

# Cape Breton a Half Century Ago

By M. C. MACLEAN

THERE is a reason for "lighting upon" this particular stage in the history of Cape Breton Island. Whether he knows it or not, the person who was born there fifty or sixty years ago passed his boyhood at a stage which, although passed sometime or other by all countries, seems not to have received the attention it warrants from students of population. This was a time when—except for Cape Breton County—the population was at its maximum. Older men lived in pioneering periods; younger men, during a time when the regular thing was to leave as soon as adolescence was passed. Some people left before this period, but without doubt these contained a large element of adventurers and, at any rate, they were few in number compared with the general exodus of the next fifty years. People have come in since that period, but this was merely part of the present century urban movement—they were not settlers in the true sense of the word. Fifty or sixty years ago, *settlement* was complete in so far as the conditions of the time permitted. Maps 1 and 2 show how far this settlement had pro-

gressed up to 1881 and retrogressed from then to 1931. These maps will bear study. The population density classes (indicated by different degrees of shading) are based upon figures of population for small areas, so that large uninhabited or small very thickly settled areas are in no danger of being confounded, except where a town shows undue influence and this could not be avoided. For convenience of reference, the average densities of population of Canada in 1881 and 1931 are shown as inserts (population referring to areas differing in size at the two censuses and exclusive of vast areas with negligible population). It is seen that by 1881 most parts of Cape Breton Island were more evenly and more thickly settled than the average for Canada, even in 1931. In other words, Cape Breton was given the "once over". Its settlers tried out not only the fertile intervals, the productive sea coast and the strips along lakes and rivers but also what look to us to-day like inaccessible mountain areas. Many a farm house in our boyhood days was familiarly known as "the roost". There is little doubt that this trial of all parts is characteristic of the people who did the settling—Highland Scots, Irish and French, particularly the former two.

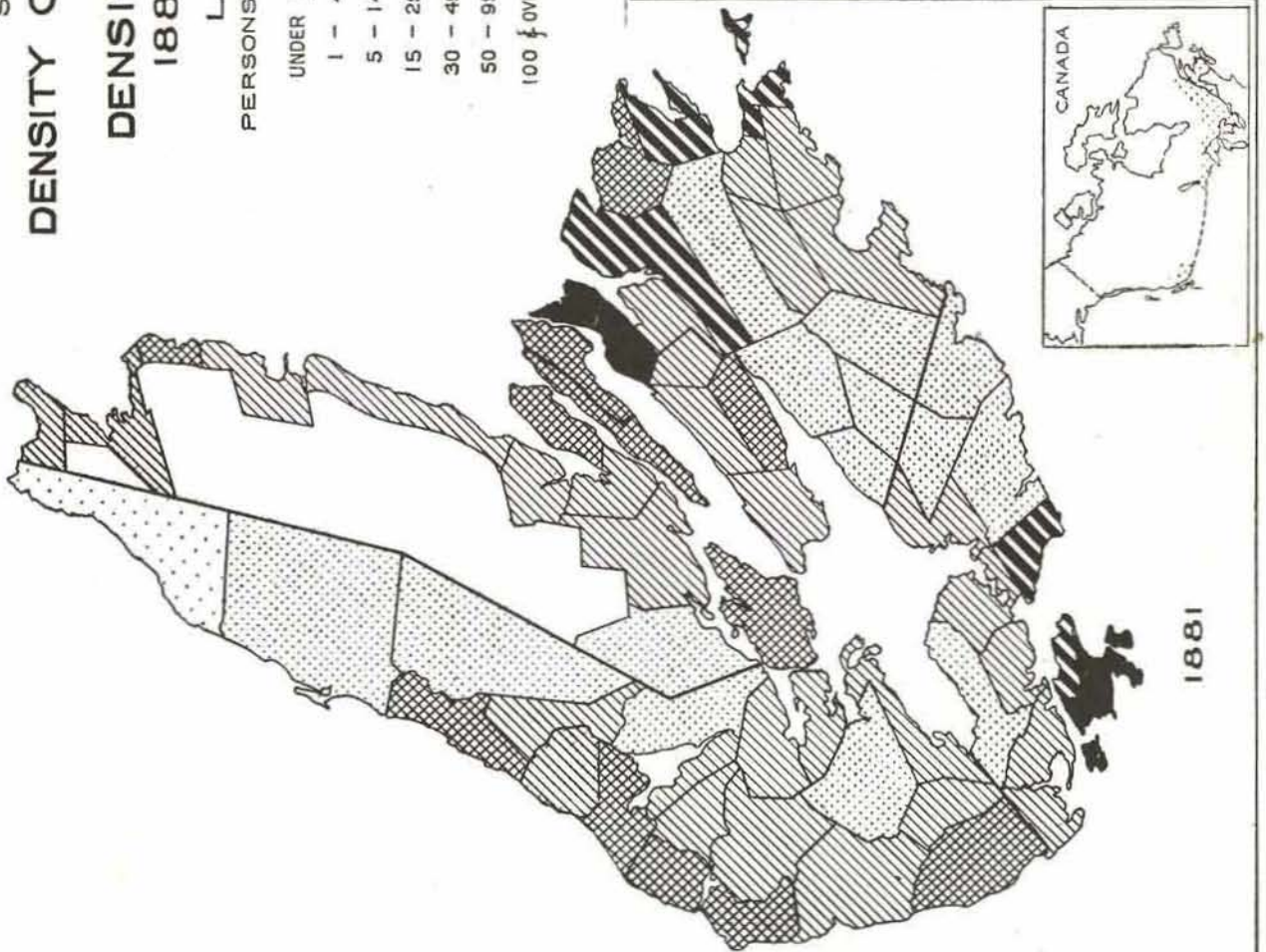
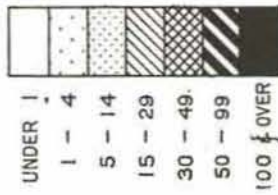
**EDITOR'S NOTE:** M. C. MacLean, a native of Cape Breton, is one of Canada's most distinguished statisticians. He contributed to this journal last year another valuable article "The Mobile Nova Scotian". *Public Affairs*, II, p. 6.

