

The potato industry of Aroostook has developed not only big farms, but farming on a bigger scale than is practiced anywhere else in the East. In order to handle such an industry, the business end of it, which is the shipping end, must be highly organized in a business way, and that is the case under present conditions. This is particularly a necessity of the business since the seed trade has assumed such proportions as it has now reached. This has made the relations of the County to the outside world very extensive in the area covered, and the requirements of the seed trade are so varied and exacting that of necessity there must be a constant effort made to place the raising of potatoes and all the details of marketing the crop on a more scientific and systematic basis.

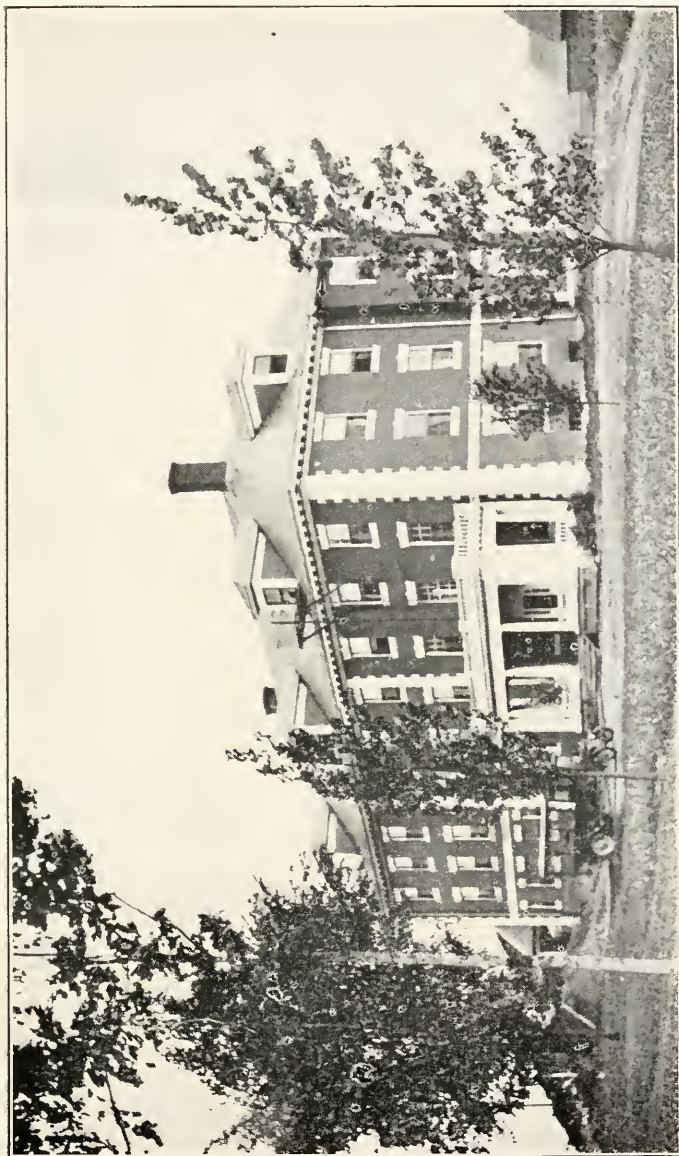
Aroostook owes the reputation that her seed has come to enjoy, to the fact of its undoubted superiority to potato seed grown in any other section of the country. Hence the constantly growing demand for Aroostook seed, and the high prices it has commanded in the market. At present it is claimed that the seed demand absorbs from a quarter to a third of the crop raised, and it is claimed by those who are experienced in the business, and broadly familiar with the conditions as to the possibilities of creating new and larger markets for Aroostook seed that it might be so developed and expanded as to practically take care of all the potatoes that Aroostook ought to raise, assuming that she followed anything like a well balanced and diversified system of farming.

CHAPTER XI.

Banks And Newspapers As Factors In Aroostook's Progress

Nothing has illustrated Aroostook's marvelous growth for the past thirty years more than the development of its system of banks. The banks that have been planted in the course of its progress in response to demands for such institutions in different centers of the County, have contributed immensely to the business welfare and prosperity of the County, and in turn they have been without exception enabled to build up a prosperous and profitable business, as a result of the great growth and increase of wealth of the people of Aroostook.

