

United States: "Their lands are declining in value, while their debts increase."

A report made to the New York State Legislature in 1887 (vol. 2, No. 24, page 16, N. Y. Senate documents, 1887), says: "It is an indisputable fact that the farming lands of this State during fifteen years have depreciated at least 20 per cent. and many agricultural localities are decreasing in population."

A despatch to the New York TRIBUNE of February 8th says of the farmers in New Jersey: "Many of the best and oldest of them say they cannot make both ends meet, and that the outlook is not encouraging. Many farmers have made assignments and others are in the hands of the sheriff."

The New York Post recently called attention to the fact that one of its correspondents "counted in a drive on the main road from Lowell, Mass., to Windham, N.H., a distance of twelve miles, six deserted sets of farm buildings, besides several which had already gone to ruin, while fields and pastures were growing up to wood."

There are scores of just such witnesses. Now, Americans are not inclined to put the worst features of their social conditions in front. They are not accustomed to parade to public view the "sore spots" of their country. Some one has wickedly, but wittily said of them that there are 65 millions of liars in the United States, all industriously engaged in "booming" their country. When, then, they depart so widely from their custom and write about farm mortgages as they do, we must believe that in this instance they are telling, if not the whole truth, yet, a very large proportion of the whole truth. We would not have to add more than twenty-five per cent. to the nine thousand million dollars asserted to be the mortgage indebtedness of United States farmers in order to get at a true statement. We may take it as proved that United States farmers are in a bad way.

But I may be told that the farmers of Canada are just as badly off as the farmers of the United States. The testimony as respects the United States farmer is that he is losing by reason of depreciation in the value of his land, and by going deeper and deeper into debt. If Canadian farmers are following in the footsteps of farmers across the line, then the records would show, here as in the United States, increased foreclosure sales, increased enforced sales of farm property. In order to obtain the materials to bring this point to the test, I examined the

official GAZETTES of the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island for the years 1878 and 1888, and found that there were in the former year 1,176 enforced sales of farm property in the provinces named. In 1888 there were but 494 such sales. If the farmers of Canada were in as bad a condition as the United States farmers, these records would surely show a larger number of sales in 1888 than in 1878.

But I may be told that these figures only show that the farmers of Canada are now in a very much better condition of prosperity than they were in 1878. They tell nothing of the relative condition of the farmers of the two countries.

I find the following statement in a Pennsylvania paper, Jan. 10th, 1889: "The Sheriff of Berks County yesterday sold ten fine farms in this county, aggregating one thousand acres. During the present winter the same sheriff has sold some twenty other large farms, besides the stock of twenty farmers who have failed. This indicates that farming no longer pays, as a similar state of affairs exists in other counties in this section." The Pennsylvanians, while admitting the deplorable condition of Pennsylvanian farmers, take refuge in the consoling thought, that in other States of the Union matters are just as bad. Thus the Pennsylvania RECORD reports the following conversation: Pennsylvania Farmer—"Been out to Kansas, eh?" Returned Emigrant—"Yes; was there ten years." P. F.—"What did you raise?" R. E.—"Most everything except mortgages."

On page 84, Michigan Report, Bureau Labour Statistics, 1887, there is a statement of mortgage foreclosures of farm properties in Michigan. There were in the year ended June 30th, 1887, no less than 1,667 foreclosures and 244 sales by levy of execution or nearly four times more than in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island taken together, the total population of Michigan being 300,000 less than that of Ontario alone, and the value of farms about 230 million dollars less than that of the farms of Ontario (according to the latest statement of both, in my possession, 1884).

In Canada we know very little about chattel mortgages on farm implements, growing crops, etc., etc. An investigation into these evidences of indebtedness in the State of Illinois showed that in 1887 farmers