**Table I. Racial and Nativity Composition of the Population of Cape Breton Island, by Counties, Compared with that of Nova Scotia and Canada, 1871.**

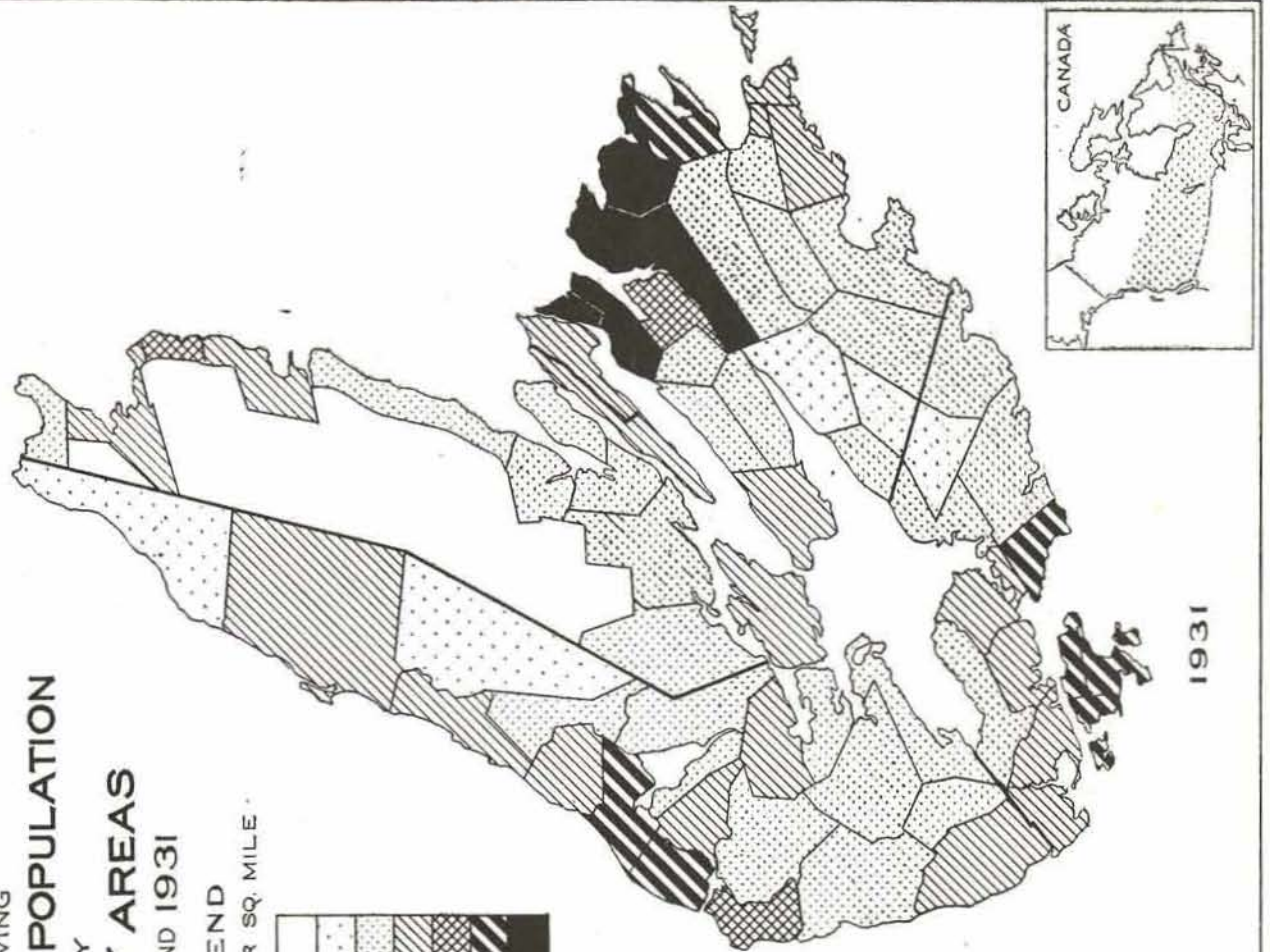
	Total Population	Racial Origin				Number Born in	
		Scottish	Irish	French	Other	Nova Scotia	Scotland
Cape Breton Island....	75,483	50,111	7,311	10,864	7,197	65,343	8,073
Inverness.....	23,415	18,197	1,307	2,682	1,229	20,734	2,322
Victoria.....	11,346	9,751	655	76	854	9,306	1,889
Cape Breton.....	26,454	17,261	3,902	1,141	4,150	22,063	3,150
Richmond.....	14,268	4,902	1,437	6,965	964	13,240	712
Nova Scotia.....	387,800	130,741	62,851	32,883	161,325	351,360	14,316
Canada.....	3,485,761	549,946	846,414	1,082,940	1,006,461	360,832	121,074

