

Manitoulin Island and some of its Prospects

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A few days recently were spent by the writer driving over Western Manitoulin in company with Mr. Metcalf, who is representing the Ontario Department of Agriculture on the island this summer. The chief object of the visit was to spy out the land as a source of seed supply, in the small seeds particularly, and incidentally to

secure some prospective members for the C. S. G. Association. We found that considerable red clover and timothy seed had been grown there, and some of it had been shipped out with much satisfaction to both grower and buyer.

The one small seed that the island is best adapted to produce has been largely neglected, viz., *alsike*. As in most parts of New Ontario, on the friable clay soils, *alsike* is almost a weed. Unlike most weeds, it is a good kind to have. The high price of grass and clover seed during the last two or three years has caused the island farmers, as elsewhere, to consider seed production where these plants do so well as they do on the north shore.

BETTER THAN IN OLD ONTARIO

While the prospects are not so bright for a good crop of clover seed this year as last, yet there was a larger proportion of good clover fields found on Manitoulin than prevailed in the older parts of the province, and a good deal of it will be saved for seed if the second growth promises well. As in Eastern Ontario, most of the farmers delay the cutting of their clover too long, not only to secure a good second crop, but for the best saved fodder as well. They have already a few hatters on the island, and some have even tried the thrashing machine with boxed-in cylinder for holling.

WEEDS ON THE ISLAND

They have weeds in some parts of the island, both in variety and quantity. In many places there are only a few as yet that interfere with seed production. Ox-eye daisy is quite plentiful in many meadows. This, however, would matter little in red clover seed production. The daisy would interfere in the growing of timothy and *alsike* seed. There is quite a quantity of new land yet to be cleared in the friable clay districts which, if kept clean, would grow first-class *alsike* and timothy seed.

Neither perennial sow thistle or quack grass have very much of a hold on the island farms. Bladder Campion is spreading rapidly, as in Old Ontario, and is one of the weeds to be reckoned with from now on. It is a menace to seed production of any kind. More attention should be paid to it by farmers generally. When a few Campion plants appear it is easy to deal with the pest by digging it into the ground a little, and putting a handful of salt on the root. Near an Indian village, quite a large number of the North-West's worst weeds were observed growing quite luxuriantly.

The farm labor problem is a live one on the island, as elsewhere. Fortunately, farmers there are favorably located for keeping sheep, and

quite a number are kept by the farmers, so that the roadsides are very well looked after, and prevented from becoming a hot-bed for weed seed distribution.

Many Farm and Dairy readers may not be aware that more than half of the land area of the island is non-tillable. Much of it is in the nature of a lime stone outcrop. These outcrops occur here and there over the area, thus breaking it



The "Queen of Crops" Grows Well on Manitoulin Island

In an adjoining article Mr. T. G. Raynor, of the Seed Division, Ottawa, tells of some things of interest that he noted on a recent visit to Manitoulin Island. Mr. Raynor may be here seen, scythe in hand, in an alfalfa field in that district.

up into small settlements always connected by really good roads. This rough land has pockets in it where the soil is quite deep and productive, and which would afford good pastureage for thousands of cattle and sheep during the summer time if only they could be cared for during the winter.

Many of the farmers are just recovering from what is known as grasshopper year, which occurred three years ago. Then they had to sacrifice much of their stock by selling them very cheaply to buyers who took advantage of their calamity to make gain for themselves.

Cattle and sheep are increasing rapidly in numbers now, and the quality is very good. Many more sheep could be kept with great profit to their owners, and will be kept more largely with the stimulus the Dominion Agricultural Department is now giving to this industry.

FRUIT PROSPECTS

Manitoulin has not proved as yet to be a successful orchard country. One farmer had spent over \$300 in fruit trees to realize that in another year there may not be one tree left to tell the tale. The hard winter just past, and the increasing leaf and twig blight which seems even to be attacking the hardy crab trees, are largely responsible for the present condition.

As if to add insult to injury, a man who claimed to be a practical trimmer and grafter succeeded better in earning the latter title as a faker than by making a success of his work. Trees were mutilated in trimming, and probably not a graft is alive, and even dead trees were trimmed and a charge made. Should this man ever turn up on the island again many a farmer stands ready to trim him to a finish. He made his \$10 a day and even more. The day for humbugging is not yet past.

FARM BUILDINGS

Like most of the farmers in some parts of Old Ontario, the island farmers have paid much more attention to the barn and outbuildings than to the dwelling-house, which in most cases is rather

unpretentious; not even well painted. The home is not even ornamented by the preserving of the original trees or the planting of shade or ornamental ones. The barns are large, well built, and seem to be adequate for the farmer's needs of housing, feeding and caring for his stock.

One farmer, a Mr. Hodgins, of Mindemoya, who takes not a few prizes for the exhibits he makes at the National Exhibition, seems to be an exception to the general rule. Some years ago he got a vision of a walnut and butternut grove on his farm, which has become a reality since 1903, and which is now affording him and his friends great delight in cracking nuts during the long winter evenings. It makes a fine thrifty looking grove, and one of his neighbors who did his best to discourage him is now sorry that he hadn't similar faith in the island's possibilities and planted one himself.

AS A SUMMER RESORT

Every year the island is becoming better known as a place to take a holiday along some of its numerous fresh water lakes, teeming with fish, and where the nights are cool even when the days are hot. Now that Manitoulin will soon be reached by rail to Little Current, the island is bound to be heard from. The rich, friable, clay soils will grow the hay, grain and small seeds. Her lighter soils will grow the corn to fill the silos to be. At present there is only one silo, partly built, on the island. There are no cheese or butter factories in operation. Time will tell a different story.

Cheap Money for Farmers

W. Graham, Grey Co., Ont.

Why is it that we farmers have to pay six per cent, in some cases eight or 10 per cent for money, when the railway companies can put out its bonds and get all the money they need at four and one half per cent? The need for cheaper capital for the carrying on of our farm operations is making this question of more and more importance to us farmers. Of such importance has the question of cheap money become to the south of the line, that the United States Government has recently appointed a commission to visit Europe and investigate the method adopted by farmers there for getting cheap money on the cooperative plan.

I understand that in Europe farmers can get money just as cheaply as can railway companies. And why shouldn't they? Farms if not actually increasing in value seldom decrease in value and offer one of the steadiest and surest kinds of investment. In railway investment there is all kinds of risk. The value of the companies bonds may go or down at the will of powerful competitors, through drastic legislation and through losses due to wrecks, strikes and so forth. Yet they get money cheaper than we do.

As I understand it, these big concerns get money cheaper than farmers because they get it to the big money market where the money is loaned in one hundred thousand dollar blocks. It seems that the farmers of some countries of Europe by organizing themselves in credit associations are offering their security in the form of bonds. Thus they get into this big money market and get money at a lower rate of interest than do we farmers here in Canada, who must look up some small lender who is putting his money out in small lots at high interest. When the report of that United States commission on rural credit comes out it would be well for Farm and Dairy and other agricultural papers to make the results of the enquiry well known, in order that we may get some idea of how to go after cheap money. Even if we must sell bonds we have to get capital cheaply if we would compete with those in other lines of business.