In the ante-railroad days of the County Aroostook was without banks, and practically without money. Such business as was done was done on an almost endless system of credit, and the habit of asking for and depending upon credit became so fixed



ARGOOSTOOK STATE NORMAL SCHOOL DORMITORY

a practice that the transition from the old habit of doing business on credit and buying and selling for credit persisted long after it might have been and ought to have been abandoned, and continued to be a hindrance to business progress in the County for many years.

The oldest banking institution in the County is the Houlton Savings Bank, which was established in 1872 and has had an uninterrupted growth in the addition to its deposits from year to year, and in the business it has done. It has always been thoroughly well managed, no institution of the kind has done more to promote the welfare of the people in its territory, and none is more deserving of the confidence it enjoys. A savings bank is in a peculiar sense an index of the thrift and prosperity of the community which it serves and measured by the record of this institution, the prosperity of Aroostook is registered in a way that testifies to the rapid strides in growth and increase of wealth in the County. At the present time its deposits foot up nearly \$2,000,000.

Following the Houlton Savings Bank, commercial banking institutions sprang up from time to time, as the growth of different business centers warranted, and at the present time there are fifteen banks in the County, exclusive of the Houlton Savings Bank, as follows: Caribou National Bank, Caribou; Fort Fairfield National Bank, Fort Fairfield; First National Bank, Houlton; Farmers' National Bank, Houlton; Presque Isle National Bank, Presque Isle; Aroostook Trust Company, Caribou; Frontier Trust Company, Fort Fairfield; Fort Kent Trust Company, Fort Kent; Houlton Trust Company, Houlton; Mars Hill Trust Company, Mars Hill; Merchants' Trust & Banking Co., Presque Isle; Van Buren Trust Company, Van Buren; Washburn Trust Company, Washburn; Ashland Trust Co., Ashland; Limestone Trust Co., Limestone.

The capitalization of the foregoing banks amounts approximately to \$800,000, and the total resources to approximately \$17,000,000. With their resources, and with the breadth and enterprise of their management, they are a great factor in the business life and activity of the County, though there is no doubt but that the immense business that is done in the County, and particularly the demands that are made upon its banking system in financing the potato growing and shipping industry of Aroostook make demands upon the banks at certain seasons of the year that are a great strain upon these institutions, and it might be profitable to the County if its banking system were broadened to a very considerable extent.

One feature of interest in connection with banking development in Aroostook is in the change of attitude which the banks have made in their relation to the public, and with the customers who patronize them.

In the very early days of banking in Aroostook, there was in fact a dependence of the people upon accommodation which the banks afforded, and the people who patronized banks were too often made to feel that sense of dependence by some lack of courtesy on the part of banking officials.

All that has changed, and it has become the habit and policy of banks to treat the public with courtesy and consideration, and the management of banking institutions here, as elsewhere, seek for patronage and are in the same sense in competition for patronage as are other lines of business.

JOURNALISM IN AROOSTOOK

No one agency has contributed more to the progress and advancement of the County of Aroostook than the press. It was indebted to the press outside its borders for the first marked impetus it was given in the increase of settlement in the County. This came about through the well known and locally famous visit to Aroostook of the Maine Press Association, which took place in 1858. Most of the then prominent editors of the State of Maine joined in this press excursion to Aroostook, all who participated in it found the new and then unexplored wilderness country a revelation of promise in the way of fertility, and all returned home enthusiastic advocates of the claims of Aroostook to the attention of those interested in finding and making farm homes for themselves and their families. Aroostook reaped a harvest of publicity as a result of this newspaper excursion, and the result of it was to turn toward this County a large tide of immigration. This unfortunately soon after was arrested by the outbreak of the war, which sensibly depleted the population of Aroostook by the contribution this section had to make in response to the demands of the war in defense of the Union. It was not until many years later that the County resumed its onward march of progress in population and increase of wealth, this only coming with the first railroad communication, which furnished a partial outlet for the County, and was later accelerated by the building of the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad.

Its own local newspaper press has also done a very great service in helping forward the progress of the County, and probably no section of the State has had newspapers more loyal to

it, more devoted to its interests, or more zealous and tireless in their labor in promoting its welfare.