MAPS OF CAPE BRETON  
SHOWING  
DENSITY OF POPULATION  
BY  
DENSITY AREAS  
1881 AND 1931

LEGEND  
PERSONS PER SQ. MILE



1881



1931

In other parts of Canada and even of Nova Scotia we find people who settled and remained in narrow strips along the sea coast. Not so Cape Breton.

It should be interesting for those who passed their boyhood in Cape Breton during the stage under observation to see how familiar scenes look when converted into figures and related to Nova Scotia and Canada as a whole. The data to be now considered are for 1871, not for 1881, principally because the census of 1871 went further into detail than the later census. Let us then begin the picture by showing the population and its racial and nativity composition.

If we remember that there must have been some childless families, and particularly that many of the families were still small because of young parents, we realize that the average, 6.27 for the whole island, represents a very large completed family. To-day the average size of family in Nova Scotia (calculated as above, *i.e.*, population per family) is 4.32 and in Canada is 4.28. Let us then examine the next table showing the family size. The coun-

life, religious life and so on. Considerable detail of occupational structure is given in the census, but for a particular reason their detail is not very reliable. An illustration will explain. The number of persons described as "fishermen" under the occupation classification and the number who manned the fishing vessels were as follows:—

	Number of Fishermen	Number Manning Fishing Vessels (shoremen, etc.)
Cape Breton Island.	2,531	5,041
Inverness.....	295	1,363
Victoria.....	440	811
Cape Breton.....	535	1,023
Richmond.....	1,261	1,844
Nova Scotia.....	10,772	18,206
Canada.....	18,362	37,498

The vast difference—say, in Inverness—between the number of "fishermen" and the number who caught the quantities of fish to be mentioned later enables us to realize the impossibility for those days of giving a true picture of occupational structure. The farmer was at the same time a miller, or a tanner, or blacksmith, or a cooper, or

**Table II. Number of Families, Unmarried and Children and Inhabited Houses, Cape Breton Island, by Counties, Compared with that of Nova Scotia and Canada, 1871.**

	Families	Children and Unmarried	Inhabited Houses
Cape Breton Island.....	12,043	51,859	11,570
Inverness.....	3,457	16,462	3,399
Victoria.....	1,692	7,966	1,654
Cape Breton.....	4,460	18,042	4,319
Richmond.....	2,434	9,389	2,198
Nova Scotia.....	67,811	254,617	62,123
Canada.....	622,719	2,283,003	570,379

try was still in close connection with the Mother Country; for the Canadian-born families of the 8,000 born in Scotland would bring at least the majority of the population within the second generation of Scotland.

