

and worse still, taking all the manure away. Now I don't wish to remark any further on this than that it appears to be getting to be a common custom, and certainly does not tend to induce that feeling of respect and confidence which the farming community should have for one another. To many in my position the harm done might have been very serious, as, having been hitherto unsuccessful, those interested pecuniarily in my operations would hardly be inclined to allow me much latitude; however, fortunately, on account of the reputation that the farm had acquired, entirely on account of the draining, I had immediate applications and selected a partner having at least as much working capital and skill as one could expect. Of course we worked under disadvantages. Our barn yard manure was limited, and I had no time to take the depth of my new manure, but I still determined to stick to the old test and maintain the fertility of the soil at any sacrifice, so the barn-yard manure was supplemented with an increase of artificial manure to keep up the rotation, and a seven acre mowing field was thrown out to pasture to be only half stocked. And in the fall a good swarth of grass could have been cut on any part of this field. I dwell somewhat on the operations of this year, as the value of the farm is made by applying the annual return to capital, this year being taken as the standard, as I know that by this method I cannot be deceived in the future but can always calculate on an increase. The crops were all light and prices realized small, and I am confident that by more careful farming from fifty to seventy per cent. could be easily added to the total yield with but small increase of working expense. Still the whole farm having been worked one time or another, every acre contributed its share, and the total result was sufficient to yield me, clear of expense, a return of nearly six per cent. on double the sum that I originally paid for the farm, which, being in a settled locality was pretty high. Now I can either lease or rent the farm to good marshes at any time, reserving the house and a certain quantity of land for myself, so that in spite of the opinions of outsiders, the farm is worth to me, as long as I reside on it, at least three times the original cost, counting nothing for embellishment, &c., in the way of ornamental trees, and which the passerby can easily imagine has been a large item. Of course I shall not be foolish enough to give a lease, based on such farming as last year's. Our failures last year were partly unavoidable, partly the result of the penny-wise, pound-foolish system. The season was too dry for superphosphate, and great loss occurred by not attending to the roots in time. My new

partner rather opened his eyes to the benefits of machinery when he found us running out our superphosphate at the rate of one ton per diem, and without any handling, for which I am indebted to your recommendation to Messrs. Gower & Co. So much for the so called English system that I hear so much about, but really do not know what people mean when they say you can never make English farming pay! never make our people take up English ideas, and so on. My endeavor has been to grow crops in the most economical and practical way, I don't care whether the ideas are borrowed from the English, Americans or Chinese for that matter, I certainly gave the Nova Scotian system so much in vogue at that time, (marsh mudding and other methods), a fair trial, with the result that my capital was nearly all sunk before I had laid a single drain or accomplished anything that could be said to add to the permanent value of the farm, and yet I find on reference to my books that in 1863, when the working expenses of the farm were far greater than those of last year, the cash returns were only one-fifth. I hope your readers will not for a moment imagine that I am attempting to show that farming can be made profitable in Nova Scotia, that mine or any certain style of farming should be adopted to the exclusion of all others. No business or enterprise can be called a success unless the operator can show a clear dividend of at least six per cent., and also command his original capital in toto at a short notice. This I certainly cannot do. There are also many farmers to whom I must tender the palm, at least for making money on a farm, if not by what would legitimately be called farming, as they have commenced without any capital. My object has been to put a plain statement of facts before the public, so as to remove if possible many deep rooted and existing prejudices, which I believe to be inimical to all progression, not only in farming but in everything.

The reader cannot fail to observe, after a careful perusal of the foregoing, that draining might be made to play a very important part in the farming career of any intelligent farmer, but unfortunately there is the reverse or dark side of the picture, which can only be removed by legislation, to accomplish which has been the object of the writer in this and previous papers, also in his little pamphlet (English and American Farming). Although on extremely wet land, where the fertility is completely locked up, drainage by itself sometimes accomplishes wonders, it is unwise to trust to anything more than the mechanical effect produced on the soil, and, as the operation is an expensive one, the advanced farmer may in the present backward state of our

farming institutions, find himself in the same position that the cats were after drawing the chestnuts from the hot ashes. This is the more unfortunate, as, although this evil might not occur, still the knowledge that it is not without the range of possibility is enough to damp the courage and enthusiasm of the veriest glutton of farming. The cost of drainage is not so great but that its benefits may be brought within the range of almost anyone, provided always that the payment be arranged for, as is done in Ontario, by annual instalments up to twenty years.

February 24th. I find by your postal card that I must conclude at once, this I am sorry for as I feel that I have not done the subject half justice. My object has been to show that the improving farmer, that is, he who makes two blades grow where only one did formerly, is entirely unsupported, while mere producers receive every encouragement; this is the more unfortunate, as it is not the case in the adjoining Provinces of old Canada, the real welfare of farming is, I am convinced, dependent more on good legislation, taken in the right direction, than anything else. The establishment of schools and farms may be advisable, but no amount of education will make a man a good farmer without experience, it is a dangerous matter learning your drill before the enemy. The mere growing of large crops I found to be a simple matter under my system, in fact too much so, as it tempted me beyond my depth. The passage of a good Drainage Act would, I believe, in a great measure more than supply the want of model farms, as, in all probability, some leading intelligent farmer would set an example which his neighbors would be only too glad to follow, so that every locality might have almost a model farm at their own door.

My operations have certainly revolutionized the ideas of many farmers in this district, and it was for this reason that I wished to present them personally before the Legislature. I have no reason to alter my ideas in the slightest degree as to what means should be taken to make farming a pecuniary success. And I still stick to the old doctrine, as expressed in my little pamphlet and endorsed by the best authorities, avoid locking up your capital as much as possible in permanent investments, such as drainage, buildings, &c. All the skill and knowledge in the world will not prevent the Ontario farmer from working at from 50 to 70 per cent. discount directly he enters the Maritime Provinces. These obstructions can only be removed by legislation.

Your obedt. servant,

ALFRED C. THOMAS.

Please excuse the last part as it was written in a great hurry.