The first newspaper to be planted in Aroostook County, started in Presque Isle and was the product of the joint enterprise of W. S. Gilman and the late Hon. Joseph B. Hall. Not long after the paper was started, Mr. Hall withdrew from the partnership, and the business was continued by Mr. Gilman, who, in 1868 removed the paper to Houlton, where it is still published by the Aroostook Publishing Company, whose efficient managing head is Albert K. Stetson. It is a thoroughly clean and reputable sheet, and ably edited and worthy of the patronage and prosperity which it enjoys.

The next venture in journalism in Aroostook was made by the late Theodore Cary, who, in 1860, started the Aroostook Times in Houlton. This continued to be published by Mr. Cary many years, and on his death it successively changed hands and was run by several other editors, with more or less divergent interests and policies, until it was acquired by Mr. Charles H. Fogg, its present proprietor, by whom it has been built up into an active and vigorous sheet, with an especially well equipped plant and with the advantage of every necessary modern equipment in its outfit. In these two papers the fine and flourishing town of Houlton has sheets well worthy of the support which they are receiving.

Probably no sheet started in Aroostook had more character and individuality, or was more of a positive force in Aroostook and within the limits of the State outside Aroostook, than what was known as the Loyal Sunrise, which was started by the late Daniel Stickney in Presque Isle in 1863, and continued to be published in that town until 1876, when it was removed to Fort Fairfield, and soon after moving there suspended publication.

Mr. Stickney was a man of much ability, of marked eccentricities of character, and one of the most vigorous and virile writers of his day in the State. As the name of the paper implies, the ruling motive and policy of the paper was actuated by the prevailing sentiment of the country in the period of Civil War and stress during which it had its birth. No man in the County did more than Daniel Stickney to inspire those within the reach of his paper with patriotism, and no man in the State spoke more vigorously than he as a champion of the Union cause. This high purpose absorbed the attention of its editor during the four years of civil struggle, and the record of the Loyal Sun-

rise as made during that period, stands as a lasting memorial to the ability and high purpose of Daniel Stickney.

Outside of this lofty zeal which inspired him as an editor, this old time Aroostook publisher was not without his limitations and shortcomings. He was as pugnacious as he was patriotic, and when the claim which the war emergency had on his time and attention was past, he naturally drifted into public controversies and politics and somewhat too often, perhaps, for the popularity of his sheet and the welfare of the community, became embroiled in local public quarrels and contentions, which neither served to dignify him personally, nor to help the influence of his sheet for good.

The press of Aroostook County as it stands today, consists of the following weekly papers: The Aroostook Pioneer, the Houlton Times, The Aroostook Republican, The Fort Fairfield Review, The Star-Herald, The Mars Hill News, and The Ashland Gazette. A venture was made in 1919 to start a daily paper in Houlton, called the Aroostook Daily News. Either through lack of sufficient field to give the paper necessary support, or through lack of good management, or both, the paper did not succeed in getting a foothold, and in July, 1922, suspended publication.

The weekly papers of the County for the most part are well equipped, firmly established, conducted with enterprise and zeal for the advancement of the communities they represent, and in point of equipment and up to date features in every way, are not surpassed by the weekly papers in any other part of the State.

The Aroostook Republican was founded in 1880 by the late Samuel Matthews, and was launched as a political organ. Like nearly all local papers which are run primarily for political purposes, the Republican, in the hands of Mr. Matthews, was not a success in a business way, and it was not until it passed into the hands of A. W. Hall, son of the late Joseph B. Hall, that it really became successful. Mr. Hall was born and bred to the country newspaper business, and the result was that he gave Caribou a thoroughly good paper, and the community in turn responded and gave the Republican, after it went into his hands so large a support that the Republican was made one of the most profitable local newspapers in the State. On or about 1894, he sold the paper to Lyman J. Pendell, who has since published it, and like Mr. Hall, has found the field a very profitable one to cultivate.

The Fort Fairfield Review is the outgrowth of what was known as the Fort Fairfield Leader. This was started by C. H. Ellis, like the Republican, as a merely political organ, and like the Republican, while so run, entirely defaulted in meeting the needs of its constituency from a business and local news standpoint, and to continue the parallel, it had to pass into other hands before Fort Fairfield was really in possession of a paper worthy of that thriving community.