The space allowed for this paper does not permit a sequence of tables that would give a full picture of the people, their lives and their occupations, school

even a merchant, teacher or clergyman. Consequently, data on occupational classes in that census are misleading without a great deal of explanation.

Similarly, we are omitting detailed figures of industrial establishments; the number of establishments; the value of raw material; the value of total production; the amounts paid in wages, and the "hands" by which we understand the

number of persons on wage. The yearly amount paid in wages would average for the "hands" \$113 in Inverness; \$121 in Victoria; \$169 in Cape Breton; \$132 in Richmond; \$204 in Nova Scotia, and \$217 in the Dominion.

The great proportion of the occupational classes, particularly in Inverness, were agriculturalists; 72.0 p.c. in Inverness, 66.7 p.c. in Victoria, 42.4 p.c. in Cape Breton and 30.2 p.c. in Richmond as compared with 41.9 p.c. in Nova Scotia and 47.5 p.c. in the Dominion.

The size of farms in that year bears mention. There were 212 farms of 10 acres or less in Inverness, 77 in Victoria, 406 in Cape Breton and 532 in Richmond. The total number of farms was 3,259 in Inverness, 1,578 in Victoria, 3,106 in Cape Breton and 1,817 in Richmond. We are not familiar with the 10-acre farm. A large proportion of these were in Cape Breton and Richmond Counties, principally in Sydney Mines, Little Arichat, Petit de Grat. In Inverness they were principally in Plaister Cove, Cheticamp and Port Hood. Evidently, they were the small holdings of fishermen. The large farms were mostly in Inverness, rather widely distributed but principally in Mabou and Whycomagh. Since the land here consists of some fertile intervals, these figures would seem to contain a story. One would have expected that the poorer lands required the larger farms.

We must hasten to what appears to us as the only set of data in the 1871 census that really describes the occupation activities of the people, *viz.*, the possessions and products of the year 1870-71. These are given in the census in great detail and, unfortunately, space does not permit a table giving all these details. We must then extract. First, let us mention the products which were found in Nova Scotia or the Dominion but not on Cape Breton Island: timber—elm, black walnut, hickory; minerals—gold (Nova Scotia in that year produced nearly 90 p.c. of the gold in the Dominion), silver, copper, iron, pyrites, manganese, other ore, peat, plumbago, phos-

phate of lime, mica, crude petroleum, marble, roofing slate. Table III gives the possessions and products that showed more per capita in one or other of the Cape Breton counties than in one or both of Nova Scotia and the Dominion. It is a striking fact that out of 111 items or groups of items listed in the census of that year one or other of the Cape Breton counties led in 62. When we remember that the population of the island was only one-fiftieth of that of Canada, we realize the magnitude of this achievement.

Practically every one of the products—those not listed as well as those listed—tells a story of the life of the people. Since Inverness, except for coal and fish, seemed to be the banner county, let us give a more detailed picture of this county. Let us remember the number of families, *viz.*, 3,457, and the size of this family, *viz.*, 6.77, and also that in those days all the members of the family except the very young were engaged in some capacity. Let us also remember that winter nights as well as summer and winter days were utilized. To show the products as they average per family in those days would not be so far wrong as it would be if done for to-day. We are, therefore, showing details as they averaged per family.

First of all, let us take what might be called the man's side of the production and put two and two together by showing the possessions or implements side by side with the products. Each family, then, averaged:—

#### Products

91.48 bu. grain.
107.06 bu. potatoes and other roots.
8.53 tons hay.
1.20 bu. fruit.
1.89 lb. maple sugar.
0.99 skins of wild animals.
50.11 cu. ft. of some kind of timber.
7.61 logs of some kind.
16.85 cords of firewood.
7.15 qtl. cod, haddock.
5.24 bbl. herring, mackerel, etc.
5.60 gal. fish oil.
0.73 tons coal.
3.37 cu. ft. building stone.
Masts, staves, lathwood (also tanbark in small quantities).

**Possessions**

- 1.56 horses and colts.
- 1 working ox per 8 families.
- 0.66 light carriages.
- 1.48 vehicles for transport.
- 0.86 ploughs, harrows, rakes (if we take farmers instead of all families we see that there were not nearly enough to go around).
- 1 reaper and mower per 230 families.
- 1 horse rake per 79 families.
- 1 threshing mill per 93 families
- 1 fanning mill per 11 families.

