

Interesting Facts and Figures from Prince Edward Island.

BY WALTER SIMPSON.

The Western Agricultural Convention of P. E. I. held its winter session in Cavendish, on the 12th of January. This convention, as originally organized, was composed of delegates from farmers' clubs, of which there were formerly quite a few in the western part of the Island. But from one reason or another, farmers' clubs are short lived, so the convention, at its last annual meeting, in order to secure its continued existence and increase its usefulness, amended its constitution to make it provide that any farmer on the payment of 25c., after being duly elected, might become a member.

This convention is doing a good work in the interest of agriculture. Its meetings are held quarterly, and are attended by our most enterprising and intelligent farmers, who discuss all questions relating to the farm in a free and easy way. The discussion is generally opened by the reading of a paper by some member who has been requested beforehand to prepare an essay on a particular subject. At the last meeting we had two such papers, one on apple growing, the other on the cultivation of wheat, both very interesting subjects.

Fruit growing has been greatly neglected on the Island heretofore, but our people are beginning to wake up to the fact that there will soon have to be a change in our system of farming on account of the very small price that we now get for our grain, and many are of the opinion that fruit growing must constitute an important part of the husbandry of the future. The show of apples at our exhibition last fall convinced everybody that saw it that this province can produce as good apples as can be grown in the world. Our failing to grow apples successfully in the past has been largely due to our not selecting the varieties suited to our climate. But our failures in the past, together with the necessity that exists for our making fruit growing pay, will spur us up to gain a knowledge of the business. The trees we are now getting are grafted with hardy Russian scions, and we believe that they will suit well in our climate. Grapes are being successfully grown on a pretty large scale in the vicinity of Charlottetown, his Lordship the Bishop having planted quite an extensive vineyard a few years ago as an experiment, and has proved beyond a doubt that grapes can be grown on the Island.

Some of our capitalists have conceived the idea of building a roller mill, and in order to ascertain if our wheat is suitable for manufacturing with rollers, have sent 100 bushels up to Ontario to be ground by the roller process. If the test is satisfactory we will probably have a mill built. This will be a good thing for farmers, as it will create a cash market for wheat, which we have not got at present, and will also enable us to compete with imported flour in our own market. At present our flour does not come in competition with the fine grades of Canadian, nor will it until we have a mill that will manufacture large quantities of as good an article as can be imported. If such a mill should be started it will give quite a stimulus to wheat growing. The prospective company have issued a circular containing a number of questions which they have addressed to leading farmers, with the request that they would answer as to whether wheat is a surer crop now than formerly, and whether they

would be willing to supply wheat for about the same price as is paid at mills in Ontario, and also how many acres of wheat they would be willing to grow for the next five years to sell to this mill. I am not aware how the farmers have answered the above questions, but I have no doubt that the answers would be favorable to the launching of such an enterprise. The cultivation of wheat has succeeded better on the Island of late years, and is partly owing to our changing our seed by importing the best we can get from Ontario.

A few words about our exports: Our export of oats for the past year amounted to 1,861,958 bushels, worth about \$558,587.40. Potatoes were exported to the value of about \$300,000. During the year we exported about 1,300 horses, valued at an average of \$120 each. We shipped about \$1,800,000 doz. eggs, the price of which ranged from 10c. per doz. early in season, to 16c. late in the fall. We export large numbers of cattle and sheep, but I have not been able to get an estimate of their number or value. The greater part of our oats goes to Great Britain, while the bulk of the potatoes and nearly all of the horses, sheep and eggs go to the U. S. It will be readily seen from the above figures that oats has been our principal export, but it cannot be much longer, as the price has gone down far below what it costs to produce it. The failure of our oat market will necessitate a radical change in our system of farming, and compel us to engage in other and more profitable branches of husbandry, which we have been to a great extent neglecting, and of which I may have something to say at another time.

English vs. Canadian Stock, Implements, Vegetables and Fruits.

