

whether his hand guides the pen or plough, for this province is purely agricultural. The farmer, however, is directly affected, and feels already uneasy in his situation. The influences under which he is being cornered and borne down are widening daily, and must extend ultimately to the professions and trades. In the opinion of many, the cloud that has been gathering is darkening. A few evidences may be cited: a universal desire in proprietors to dispose of farm property, and in farmers' sons to forsake farming are among the strongest evidences of increasing agricultural depression. It would require but little observation to convince one, that the former pervades the minds of our property holders; and, touching but delicately the latter, it is enough to say that there is great cause for regret. But remaining upon our farms are the few who are "anchored," and these are the poor fellows who must breast the storm.

Intricate questions coming every day from our farmers reveal the degree to which changing circumstances are presenting new difficulties. Decreasing fertility of soil, and increasing competition, accompanied by lowering prices in farm produce, and difficulties in reaching markets, are not insignificant foes. Nature favors the island with large crops of roots even 1200 bushels of turnips per acre—and potatoes and oats are grown extensively.

These the farmers have grown abundantly for many years, and, while navigation is open, have no difficulty in marketing. But a prime steer, or a summer's make cheese is a rarer article, and has to wait the slow demand of a sluggish local market. The first of these conditions only encourages the further exhaustion of the soil at the farmer's expense, and the second discourages the inception of higher and more profitable systems of agriculture. That the farmers have a keen perception of the disadvantages under which they labor, and that they still continue along this disheartening course, expresses their inability to get out of the beaten rut or track.

Now, with these evidences there are other grave features, notably this:—the island having no other natural industries giving much employment, and there being but few openings along professional and commercial lines, the young men leaving the farms cannot find other employment. The alternative is to leave the island.

That the farmers of the island are kind hearted, intelligent and plodding is admitted

by all who know them. But it is to be regretted that they are not more progressive.

The chief products grown are potatoes, over 6,000,000 bushels annually, and oats amounting to over 3,000,000 bushels. The greater part of these products are exported; but, after paying freights, commissions and duties, they do not return much money to the farmer. Last season potatoes did not net more than 15 to 20 cents a bushels. Oats, lately, have commanded fair prices; but the yield per acre of this crop is decreasing. In certain departments of live stock there has been marked progress, particularly in standard-bred, and, to some extent, in Percheron and Clydesdale horses. It is an exception, however, to find either a saddle or a coach horse on the island. But let no man boast that his spirited driver can lead along her majesty's highway, for the most sleepy looking, unshapely and ungaitly weed may rouse up and move his stumps with surprising activity. Yes, a pride is taken in speeding horses; and nowhere probably, unless in Cape Breton is there faster and wilder driving.

In the improvement of cattle, sheep, and pigs, there has not been as much interest taken as with horses. There has been a lack of systematic selection and improvement, and as a consequence, the great bulk of the cattle and sheep of the island are unimproved. But of late the interest in the improvement of all classes of live stock is awakening. The establishment of a Provincial Exhibition, that is held annually in Charlottetown will advance this interest, and the local government, in all probability, will give substantial aid to farmers, through regular importations, careful breeding, and distribution of the best breeds of cattle sheep and pigs. A dairy experiment station is to be located here in a few weeks, the result of which must certainly be to encourage the production of a better class of cheese and butter. But as yet there has been very little factory cheese and butter made on the island. Two or three cheese factories have been working, more or less irregularly, for several years. The tendency is, however, to discontinue them.

No creameries have yet been established here. The system of agriculture practised at the present time, is much as it was twenty-five, thirty, fifty or more years ago. But, notwithstanding this apparent standstill, there must be a brighter future for P. E. Island farmers. We have a warm soil, easily tilled, and capable