If there is anyone whose sense of humour cannot stand the idea of a fraction of a live horse, let him remember that averages generally show these oddities or express the average as 156 horses per 100 families; likewise, the fact that we are quoting all families instead of farmers' families in matters purely agricultural. The quoting per farm family would raise the share of the family much higher.

Before commenting upon this list, let us look at the products that were largely the share of the women and children.

**Products**

- 200.44 lb. butter.
- 30.74 lb. home made cheese.
- 4.55 lb. dressed flax.
- 1.83 yd. home made linen.
- 30.05 lb. wool.
- 40.25 yd. home made cloth.

**Possessions**

- 3.91 milch cows.
- 3.60 other horned cattle.
- 13.18 sheep.
- 1.98 swine.

Coming into the share of both the men and the women and children is the miscellaneous item, animals slaughtered and sold. There were, per capita, 1.15 cattle, 2.76 sheep and 1.25 swine.

Now, while the city man may not be able to visualize how much work so many tons of hay, etc., mean, he can gather from Table III that it was more per capita here than in the rest of Canada, some of the things listed above being considerably more; consequently, he can safely conclude that unless the Inverness man had better equipment, he must have worked very hard. But, on looking at the equipment, he can see that every farmer could not possibly use the mower, nor horse rake, nor fann-

ing mill—much less the threshing mill and not even, in all cases, the plough. The shortage of mowers recalls the old hand scythe; of horse rakes, the hand rake; of threshing mills, the old flail; of fanning mills, the old device for fanning grain, *viz.*, lifting high in the air a peck or more of grain in a vessel known as the grieve but more familiarly as the "greidhear", shaking this and letting the breeze carry away the chaff. To-day this awful method of winnowing, to say nothing of the flail, would make even a strong industrious man run away from work. And then in this list of activities we are not including the stumping, the fencing, the stone picking and the long drives on the springless cart or treks on foot to sell the produce, receiving not cash but kind and sometimes bringing the produce back unsold. In the man's list we are not altogether fair to the woman nor in the woman's list to the man. The woman helped with the raking and fish cleaning and the man took a turn at churning. But the Census of 1871 was more unfair to both in omitting some very important products. Milling, tanning, coopering and so on were important occupations but we have no record of the bags of oatmeal, barley or buckwheat flour, the strips of leather, the tubs and barrels, the home made shoes and suits of clothes and so on.

The share of the women and children must be considered as over and above the regular and more-arduous-than-now duties of the housewife. Let us remember the size of the family and the rearing, dosing and clothing of these families. Furthermore, there is no record of gallons of wild berries picked and preserved, the preparation of many animal products in addition to butter and cheese, the tailoring of the home made cloth, the hens, geese and ducks, the home made soap, the rug hooking, the knitting, etc. Yet, even as it is, the woman's list is a formidable one. The butter and cheese presupposes the calf-feeding, the milking, the dasher churn, the improvised cheese "press"; the linen products recall the cutting of the flax fibre with

a sickle and the interminable processes of drying, bleaching, breaking and so on, a large number of these being carried on during the long winter nights; the home made woollen cloth, the shearing, washing, carding, spinning, weaving, cutting and sewing, all, or mostly all, by the same persons and without any modern machinery. That some of these products, preserved till to-day, should show every indication of artistic taste is astonishing considering the quantities produced and the limited means of production.

It is remarkable that these people picked up a good time as they went along; and, indeed, to the superficial observer, they did not seem to work hard. Were it not for the fact that we see these figures side by side with the rest of Canada, we would not be fully convinced that the production was great, but it was! One explanation is that these people simply would not "putter about". They worked while they worked but when there was nothing particular to do, they hated to pretend to work—they went to a picnic instead. Their social life was very colourful.

If we look at the lists in Table III as income instead of production, we may say that while there are omissions of a certain kind, such as regards flour, poultry, poultry products, etc., there is not much omission as regards cash. The "hands" in industrial establishments in Inverness County brought home an average of \$113 per year (there were 368 hands in all) or about \$12 per family. It is true there were Inverness hands in establishments outside Inverness County but they were not counted in the population of that year.

Some mention should be made of the professional people and the white-collar jobs. In that year there were, on an average, a clergyman, doctor, lawyer, teacher or student to every 16 families, a merchant or clerk to every 18 families—not a very large proportion of white-collar persons. It was after this time that the county became so strongly professionally minded.

