

Agricultural Journal

AND

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

LOWER CANADA AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY, 1848.

AGRICULTURAL REPORT FOR JANUARY.

The general character of the present winter is different from any we have known in Canada for the last thirty years. On the 1st of January, the temperature was at 55°, with rain; the land was perfectly free from snow—the grass as green as in October—and ploughing might have been executed. Up to the 5th, the weather continued mild, and on that day snow fell. On the 7th, the temperature was 12° below zero. On the 9th, we had the first good sleighing, but the temperature was mild and at 22°. On the 10th, it was 22° below zero, with high wind, drifting, and extreme cold. On the 11th, it was 21° below zero. On the 12th and 13th, in continued very cold, but on the morning of the latter day the temperature rose to 28°, and on the 14th, to 38°, with heavy rain, and very high floods in Montreal and the neighbourhood. On the 15th, temperature at 45°, heavy rain, and flood still rising; 16th, 17th, and 18th, continued mild, and nearly all the snow disappeared from the land. Such is a fair record of the first month of the New Year, and we believe such extreme variations of temperature have seldom occurred in the same period of any former year. So far, it does not appear that any injury has been done to grass-land, and as there is not much fall wheat sown in Eastern Canada, there cannot be much damage done in that way. No doubt the land would be much safer under a covering of snow, than exposed to those great changes, and we may imagine, from this year's experience, how great an inconvenience it would be to the people of this country if we

had the mild and open winters of the British Isles. The usual Canadian winter is the most suitable for us. The roads, formed by snow and ice, are to the Canadian farmer what rail-roads are to the people of other countries; they might be nearly as convenient, and without any cost. The snow and ice, therefore, so far from being injuries to us in winter, are as necessary to our convenience and prosperity as the fine weather of the spring, summer, and autumn.

We fear that the ploughed land, where not properly drained, will be injured by much and long continued rain, for the last three months. When ploughed soil is drenched with wet in this way, it is liable to run together into a soft mass, and require ploughing again when it becomes dry in spring. It is generally supposed that fall ploughed land, after exposure to the frost and snow of the winter, will be in a better state of preparation for the seed in spring, than if ploughed in spring; and we have no doubt of the correctness of this opinion, provided the soil has been well drained, and is sufficiently open and mellow when required to be sown. It is useless, however, to expect a good crop on land that is not open and mellow when sown, and any that may not be in this state next spring, should be made so by another ploughing. If our arable lands were sufficiently drained, the frost and snow would have a very beneficial influence upon it; but when not drained, this benefit is lost in the spring, as the soil becomes water-soaked, and when dried by the sun, is baked as hard as bricks. Every new work on Agriculture recommends draining to go before all improvements, and every skilful farmer will be aware how requisite it is. We have no crops in the land now to report of, but we may be preparing what will be necessary to produce good crops, namely,—manure, clean good seeds—and such care of our stock of animals as will insure their usefulness next summer, for the dairy and for the shambles. Cattle must have sufficient nutritive food, in winter, to make them profitable in