

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, SEPTEMBER 26, 1887.

THE WHEAT SUPPLY.

In a previous issue of this journal the wheat supply of the world as figured up by the London correspondent of the *Northwestern Miller* was given, in connection with other wheat statistics. At that time the London correspondent, who by the way, is heavy on statistics, made out a surplus for the world of 12,000,000 bushels. The correspondent has since revised his figures, with the result that the surplus of wheat is reduced by nearly one-half. He now figures out a total available surplus in exporting countries of 257,000,000 bushels, against a total deficiency in importing countries of 250,000,000 bushels. The surplus supplies of exporting countries are stated as follows:

	Bushels.
United States.....	112,000,000
India	30,000,000
Russia	62,000,000
Roumania.....	10,000,000
Hungary	20,000,000
Chili	4,000,000
Argentine Republic.....	6,000,000
Canada, Australia, Egypt, etc....	13,000,000
Total	257,000,000

Importing countries are expected to require the following amounts:

	Bushels.
United Kingdom.....	136,000,000
France	20,000,000
Holland and Belgium.....	24,000,000
Germany	4,000,000
Switzerland and Italy	24,000,000
Spain and Portugal.....	16,000,000
West Indies, China, etc.....	26,000,000
Total	250,000,000

The above figures do not indicate a very large surplus of wheat, but simply a sufficient supply, and if they are near the mark there should be no valid reason for very low prices. However, other statisticians make the surplus appear considerably larger, such for instance as in the case of Mr. Harris, the well known London economist, whose estimates of the wheat crop were published in a previous issue of this journal. Mr. Harris puts the import requirements of France at 8,000,000 less than the *Miller's* correspondent, and in doing so he seems to have the best of the argument. The French wheat crop is generally acknowledged to be excellent, both in quantity and quality. The correspondent, however, concludes that France will import more largely than would be indicated from her crop

returns, on account of the low reserves of wheat held. In the case of Germany, the home wheat supply is acknowledged to be equal to the average requirements, but on account of a reported shortage in the potato crop, the *Miller's* correspondent sets down 4,000,000 bushels to that country, whereas Mr. Harris considers that no wheat importations will be made. It is not certain that a shortage in the potato crop will greatly increase the consumption of wheat, and in the meantime Mr. Harris would appear to be on the safe side in the case of Germany also. The correspondent increases the average requirements of Spain and Portugal by 4,000,000 bushels, on the ground of an alleged shortage in the wheat crops of those countries. Thus in the countries of France, Germany, Spain and Portugal the correspondent makes the import requirements amount to a total of 16,000,000 bushels greater than Mr. Harris. In the other importing countries the two British writers do not materially differ in their estimates, but the correspondent adds 10,000,000 bushels to the requirements by way of sundries. It must therefore be concluded that Mr. Harris' estimate, which is 26,000,000 bushels below that of the correspondent, is at least on the safe side, the larger figures of the latter being shown to be based in several instances upon supposition and side issues, and not upon a strict adherence to the supply and demand, as indicated by previous years. Mr. Harris also places the surplus of exporting countries at 19,000,000 bushels greater than the correspondent, thus making out a total surplus for the world of 52,000,000 bushels or 45,000,000 bushels greater than the 7,000,000 bushels' surplus of the correspondent.

In connection with the above statistics the estimates of the Hungarian Minister of Commerce will be interesting. This Hungarian Minister has been summing up the wheat situation and comes to the following conclusion: The United Kingdom will require 100,000,000 bushels, France 42,000,000 bushels, Germany 17,000,000 to 20,000,000 bushels, Switzerland 9,633,000 bushels, Italy 20,000,000 bushels, Austria 20,000,000 to 22,600,000 bushels. The surplus of exporting countries is placed as follows: United States 100,000,000 bushels, Canada about 10,000,000 bushels, India 25,500,000 to 28,000,000 bushels, Russia 73,666,600 to 79,333,300 bushels, Roumania 11,000,000

to 14,150,000 bushels, Hungary, 34,666,600 bushels.

The discrepancies in the figures of the statisticians will be somewhat puzzling to those not posted in matters relating to wheat, and they will be inclined to give over any desire which they may have to understand the situation as a bad job. The unreliability of a great deal of the statistics present may be shown from the reference to Canada by the Hungarian Minister. Canada can have but little wheat to export this year. The wheat crop of Ontario is estimated by the agricultural bureau of that province at less than 19,000,000 bushels, or between 10,000,000 and 11,000,000 bushels under the average, which will not leave the province a very large surplus. The surplus of Manitoba will therefore be nearly all required in the Dominion as the other provinces are not self-sustaining in the production of wheat.

ANOTHER ESTIMATE.

The last issue of THE COMMERCIAL contained an article on the cost of raising wheat, based on the experience gained in connection with the Dalrymple farm in Dakota. The *Montreal Journal of Commerce* has lately been considering the cost of raising wheat in Ontario, but without coming to a satisfactory decision. That journal publishes the estimates of a number of farmers, and if the figures are at all near the mark, it would appear that Ontario agriculturists might as well give up growing wheat at once, for all the profit they derive from the industry. In fact the figures would indicate that an actual loss is often suffered in wheat-growing in that province. The figures given by the farmers as to the cost of raising fall wheat, vary from 76 cents to \$1 per bushel, in an ordinary crop year. The *Journal of Commerce*, however, is of the opinion that all these estimates are above the average cost for the whole province. This year the fall wheat crop of the province will only average sixteen bushels per acre, against a general average for the past five years of 21 bushels per acre, the crop having suffered severely from heat and drought. At 80 cents per bushel, which is about the maximum price which the farmer can expect for his wheat, the average return for the province would be \$12.80 per acre. Now, the lowest estimate of the cost per bushel in raising the wheat, as stated above, is 76 cents, and this is estimated on an