Such was the Cape Breton of half a

century ago. Then began a pilgrimage—not more peculiar to Cape Breton than other parts of the world, particularly Eastern Canada. The half century has been one of Nomadism, ever-increasing dependence upon economic opportunities already existing and growing complexities in the social structure. Whether we can call it an "awakening" to higher and higher standards of living or what, we do not know. In any case, a peculiarity of it has been unwillingness to do the best with what we have. It was too easy to move. The "settler" was discouraged with the first signs of depression and moved on. The young moved, first to the cities of the United States, then to the West, then to the cities of Canada. The independent worker exchanged his independence and receipts in kind for cash wages. It is difficult to imagine a real development of a country under such conditions or any real attachment to home and country. There is forever the question as to whether employment creates a population or a population employment, but it would seem that in the past half century the former was really the case while in the true nature of things the latter should be the case. The creative powers function best when there is need of creation. There is every indication that this feverish movement is at an end, at least until something unlooked for turns up—for the simple reason that there is nowhere to go. Necessity will compel us to make the best of what we have.

A year ago it was our privilege to be in a Cape Breton crowd at a fair. Here were statistics in the flesh! The size of the crowd, and the age and sex composition as well as its general demeanour could be compared, first, with a similar crowd, say twenty years ago and, secondly, with a similar crowd a half century ago, before the exodus. The age and sex composition was very dissimilar to that of the twenty-year-ago crowd and quite similar to that of a half century ago; so was the size of the crowd—quite large. The adolescent and early adult

Table III. Possession and Products in which one or other of the C  
both of Nova Scotia and the Four Provin

Item	Number				
	Inverness	Victoria	Cape Breton	Richmond	Nova Scotia
<b>Field Products:</b>					
Winter wheat (bu.)	177	43	22	25	3,087
Barley (bu.)	22,408	8,935	13,274	1,968	296,050
Oats (bu.)	276,330	107,707	150,440	30,604	2,190,099
Potatoes (bu.)	360,710	174,563	388,879	94,943	5,560,975
Hay (tons)	29,491	8,937	13,350	6,731	443,732
Grass and clover seed (bu.)	683	143	288	34	8,121
<b>Home Products:</b>					
Butter (lb.)	692,906	313,016	443,001	224,220	7,161,867
Home made cheese (lb.)	106,262	9,423	12,808	3,162	884,853
Flax seed (bu.)	266	50	29	1	2,830
Dressed flax (lb.)	15,739	1,162	2,361	51	111,588
Home made cloth (yds.)	138,996	57,632	81,939	51,158	1,476,003
<b>Other Home Products:</b>					
Wool (lbs.)	103,874	37,907	63,204	31,559	1,132,703
<b>Animals Slaughtered or Sold:</b>					
Cattle	3,974	1,590	1,919	1,049	42,815
Sheep	9,535	5,204	7,607	2,519	139,631
Swine	4,324	1,351	2,493	698	52,788
<b>Fruits:</b>					
Other (2) fruits (bu.)	766	256	553	10	12,736
Tobacco (lb.)	39	4	2	.....	263
<b>Furs:</b>					
Bears	8	8	.....	3	209
Otters	7	13	4	7	267
Martens	51	7	1	5	156
Minks	235	155	78	130	4,269
Foxes	51	27	34	42	828
Moose, caribou, deer	.....	6	.....	41	971
Seals	279	481	11	17	1,938
Muskrats	1,825	800	1,844	464	20,449
Other skins	971	8	319	1,020	12,950
<b>Forest Products:</b>					
Square red pine (cu. ft.)	2,010	6	9,482	1,900	22,020
Birch and maple (cu. ft.)	53,136	3,528	29,086	4,335	518,727
Masts, spars, etc.	831	131	209	38	10,631
Staves (M.)	319	146	283	158	11,811
Lathwood (cds.)	2	25	7	.....	924
Firewood (cds.)	58,243	24,717	34,423	16,258	526,472
<b>Fisheries:</b>					
Cod (qtls.)	22,429	17,665	19,791	30,540	380,308
Haddock, hake, pollock (qtls.)	2,291	800	604	10,756	101,042
Sounds and tongues (bbl.)	17	10	41	45	871
Herrings (bbl.)	7,724	3,855	5,736	12,179	135,266
Gaspereaux (bbl.)	2,757	35	595	650	10,358
Mackerel (bbl.)	6,690	2,371	2,362	5,091	69,647
Halibut (bbl.)	86	78	242	186	2,536
Salmon (bbl.)	272	255	551	93	4,218
Eels (bbl.)	204	151	354	95	1,262
Trout (bbl.)	60	5	10	2	372
Other fish (bbl.)	84	47	34	.....	1,367
Cured roes (bbl.)	139	60	10	68	1,952
Oysters (bbl.)	86	59	39	20	1,257
Cod liver oil (gals.)	1	.....	50	149	1,405
Other fish oil (gals.)	19,356	11,508	15,083	16,037	287,925
<b>Mineral Products:</b>					
Coal (tons)	2,537	446	394,723	.....	657,506
Lump gypsum (tons)	.....	1,200	.....	1,000	96,544
<b>Work Animals:</b>					
Horses	4,324	1,521	3,105	1,268	41,925
Colts and fillies	1,053	266	346	177	7,654
Oxen	515	486	161	284	32,214
<b>Farm Stock:</b>					
Milch cows	13,530	5,225	7,735	3,980	122,688
Other horned cattle	12,431	4,381	4,969	2,898	119,065
Sheep	45,556	16,716	23,649	15,212	398,377
Swine	6,840	2,039	3,473	977	54,162
<b>Vehicles and Farm Implements:</b>					
Light carriages	2,277	754	1,675	749	40,119
Vehicles for transport	5,115	1,686	4,013	1,663	76,151
Ploughs, harrows, cultivators	2,987	1,295	2,091	609	38,700
Fanning mills	301	132	74	21	4,731
<b>Fishing Equipment:</b>					
Boats and vessels	512	423	563	844	8,662
Fathoms of nets	35,382	34,543	52,830	90,748	975,674

