

Soil Conservation And Related Problems

Excerpts from a Report by the Prince Edward Island Branch of the Agricultural Institute of Canada.

Soil erosion, as it is commonly considered today, refers to the accelerated removal of soil from its place "in situ." It is the result of misuse and mismanagement of land, involving the destruction of the protective cover provided by nature, the depletion of the soil organic content and the lowering of soil fertility.

Over most of Prince Edward Island the soils are high in fine to very fine sand and silt, and low in humus and clay content. This texture renders them particularly susceptible to erosion by both water and wind. The fine particles of mineral soil and humus are necessary for the maintenance of soil fertility and the retention of soil moisture. The removal of this mineral and organic material, by surface run-off or otherwise, lowers fertility and increases the danger of more serious erosion.

Field observations, made during the recent reconnaissance survey, have shown that the thickness of surface soil, in the virgin state, is around eight inches. On much of the cultivated land, however, the average thickness of surface soil is around five inches, and very often four inches. This would indicate that, during the years of cultivation, a considerable amount of the surface had been removed.

Other equally obvious evidence of the erosion that has occurred in the past, and is still taking place, was provided by the denuded and impoverished hillsides, and the severe gullying in some localities. The large deposits of fine fertile soil seen at the foot of slopes and on flat areas along rivers and streams, and the salt marshes about estuaries were formed largely by fine soil washed down from the surface of higher land. The deposits of silt in rivers and streams and in harbours where dredging is required to keep the ship channel open are further evi-

dence of continuous soil erosion. Though gullying is the spectacular form of erosion, the most serious damage has been caused by the slow cumulative action of sheet erosion. This type is usually not noticeable until an advanced stage has been reached and crop production has decreased materially. Few realize the loss it can cause over a period of years; and, as a result, very little effort is made to prevent it.

Present Distribution

The Dominion Census returns for 1951 show that in Prince Edward Island there were 10,137 occupied farms, comprising 1,095,304 acres or 78.4 per cent of the total area. Farms on which there was no improved land or which had been abandoned were not included.

The use of the land comprising these 10,137 farms is shown to be as follows:

Land under crops	426,210 acres
Pasture	197,937 acres
Summer fallow	1,806 acres
Other improved land	19,842 acres
Total improved land	645,795 acres
Wood land	346,191 acres
Other unimproved land	103,318 acres
Total unimproved land	449,509 acres
Total improved and unimproved land	1,095,304 acres
Improved land in per cent of total	46.2 per cent

The livestock population for 1901 and 1951, is given as follows:

	1901	1951
Horses	33,731	21,349
Cattle	112,778	97,924
Sheep	125,546	34,386
Swine	48,007	72,499
Poultry	581,790	1,009,347

LITTLE POND C. W. L.

The members of Little Pond C. W. L. sub-division met at the home of Mrs. Charles S. MacDonald on March 21 for their monthly meeting. Mrs. John Blackett presided. Meeting opened by prayer. The treasurer, Mrs. Gerard MacDonald, read the financial statement. A list of bills to be paid was made out and the following were moved to be paid: T. B. \$2; C. G. scholarship \$12.50; Sr. St. Martha \$5; Missionaries of Mary \$5; National Scholarship \$1; budget fund \$1; National per capita \$3.10; Diocesan per capita \$4.65; Red Cross \$2. It was agreed that covers for

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MISS AUDREY DERLOIS will be the speaker at the Easter Thank Offering Service of the Baptist Women's Missionary Society to be held in the Church Hall April 14th. A large attendance is expected.

YOU'LL WANT MORE when you hear Luta and Lois MacLeod, Irish-town, ages 6 and 7, vocal duet; Doris Hogan, Alberton, age 13, vocal solo; Viola Shepherd, Cardigan, age 16 singing with guitar. P. E. I. All Star Cavalcade, P. W. C. Auditorium, April 22nd, 8 p.m.

Sanctuary chairs, rods for carpet and a few other articles be purchased as soon as possible. A letter from Mrs. Praught re-lay retreats was read and discussed. The sick committee reported having given one treat and Mrs. Chas. S. MacDonald and Mrs. Jocie McKenzie were re-appointed for next month.

Mrs. Joie MacKenzie, Mrs. Edward R. MacDonald and Mrs. Ronald MacDonald were appointed as the nomination committee to name the officers for the annual meeting which will be held at the home of Mrs. Chas. J. MacDonald this month.

Meeting closed with prayer. A dainty lunch was served and a social evening followed.

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LADY FANE SCHOOL (March Report)

Grade X-1. George Cotton.

Grade IX-1. Gertrude Gamble; 2. Mary Robblee.

Grade VIII-1. Jean Robblee; 2. Joyce Waddell.

Grade VII-1. Maureen Craig; 2. Frankie Murphy.

Grade VI-1. Evelyn Gamble; 2. Wyman Cairns; 3. Ruth Robblee, Vernon Walsh.

Grade III — Elizabeth Cairns, James Craig.

Grade II-1. Margaret Francis; 2. Miriam Gamble; 3. Mildred Francis.

Grade I (Sr.)-1. Sylvia Wilson; 2. Fraser Brown; 3. Harry Craig and John James Waddell.

Grade I (Jr.)-1. Jerry Craig; 2. Howard Francis.

Teacher—Phyllis Cairns.

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