

vember sitting. The necessity of obtaining from Canada an order-in-council, which forms part of the case, is given as the cause of delay. The document may have been wanting to complete the case, without leading to the conclusion that the decision will necessarily turn upon its contents. It is something to be assured that in November the final decision will come.

Great complaints are made by Senator Cullom and others that Canadian vessels are bringing from China to the United States a large proportion of the tea consumed in the Republic, not less than forty-two per cent. This result is represented as due to the fact that the Canadian line of steamships is subsidized by the British Government. This is not a correct statement. The subsidy, if such it can be called, was only agreed to be given a few days ago, while the importation of tea complained of goes back a year or more. The real cause of the diversion of this traffic is a very different one; it has its origin in the restrictions of American navigation laws, which compel American forwarders to purchase abnormally dear vessels. A large part of the ocean-carrying trade of the United States is in the hands of foreigners, and the Republic benefits by the reduced freights compared with what they would be if American carriers did the business under the restrictions to which they are subjected. If consumers of tea in the United States get it carried cheaper by Canadian than American vessels they reap the benefit; and the incident is only in accordance with the whole tendency of the ocean-carrying trade. The ocean commerce of the United States can never be whistled back so long as the present restrictive navigation laws remain in existence.

#### THE FINANCIAL CONDITION OF AGRICULTURE.

Everywhere we hear complaints of the decline in the profits of agriculture; in not a few places that, on this or that product, there is no longer any profit at all. The losses of farmers in England in the last few years are represented as almost incalculable. For this state of things competition, extending over a large part of the world, is responsible. The price of wheat appears to be too low to be remunerative. And this, coupled with a deficient yield, seems to have been true in Canada last year. It is impossible to conceive that the price could long be maintained at a figure that was, on the whole, or in a majority of countries, unremunerative. According to the returns received at the Bureau of Industries, the growing of wheat in Ontario was unprofitable last year. These returns give the following financial results of eight different crops in the Province:

	Cost per acre.	Value of Product.
Fall wheat.....	\$19.43	\$17.08
Spring wheat .....	15.50	13.61
Barley.....	14.83	18.63
Oats.....	14.78	16.59
Pease.....	15.47	13.87
Corn.....	21.70	25.80
Potatoes.....	34.64	54.43
Turnips.....	33.41	41.27

The returns are from 197 different persons, a small number, be it observed, for the whole Province. We know nothing of the conditions under which that number of farmers or others were induced to report, or how the story would be modified if we heard from the vast majority of farmers who have made no report. If these returns give a fair sample of the whole, the case is indeed serious. But the year's returns were below the average. It is just possible that those who felt the pressure most were most ready to report their grievances. The returns indicate a loss of \$2.35 per acre on the growth of wheat; and if we allow for the possibly somewhat exceptional character of the cases reported, and for looseness and inaccuracy in making them up, still it would scarcely be a violent conclusion that wheat-raising in Ontario last year was not remunerative. We must not suppose that the cost given is made up of items of actual expenditure copied from account books; the cost will, in most instances, be the result of an estimate more or less vague, and there may be reason to suspect some slight exaggeration.

We may apply some tests to these figures. In point of yield, the Ontario wheat crop was last year equal to the average American, for several years past; and with such yield the Americans have gone on producing wheat, which it is not reasonable to suppose they would have done at a loss. We are then brought face to face with this alternative: either the cost of growing wheat is greater in Ontario than in the United States, or the sample figures reported by 197 persons contain some exaggeration. But though it may not be desperate, the case for this year is bad enough. Last year gave an exceptionally low product of wheat: an average crop, on the basis of these figures, would have wiped out the loss and left a fair profit. This is the encouraging feature on which we may fairly fix attention. We are entitled to conclude that, on the whole, wheat-growing in Ontario has not ceased to yield a profit. Whether that profit is an adequate return for the capital employed is the only remaining question. One thing is certain: a lower average yield does not deter the American farmer from continuing to grow wheat; it is a fair conclusion that he would not have done so for a number of years at a loss; and by the light of this conclusion some consolation may be drawn from the prospect before Ontario farmers. But in this particular, Ontario is in the best condition of any of the old Provinces.

It is a little curious that corn, of which but little is grown, yielded a profit of \$4.10 an acre. There is scarcely sufficient total heat in Ontario to ensure the complete ripening of corn, one year with another. Last year's exceptional heat had something to do with the success of the corn crop. There is a new purpose to which a corn crop can be put, and that is the production of ensilage, which is made of the green crop, and is used as fodder. Mr. Valancy Fuller, who speaks from personal experience, says that, in the form of ensilage, the equivalent of a ton of hay can be grown, in Ontario, for \$4.62. In growing ensilage, selecting profitable crops, and the

establishment of creameries, the salvation of the farmer is mainly to be sought. Potatoes yielded a large profit, nearly \$20 an acre; and the profit on turnips, though not so large, was good. Besides wheat, pease was the only crop out of eight in which a loss is reported. The financial result of farming is made up of the aggregate of productions; and looking to the whole result, as indicated by these figures, and at the exceptional character of the year, the case of the Ontario farmer is by no means desperate.

In the older sections of the Province, the farmer who sticks to old methods can scarcely be said to be in a progressive condition. His much-cropped land no longer gives the return it once gave; and the lessening of the price of wheat being coincident with diminished production, his wealth is no longer increasing. But there are farmers and farmers; and if some have reached the stationary condition, others have not ceased to make money, even in the older parts of the country. There never was a time when so many farmers were retiring on a competency. About half the farms in the township of Vaughan, which is chiefly owned by farmers, is said to be in the hands of tenants. The owners of the farms have, for various reasons, quit the old homesteads, and sought other scenes. On this process, though to some extent a natural one, it is impossible to look with entire satisfaction. Very often the skill and the labor of these farmers are lost to the country; the skill is useless in the new channel in which they are found, and the labor rusts for want of exertion. One inducement to retire, to which the farmer yields, is likely to prove delusive. When he is offered about as much, in the form of rent, as he could extract from the land by adding his own labor, the anomaly is sufficiently striking to require explanation. If the tenant has ample means to work the farm, and is a much better farmer than the owner, the experiment may succeed; if not, it is a delusion to suppose that the rent can be paid. These farmers drift to villages, towns, and cities, especially to Toronto, to which all kinds of persons who have made money wend their way. This is a kind of movement of agriculturists which DeToqueville mentions as having inflicted great injury upon France; and it is certain that it can do no good to Canada.

The price of land in the old settlements of Ontario, except in the neighborhood of the cities, when not retrograde is stationary. Under any circumstances it would be equally preposterous and unjust to talk of throwing all the taxes of the country on the land; in the actual condition of things it is little short of insanity.

—At the quarterly meeting of the Brantford Board of Trade the president said that a great deal of American silver had come into the city during the last few months, and he thought that the old rule of discounting it at some regular rate should be again brought into use. He also thought that Canada should have a national money system similar to that of the United States. At present Maritime bills are discounted in Ontario, and Ontario bills discounted in the lower provinces.