(1) Too small p.c. to be of any importance.

(2) Not apples or grapes.

Some Breton Island Counties came up to or exceeded one or more of the Dominion, 1871.

Four Provinces	Number per Head of Population					Four Provinces
	Inverness	Victoria	Cape Breton	Richmond	Nova Scotia	
6,367,961	0.008	0.004	0.001	0.002	0.008	1.83
11,496,038	0.96	0.79	0.50	0.14	0.76	3.30
42,489,453	11.80	9.49	5.69	2.14	5.65	12.19
47,330,187	15.41	15.39	14.70	6.65	14.34	13.58
3,818,641	1.26	0.79	0.50	0.47	1.14	1.10
348,605	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.002	0.02	0.10
74,190,584	29.59	27.59	16.75	15.71	18.47	21.28
4,984,843	4.54	0.83	0.48	1.22	2.28	1.43
118,044	0.01	0.004	0.001	(1)	0.007	0.03
2,584,765	0.67	0.10	0.09	0.004	0.29	0.74
7,641,917	5.94	5.08	3.10	3.59	3.81	2.19
11,103,480	4.44	3.34	2.39	2.21	2.92	3.19
507,725	0.17	0.14	0.07	0.07	0.11	0.15
1,557,430	0.41	0.46	0.29	0.18	0.36	0.45
1,216,097	0.18	0.12	0.09	0.05	0.14	0.35
358,963	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.0007	0.03	0.10
1,595,932	0.002	0.0004	(1)	.....	0.0007	0.46
2,553	0.0003	0.0007	.....	0.0002	0.0005	0.0007
6,132	0.0003	0.001	0.0002	0.0005	0.0007	0.002
17,582	0.002	0.0006	(1)	0.0004	0.0004	0.005
49,799	0.01	0.01	0.003	0.01	0.01	0.01
12,861	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.003	0.002	0.004
19,271	.....	0.0005	.....	0.003	0.003	0.006
37,402	0.012	0.04	0.0004	0.001	0.005	0.01
488,182	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.03	0.05	0.14
56,105	0.04	0.0007	0.01	0.07	0.03	0.02
1,954,372	0.09	0.0005	0.36	0.13	0.06	0.56
1,939,357	2.27	0.31	1.10	0.30	1.34	0.56
121,685	0.04	0.01	0.008	0.003	0.03	0.03
34,706	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.01
25,657	(1)	0.002	(1)	.....	0.002	0.007
8,713,083	2.49	2.18	1.30	1.14	1.36	2.50
682,631	0.96	1.56	0.75	2.14	0.98	0.20
120,213	0.10	0.07	0.29	0.75	0.26	0.03
1,261	0.0007	0.0009	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.0004
417,300	0.33	0.34	0.22	0.85	0.35	0.12
29,117	0.12	0.003	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.01
77,925	0.29	0.21	0.09	0.36	0.18	0.02
3,560	0.004	0.007	0.009	0.01	0.007	0.001
15,907	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.007	0.01	0.005
7,693	0.009	0.01	0.01	0.007	0.003	0.002
19,729	0.003	0.0004	0.0004	0.0001	0.001	0.006
81,152	0.004	0.004	0.001	.....	0.004	0.02
2,934	0.006	0.005	0.0004	0.005	0.005	0.001
14,500	0.004	0.005	0.001	0.001	0.003	0.004
2,491	(1)	.....	0.002	0.01	0.004	0.001
676,403	0.83	1.01	0.57	1.12	0.74	0.19
671,008	0.11	0.04	14.92	.....	1.70	0.19
114,433	.....	0.11	.....	0.07	0.25	0.03
643,171	0.18	0.13	0.12	0.09	0.11	0.18
193,572	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.06
139,635	0.02	0.04	0.0006	0.02	0.08	0.04
1,251,209	0.58	0.46	0.29	0.28	0.32	0.36
1,233,446	0.53	0.39	0.19	0.20	0.31	0.35
3,155,509	1.95	1.47	0.89	1.07	1.03	0.91
1,366,083	0.29	0.18	0.13	0.07	0.14	0.39
514,116	0.10	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.15
842,514	0.22	0.15	0.15	0.12	0.20	0.24
573,648	0.13	0.11	0.08	0.04	0.10	0.16
167,964	0.01	0.01	0.003	0.001	0.01	0.05
17,867	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.06	0.02	0.01
1,879,435	1.51	3.04	2.00	6.36	2.52	0.54