The party who came to the rescue of the Fort Fairfield people and met their needs by buying the Leader, was Mr. Chandler C. Harvey, who, after purchasing the Leader plant and remodeling it, changed the name of the paper to the one it still bears, and under Mr. Harvey's management it is one of the best local papers of the County, and not surpassed by any sheet in its class in the State.

The Star-Herald, printed in Presque Isle, is an amalgamation of two papers, one of them the North Star, for many years edited by the late Dr. F. G. Parker, and the other the Aroostook Herald, by the late Joseph B. Hall.

The Herald was originally started in Presque Isle by Mr. Hall, shortly after the Pioneer removed to Houlton. After being run for a short time, its publication was suspended by Mr. Hall, who went elsewhere, and during his absence founded several papers which have cut quite a figure in Maine and Western journalism. Among his ventures, after he suspended the Herald, and left Presque Isle, was the Portland Press. This offspring of his became one of the influential papers of the city and State, and has recently, through reorganization, become a part of the hyphenated Portland Press-Herald, which is now being quite aggressively conducted, and claims to have a large circulation in the lower part of the State.

After founding the Press and conducting it for some years, Mr. Hall drifted West and while in the West founded the Fargo Republican, which is today one of the live papers of the section of the West in which it is published.

Severing his connection with Western journalism in 1883, Mr. Hall returned to Presque Isle, and resumed publication of the Aroostook Herald, and at once turned his attention to agitating the construction of what he called an Aroostook Direct Line Railroad. This agitation was the beginning of the movement, as has been previously stated, which resulted in Aroostook acquiring much needed railroad connection with the outside world.

In the meantime, following the death of F. G. Parker, the

North Star, which was being published in Presque Isle when Mr. Hall returned and revived the Herald, was purchased by the present editor of the Star-Herald, G. H. Collins, who joined with Mr. Hall in the agitation for better railroad facilities.

The North Star under Dr. Parker was another example of political journalism in Aroostook, being under his administration, the organ in the County of what was locally called Modocism, this term being merely another designation for Greenbackism, which was then epidemic in Maine and many other sections of the country. Modocism differed from its parent stock only in the fact that while it adhered to the principles of that party, there had been superadded to it, under the designation of Modocism, a most virulent political and personal feud which was then raging in Aroostook, growing out of the antagonism which had sprung up to what was known as the Powers Regime.

So long as Daniel Stickney ran the Loyal Sunrise, after the advent in Presque Isle of the North Star, as the pugnacious and combative champion of Republicanism, which necessarily included defense of the so-called Powers Regime, he was in violent contention with the North Star, under Dr. Parker. The bitter feud completely absorbed the attention of the contending papers to the almost entire exclusion of home news and the claims of different local interests. It was a fierce newspaper warfare, in which Dr. Parker won out, by virtue of possessing a much more genial personality, and resources of personal abuse and sarcasm which were quite unique, and of effectiveness such as has been rarely equalled in Maine newspaper controversies.

The combative Daniel retired from the field by removing his paper to Fort Fairfield, where it soon after died.

It is worth recording of Dr. Parker that he had a stronger hold upon the hearts of the people of his community than any other man who ever conducted a paper in the County. He was unsparing in the personal attacks he made growing out of the bitter controversies which then raged, but a more likable man personally has never lived in Aroostook, and when he came to die, which was suddenly and unexpectedly, the personal and public evidences of regret and sorrow were general and sincere. It is on record that the crowds which gathered when genial Dr. Parker was laid to rest, and the length of the procession of neighbors and friends which followed him to the grave, surpassed any like demonstration of mourning which had occurred in our County up to that time.

In the North Star and in contemporary sheets there were col-

umns of sorrowful eulogy over the deceased Dr. Parker, his former fierce rival and antagonist, Daniel Stickney, joining in the eulogies, and writing one of the most just appraisals that was published concerning his worth, and one of the most touching newspaper references that were made in regard to the lovable qualities of the man.