At a banquet held in Chatham in connection with the recent meeting of the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association, Mr. Allan, President of the Association, made pertinent allusions to the above subject. With respect to stock, he considered that the English surpassed us only in one point—that of the science and practice of stock feeding. Their forte was quality, and they wanted nothing but the very best. The best animal at the Smithfield show was a Hereford. There was nothing to equal the quality of the English beef and mutton; the flavor was superior to that of ours. He had seen just as fine sheep in Canada, excepting the Southdowns. He observed that there was a great deal of difference in the implements manufactured here and in England; theirs were very cumbersome and were built with a view to strength and the killing of animals. Especially was this the case with reference to their reapers and mowers; ours were much lighter, and did faster and better work. With reference to grain, our samples could not be surpassed by any country, and we should be proud of them. Our roots and vegetables attracted a great deal of attention, even when compared with those of theirs which were produced under a high state of cultivation. Theirs were not so large as ours, and did not yield so much food per acre, although they cultivated and manured much more highly than we.

With regard to fruits, the Colonial Exhibition had dispelled the illusion that Canada was a land of polar peculiarities. They were at first very suspicious of our exhibits, and thought our fruits were made of wax, so we had to allow our specimens to be tested. Then they thought they

were grown in hot-houses, so we had to put on labels indicating that they were grown in the open fields. Fruit growers and shippers labored under disadvantages by the existing system of placing our fruits on the English markets. If these obstructions were removed, our farmers and fruit-growers would realize the following prices per barrel in their own orchards for the varieties named: King of Tompkins, \$1.50; Fallwater, \$1.30; Twenty Ounce Pippin, \$1.25; Baldwin, \$1; American Golden Russet, \$1.15; Mann, \$1.15; Northern Spy, 90c. (for spotted specimens, but fine samples would bring \$1.30); Swayzzie Pomme Grise, \$2; R. I. Greening, \$1. The last named variety would ultimately excel the Baldwin in price, as the prejudice against green fruits was dying out, and consumers were beginning to pay more attention to quality than to appearance. Shippers should pay separate prices for each variety based upon the market prices in England. Only the choicest samples should be selected, and all the apples packed into one barrel should be of the same size and color, the barrels then being branded with the names and addresses of the growers or shippers. Strict honesty should be observed all round, as the buyers soon learned the brands; they paid the highest prices for the honest brands, for in suspicious cases the barrels were emptied out and the quality examined much more frequently, thereby entailing extra labor and expense. Specimens from the same tree could be divided into two or three brands and priced accordingly; by so doing, higher prices would be obtained on the whole than by mixing the specimens. No shipments should be made to London by water up the Thames, as the fruit thereby became damaged by rough handling and pilfering, and the party or parties to be blamed could not be found out; such shipments also reached their destination nearly a week later than via Liverpool. The safest, cheapest and quickest way to ship was by rail from Liverpool to London, many fees thereby being saved, such as those to the Duke of Bedford, etc. The railroad charges were too high; but the Midland Railway now bought out a block of land whence our fruits could be distributed all over the country, evading the fees, which would be of advantage to our shippers and fruit growers.

A Voice.—That's hard on the poor Duke of Bedford.

He shipped large quantities of our apples to Copenhagen, where he realized remunerative prices. He thought that Denmark would in future be an excellent market for our apples; the Danes appreciated the quality of our apples. Our system of packing, generally speaking, was very good; but our brands were not up to the mark. We should pack fewer culls. A limited trade could be done by shipping fancy samples in half barrels for the Christmas markets, and fancy prices could be realized. A large trade could also be opened up with India, but the trade would be limited for our best qualities, as the masses were too poor to pay high prices. Shipments to India would be greatly facilitated by the C. P. R., thence by steamers from our western coast. There were also trade prospects in France and Germany. Our apples brought 3s. per barrel in the British markets more than American apples; this figure was more under than over the mark.

A large immigration would follow our work at the Colonial Exhibition. He was in receipt of