boys and girls were largely represented whereas twenty years ago they were conspicuously absent. It was a refined crowd—perhaps too refined. Their patience in listening to an avalanche of speeches of unmerciful length—they who had come long distances to dance—was a little uncanny, and in this respect they certainly did not resemble the crowd of fifty years ago. The tongue in which they spoke and their amusements also had kept up only too well with the “wheels of progress”.

If growing up and then “flitting” is no

longer the order of the day, it is clear that upon such a crowd rests the responsibility of creating opportunities instead of going out to look for them. Who knows what the necessity will bring about? If their grandparents with the means at their disposal could produce more than their share of Canadian products and create as described what can modern methods in the hands of people of the same blood bring forth after a period of “seeing the world” and seeing that opportunities are not much better elsewhere than at home?

## Rural Dentistry in Nova Scotia

By WARREN C. OXNER

**A**BOUT thirty years ago Dr. Wm. Hunter a surgeon of London, England, toured both Canada and the United States with the purpose in mind of directing attention to the importance of sound teeth in relation to general health. So impressed were those whose interests lay in the fields of medicine and dentistry that efforts were made towards the education of the public to the vital significance of oral hygiene.

Although Ontario, which has large and well organized professions, led the campaign in Canada, other provinces soon followed suit. In 1906 the Nova Scotia Dental Association appointed an Oral Hygiene Educational Committee which since that date has been active in a campaign designed to include not only urban centres but also the rural areas which for obvious reasons are the most difficult to reach.

During the same year, as a result of a paper read before the Nova Scotia Dental Association on the dental education of public school children, many constructive suggestions were made. It was recommended that steps be taken:

to revise the school books in regard to the care and preservation of the teeth, to appoint dentists in public schools to make periodical examinations of the children's teeth, to distribute booklets to parents and children on the care of teeth, the examination of teachers on oral hygiene and finally to lecture on dental hygiene before the School Teachers' Association.

In 1909, the Canadian Oral Prophylactic Association of Toronto, was appointed to carry on the work as a national movement in Canada. During the following years, educational work proceeded, lectures were given, lantern slides and moving pictures were shown, further examinations through the province were made and school books were revised. Efforts also were made to secure legislation for the establishment of free clinics for the poor. Lectures were given to teachers in training at the Normal School with the expectation that such instruction would be passed on by them to pupils. In many sections of the province dentists were appointed to carry on educational work.

In 1919 dentists were appointed to accompany the Red Cross Rural Health caravan to outlying districts. In this manner valuable operative and educa-

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** W. C. Oxner, D.D.S., is Professor of Crown and Bridge Work and Ceramics in the Faculty of Dentistry at Dalhousie University and President of the Dominion Dental Council of Canada.