Far different was it when Daniel Stickney himself came to pass away. Though a much abler man than Dr. Parker, meager praise was given him, and there was a pitiful absence of manifestations of sorrow. Probably, in anticipation of this dearth of eulogy and public appreciation of his career, quite characteristically Daniel Stickney wrote his own epitaph, and provided that it should be inscribed upon the monument which has been erected over his last resting place in Fairmount Cemetery. This very original epitaph reads as follows:

“Daniel Stickney

Born November 25, 1804. Died August 16, 1894. Until 18 years of age a farmer's boy; 25 years a mechanic and teacher of common schools; 25 years a lay preacher of the gospel as taught by David in the twenty-third Psalm, by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, by Paul upon Mars Hill to the Athenians, and in the twelfth chapter of Romans. For over fourteen years proprietor and editor of the Presque Isle Sunrise; a Republican from his earliest recollection to the day of his death, always regarding the Democracy of politicians with perfect contempt.”

Besides the papers already described, there are at present being published in Aroostook the Mars Hill News, whose editor and proprietor is Mr. Percy L. Waddington. This is a small paper, but it is clean and newsy, and worthy of the support it is receiving in the progressing and enterprising community in which it is published. Finally, there is the Ashland Gazette, printed by J. R. Coburn, which covers the field of which Ashland is the center.

Since the advent of the railroad, or rather, since the old-time newspaper methods were superseded by the new and modern ideas of running local newspapers, there has been a revolutionary change in the manner of conducting papers in Aroostook, and a very marvelous improvement in them typographically, and from a news and editorial standpoint. The old-time political sheet devoted practically no space to local news or to articles

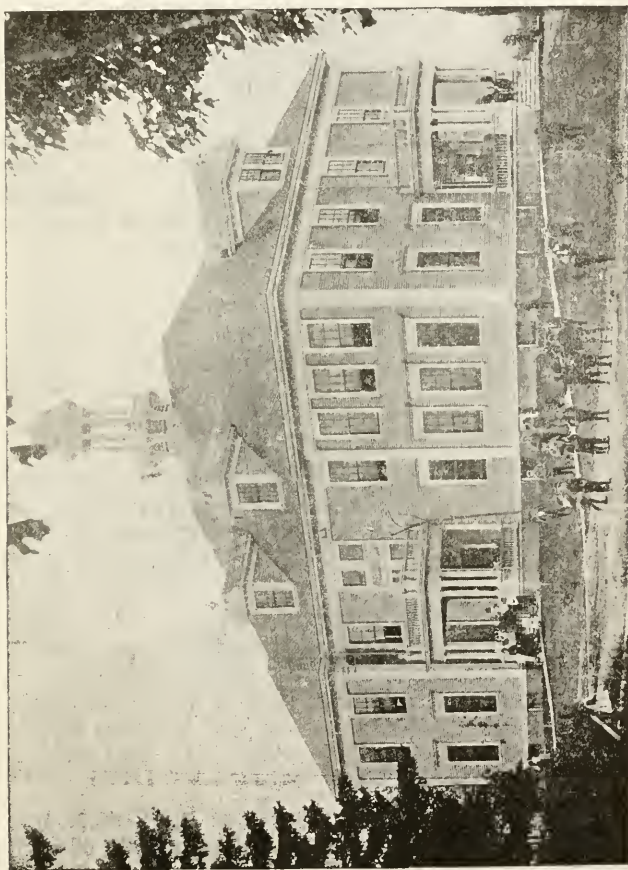
of community interest and value. Their time and space were taken up almost wholly with political controversies, and as a consequence today, with the subjects they discuss, forgotten and buried among the dead issues of the past, they are of no value for purposes of reference or as a record of local history. The modern local newspaper, of which the Aroostook papers are good examples, put local news and local, social and business to the front. They reflect completely the life and activity of the community. Hence they are of the utmost usefulness as agencies in stimulating and promoting everything that tends to community welfare, and after their grist of local news items is read, they are preserved in different files for reference and in coming years become of great interest as a valuable historic record, and as a complete reflection from week to week of the business and industrial progress and the daily life of the communities in which they were published.

