

use of the diggers, but practically an employment requiring so much care, time and expense of travelling is beyond the reach of the present staff.

Any comparison between the relative values of mussel mud and oysters must be in a manner fanciful, for the reason that the market price of a load of manure bears but a slender proportion to its results when applied by the hand of skilful labor. Mud is sold, lifted on the ice, at eight cents per load, and, at a low estimate, there must be equal to one thousand farmers who use two hundred loads each per annum. Cash value of 200,000 loads of mud at 8 cents, \$16,000—an amount not directly brought into the island. Quantity of oysters legitimately taken the past year, say 30,000 barrels, of which 20,000 barrels were exported at one dollar per barrel, cost price \$20,000, which money is brought into the island; to which I must reluctantly add an estimate of 500 barrels illegally taken in the close season for home consumption. Statistics accompanying the next census returns will give the exact number of mudding machines, at which, at present, I only guess.

The breeding of oysters artificially is now among the established industries of the age. Prince and Queen's Counties, as well as several localities in King's, are especially well adapted to oyster culture. This Province, too, has the advantage of having its name known as an oyster producing country. The famous Bedeque oysters were long a *bonne bouche* loved of epicures. Bedeque is now oysterless. Almost all that is required to partially restore the perishing fishery is a system of inexpensive grants or leases, and protection against disturbance of the beds. The conditions, however, are indispensable, for no scheme of destruction could be devised more certain to obliterate oysters from the list of island products than the digging of innumerable mud holes into which the spawn is washed, and being silted over, perishes. Oyster culturists would, no doubt, attempt to remedy this by the use of intercepting fences of faggots, but such, at best, is a partial expedient.

As this report will likely be read by persons who may be disposed to try oyster culture on a larger or smaller scale, I give a brief account of the oyster breeding establishment at the Narrows, Lot 12, Prince County, the only one in the Province, and the property of the Hon. J. C. Pope. The locality is on the mainland of Prince County, and extends from the shore to mid-channel of the narrows, which are here one-quarter to one-half mile in width between the mainland and Lennox Island, the property and home of the remnant of Micmac Indians. The site was leased prior to Confederation, under the local Act for the encouragement of oyster culture. The system pursued is to nurse the natural beds and to build new ones where the water and bottom of hard sand and hard mud are suitable. Average rise and fall of tide about two to three feet. Fifteen acres of beds are already planted and a new one of four acres is being laid down. During the fishing season thirty men with a like number of small boats are employed. Spawn was formerly shipped to England but is understood not to have paid. An attempt was made to rake the beds by means of a dredge similar to those in use on the British and French coasts, but, from local causes, it was not found to answer, and the oysters are now fished up altogether with "tongs."

One man in a day can fish one, two or three barrels according to circumstances. The boats when laden discharge their cargoes at a receiving house where the oysters are carefully hand-picked and separated into two marketable qualities, number ones and number twos, the number ones being exceptionally large and fine. The remainder, consisting of dead shells and small live oysters, are laid separately on the new beds in a "culch" or stratum of about six inches in depth on which the young brood develop rapidly, and in four years from the spawn become of full marketable dimensions. The first quality of number ones are shipped chiefly to Montreal, whence they find their way to the Capital. Number twos are sold elsewhere. None are canned. It is unnecessary to put on record here the quantity annually shipped. The French method of cultivating on *plats* is not practised at this establishment, and might be rather cumbrous where other means answer the purpose but, there is no doubt it would be successful if tried. A piece of telegraph wire was recently fished up completely encrusted with good oysters of uniform size, which indicates that the