

THE GROWTH OF P.E. ISLAND EDUCATIONALLY.

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FOR two long centuries after its discovery, from 1479 to 1700, Prince Edward Island lay untenanted except by the aboriginal Indians and a stray European who may have acquired their language, or cultivated their friendship. It is, however, from the year 1715, or two years after the Treaty of Utrecht, that the Island may be regarded as a settled country. The first to settle in the colony were Acadians, and these subsisted by fishing and the cultivation of small patches of ground. Progress was slow, for in 1728 there were only sixty families on the Island; and in 1745, or thirty years after the settlement began, they did not exceed 150 families, or about 800 souls. A French officer who visited the Island in 1752 reckoned the whole population to be 1,354. The expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1355 tended greatly to increase the population of the Island, as many of the fugitives settled here. On the surrender of Prince Edward Island to the British three years later the number of inhabitants was over 6,000. Shortly after this a panic seemed to have seized the inhabitants; they dreaded a forcible expulsion like their brethren in Acadia; cultivation was abandoned, and many of the people went to the mainland as a place of greater safety. When William Patterson arrived in 1770 as the first Governor of Prince Edward Island as a separate province there were not more than 150 families. At the beginning of the present century the population was about 5,000. In Charlottetown there were only fifty families, or between 250 and 300 persons. It will be remarked that up to 1800, A.D., the population of the Island was very unsteady, and to a great degree was migratory. Consequently very little progress was made, and education received very little attention. In August, 1767, the Island was divided into townships or lots and granted to individuals having claims upon the British Government. Each township was to furnish a glebe lot of 100 acres for a clergyman and a lot of thirty acres for a schoolmaster. No schoolmaster, coming from England, was permitted to teach without a license from the Bishop of London; and it was assumed in his instructions that all Christians, save those connected with the Church of England, were heterodox. Some denominations were, indeed, tolerated, but, in conformity to the bigoted British policy of the times, Roman Catholics were not permitted to settle on the Island. In 1834 the Legislature petitioned the King to allow that body to appropriate to the support of education the clergy reserves and the school lands, as it was impossible to dispose of them according to the original intention. In the following year an Act was passed by the Legislature authorizing the sale of the lands and appropriating the monies arising from the sales for the purpose of promoting general education within the Island. In 1821 education began to receive some of the attention it deserved, and in that year an institution called the National School was opened in Charlottetown. In 1829 the Legislature passed a Bill for the establishment of a classical academy in Charlottetown, to be designated the "Central Academy," vesting the management in a patron and nine trustees. Two teachers were to be employed, each to receive a salary of £150 a year, and no religious test was to be permitted. In January, 1836, the Academy was