SCHOOL PROGRESS IN AROOSTOOK

In no department of public life and activity has more marked progress been made in Aroostook within the past thirty years than in the sphere of education. Thirty years ago, Aroostook more than in anything else, showed the crudeness of pioneer life and the defects and shortcomings of a new community, in its schools. In buildings, in equipment, and in lack, not only of public appreciation, but of the means to support school instruction at a high standard, the different communities of Aroostook were sadly deficient. In Aroostook communities there was a lack of that social refinement and practical efficiency in life which education gives both to individuals and communities. The change for the better in the County is greater measured by the progress that has been made in the sphere of education than in almost any other line of social activity. Whereas, thirty years ago Aroostook had almost no organized and efficient school system, today it has one which its people have reason to be proud of. Its schools are as well housed, its school equipment is as ample and up to date and school instruction is on a higher standard, both as to what is taught and the capability with which schools are supervised and instruction imparted to pupils, than in any other section of New England.

Any one of the many hustling and enterprising towns of Aroostook may be taken as a yardstick to measure the remarkable educational progress which has been made. The town of Presque Isle may be taken as an example. In 1891 it had no

graded system. In the village its school pupils were herded into what was then known as the old Academy building, which was sold when what is now known as the Training School building was built, and was moved off and remodelled to make the front of the R. J. Smith & Co. Store. This old building was utterly delapidated, and destitute of every appliance for the comfort, convenience and sanitary care of school pupils. It was a disgrace to the town, and a menace to the health and physical and moral welfare of the pupils.



TRAINING SCHOOL BUILDING,
Academy Street, Presque Isle

In the spring of 1893 at the annual March meeting, an ap-

appropriation of \$20,000 was made to build a new school building. In those days a dollar as compared with the present time, went a long way in both material and labor, and the town, for its expenditure of \$20,000, secured a building ample at the time to meet requirements, and which stands today as a very creditable part of the housing accommodation of the village pupils in Presque Isle.

Since the construction of what is known as the Training School, on Academy Street, Presque Isle, which was the first step in development of an organized school system, there has been added the large school building in Gouldville, and in 1910 there was erected a new high school building, a brick structure which, at the time it was built, seemed likely to meet the requirements of the village for an indefinite time. This addition, however, sufficed to meet the requirements of the growing school population only for a short time. Five years had not elapsed before there was a crying need for additional accommodations.

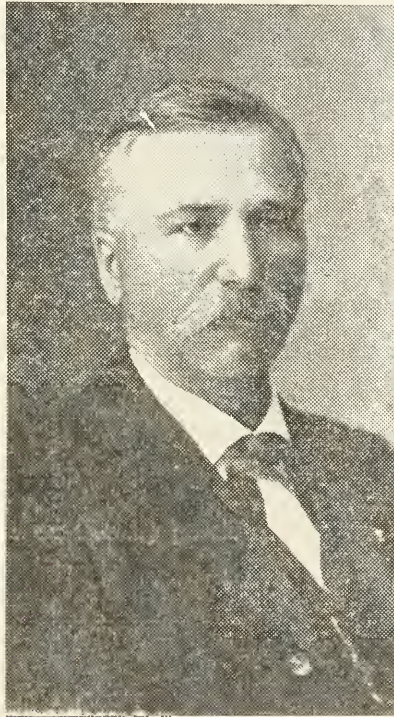
For some years after the need became acute, the matter of solving the problem of increased school accommodations was discussed. In December, 1921, it was solved, for the time being, at least, by the burning of the High School building, which at once forced upon the town the necessity of replacing the burned building. This has been met by an appropriation for the construction of a new building, and very wisely this has been provided for, not only with a view to meeting present needs, but also with a view to future growth.

At the annual town meeting of 1922, there was an appropriation of \$135,000 made for the construction of a new high school building, and for replacement of equipment, so far as the loss on equipment is not covered by insurance which amounted to \$25,000. The contract for the building was in round numbers \$112,000, but the prospect is that certain conditions, not included in the architect's design, will carry the expenditure to a figure higher than was anticipated, not at present definitely settled.

When the new building is completed it will provide amply for the present school needs of the town, and will be a thoroughly modern and up to date school building which will be a great credit to the community.

