellsworth Paynter, now of Boston, was fined a total

Island News Page

2 The Guardian, Charlottetown, Tues. Dec. 13, 1966.

Farm Training Centre Discussed At Meeting

ALBERTON -- The story of a Farm Training Centre in Ladner, B.C. for the mentally retarded formed the program, at the December meeting of Alberton branch of the Association for Retarded Children.

Information concerning an edition of the Bible prepared by the retarded in the Netherlands was also of interest to the meeting. This edition, produced in short, simple sentences, with an abundance of illustrations in color, was planned by a special committee composed of Protestant and Roman Catholic experts in the education of retarded children and representatives of the Netherlands Bible Society. Members of Alberton branch expressed the hope that such an edition might be available in English in the not too distant future.

New School Opens Tuesday

St. Peter's Consolidated Elementary School will open officially on Tuesday, December 13, with the laying of the cornerstone by Premier Alex Campbell.

The opening ceremony will commence at 8 p.m. with the invocation by Rev. D. R. MacLennan followed by remarks from the chairman, D. G. Anderson.

Guest speaker at the opening will be Dr. Frank MacKinnon principal of Prince of Wales College. Other speakers will be Premier Campbell, Hon. Gordon Bennett, and Keith Pickard, architect.

Mr. Bennett, minister of education, will perform the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the main

THE PRESIDENT

The president, Mrs. A.C. Green, reported briefly on a recent conference in Charlottetown which had for its theme, "Community Action for the Mentally Retarded." Mrs. James Hodgson was the other Alberton representative at this conference.

An invitation to attend the Christmas concert to be presented by pupils of the Day Training class in O'Leary was received and a number of members plan to attend. Mrs. Larter and Mrs. Green volunteered to buy Christmas gifts for the Alberton children who will be present at the concert.

MAGAZINE

It was decided to subscribe to the magazine, "Mental Retardation" for parents of retarded children in the area.

City Man Has Case Remanded

Leonard Lemuel MacDonald, Charlottetown, was fined \$30 and costs or 30 days on a disorderly conduct charge when he appeared before Magistrate A.J. Haslam, QC, in city police court yesterday.

Lloyd Adrian MacDonald, city, charged with impaired driving, was remanded until Dec. 20th.

Numerous cases of persons charged with being drunk and incapable, and two cases under the Liquor Control Act were also dealt with by the magistrate.

Wilbur Desmond Doyle, city, was fined \$10 and costs or five days when charged with parking on a sidewalk.

of \$30 and costs for traffic violations. Three other cases were adjourned.

door of the new school. Following this, the gathering will be shown through the building by the school principal, Francis White.

Opening ceremonies will close with benediction given by Rev. Bennett MacDonald.

St. Peter's Consolidated School comprises the following school districts: St. Peter's North, St. Peter's South, Fortune Road, Cable Head East, Southampton, Goose River and Farmington.

Members on the board of trustees are Mr. Anderson, chairman; William MacMillan, Kenneth MacKinnon, Frank Wilson, Hillary MacDonald, James MacAulay, secretary.

we are pleased to have been

- PLUMBING
- HEATING

and

- VENTILATING CONTRACTORS

for St. Peter's Consolidated School

BEVAN BROS. LTD.

60 Queen Street Dial 4-4688

You are cordially invited to attend the official opening ceremonies of the ultra modern

SAINT PETERS CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

Tuesday, Dec. 13th. at 8 P.M.

The cornerstone will be laid by Premier Alex B. Campbell. The school will be officially opened by Hon. Gordon Bennett, Minister of Education.

Guest Speaker
Dr. Frank MacKinnon,
Principal of Prince of Wales College

Another Step Forward In The Education Program Of Prince Edward Island

The congratulations and best wishes of our department are extended to the Trustees, rate-payers, teachers and students of the St. Peter's Elementary Consolidated area on the occasion of the official opening of this fine new school.



Hon. Gordon Bennett
Minister

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

We are pleased to have been associated with the construction of this modern new school.

WALDRON DINGWELL
Souris P. E. I.

We are pleased to have been Painting Contractors for the new St. Peter's School

Eastern Painters Ltd.
P. O. Box 1301 Charlottetown

FINE CONSTRUCTION LASTING PERFORMANCE

St. Peter's Consolidated School
Another Fine Building Built
By ---

Williams, Murphy & MacLeod LTD.

SUMMERSIDE CHARLOTTETOWN