Among the educational developments of the County, one of the most important was the planting in Presque Isle of a State Normal School. A long period of agitation preceded the final passage of the necessary legislation looking to this end. One of the chief promoters of the project was Rev. Geo. M. Park, who,

in the early or pioneer stages of the effort in the direction of securing the Normal School, may be said to have practically stood alone, and to have kept the project alive in spite of the general public apathy and indifference. That the proposition was at length taken into consideration and that Presque Isle was selected as the location of such a school, may be said to have been due to Mr. Park's untiring work in promoting the project, and the act which gave reality to this long period of agitation, passed in the



HON. GEO. H. SMITH
Prominent Lawyer, and Instrumental in Securing
Passage of Normal School Bill

session of 1901 was the culmination of years of agitation chiefly conducted by him. According to the terms of the legislation, the town gave to the State a site which had at one time been oc-

cupied by what was known as St. John's School. There was located on this site what had been the main school building of the St. John's School. To the land that was turned over to the State later on was added a dormitory which now occupies the northern portion of the campus. After the building of the dormitory a considerable period elapsed during which the school was operated and continued to grow, but badly handicapped on account of the lack of a main building. This was at length provided for in the year 1921, when the present fine main building was completed and opened for the use of pupils in the fall term of 1921.

For some time past the school has been under the very faithful and efficient management of Principal San Lorenzo Merri-man, who, previous to his accepting this position, had made an excellent record as principal of the Presque Isle High School.

The Aroostook State Normal School is now fully past the experimental stage, and there is no question but that it will develop into perhaps the leading institution of its class in the State, and that it will have a great influence in advancing the educational welfare and prosperity of the County and State.

It would not be just to conclude this hasty and imperfect sketch of this institution without mentioning some other names of persons who are entitled to credit both for aid rendered in the efforts to secure the school, and also for generous and zealous aid in promoting the welfare of the school after it had been established. Among those whose labor was indispensable in the legislative stage of the undertaking, was the late Hon. George H. Smith, who was in the House of Representatives at the time the bill was introduced providing for the establishment of the school, and who, during that period, rendered service which was indispensable to the enterprise. After the school was started, in the earlier days of its operation, the late Hon. T. H. Phair was for a long time a member of the Board of Normal School Trustees and in that capacity his business judgment and his active aid and generous help in every way were very potent factors in aiding the school during its infancy, and in times when it needed such ability and means as he placed at its disposal, to forward and strengthen it. Many others might be mentioned to whom credit is justly due for very effective labor in helping to found and establish this important public institution.

The Aroostook Normal School is doing great work for the County, and its influence is especially felt in increasing the prestige of Presque Isle as an educational center. If the town of Presque Isle is reaping the principal direct benefits from the es-

tablishment of this institution, it is because the movement for the starting of such a school originated here, and was finally pushed to a successful issue by the labor and efforts of Presque Isle citizens.

We have made particular mention of schools in Presque Isle, including the Normal School, not for the purpose of singling Presque Isle out for special credit, but because Presque Isle in a general way, simply stands as a conspicuous representative of what the entire County of Aroostook has been doing in the line of educational progress in the last twenty-five years. Practically every town in the County has been making like strides forward in educational advancement, the people of every community are generous and ungrudging in the aid that they give to schools, and as a result, Aroostook is as conspicuous an example of progress and advancement in school activity as she is in other lines of progress.

CHAPTER XII.

What Farmer Organizations Have Accomplished In Aroostook. The Grange and Northern Maine Fair.

As one would naturally expect from the magnitude and success with which farming is carried on in Aroostook, there would spring up farmer institutions and organizations on an equally large and successful scale. This has been the case, and as a result we find in Aroostook that the Grange is a very numerous body, and very much stronger in its organization, and more aggressive and successful in securing the aims and objects it seeks to accomplish for the welfare of the farming community, than is the case elsewhere in the State, or elsewhere in New England.

Without being in any sense a political body, it is a power in legislation, in influencing the passage of laws needful for the advancement not only of the farming class, but the welfare of the State as a whole. It represents the soundest elements of citizenship, and in no small sense is the organized conscience of the community in all public matters into which enter moral and ethical considerations. This makes it a strong factor on the right side of every moral question, and in no less degree is it usually a factor in matters of a purely practical nature.

The Grange of Aroostook is a strong institution, conducted in harmony with the best interests of the farming class, and an indispensable agency in raising the standard of intelligence, culture and refinement among the farmers and their families in our