

usually early and sudden commencement of the present winter. Both November and December have been remarkably cold months, and the temperature of the 20th December—20° below zero at Toronto—is the lowest that has been recorded here for many years.

Such has been the character of the season; and it is somewhat noticeable that under these circumstances the crop returns have been so good as we find them. But the same thing has been observed in Britain and other countries, and crops have generally suffered far more from a wet season than from one of excessive dryness. The wheat crop especially turned out well. Oats, also, very generally yielded well; while the other cereals, taking the country throughout, turned out better than was expected. Hay was, however, nearly everywhere, a short crop. The continuance of the drought through the fall months has had a serious effect on root crops, and potatoes and turnips are in many parts reported as having yielded much below the average. The advantages of deep culture and drainage under these adverse circumstances, have been strikingly exemplified, both in resisting the influence of the drought and obviating those summer frosts which, before proper drainage was introduced, inflicted yearly damage in some localities. Among the most destructive consequences of the severe and protracted drought have been the disastrous fires which have made the past year memorable, not in Canada only, but to a far more tragical extent in Michigan and other North Western States.

The ravages of insects on field crops during the past year have from various reasons received a marked check. Very little complaint has been heard of the midge, which in former years has done such serious damage to the wheat, but the Hessian fly seems to have re-appeared in some localities. Grave and well-founded fears were entertained with regard to the rapid advance of the Colorado Potato Beetle; but the injury inflicted, though severe in some localities, has been comparatively slight. Still, our vigilance and precaution must not be abandoned. All past experience shows that this insect is one of the most destructive to which the potato crop can be exposed, and its advance is sure and rapid. Happily, its numerous insect foes seem to have increased in a ratio commensurate with its own rapid multiplication, and perhaps to this circumstance we may have been greatly indebted for the comparatively small amount of damage inflicted.

Passing from this rapid glance at the character of the season and the crops to the condition of the market, it may be observed that the grain trade of Canada during the year 1871 has not been noted for any remarkable peculiarity. The balance of the wheat crop of 1870 was disposed of with increasing advantage to holders, until it was definitely ascertained that the new crop of 1871 would be sufficiently large to afford a considerable surplus for export. From January to May

there was a gradual appreciation in the value of spring wheat, the price advancing from \$1 15 to \$1 40. This was due chiefly to the scarcity of the article and the steady demand for milling purposes. Fall wheat advanced within the same period from \$1 25 to \$1 50, but under the influence of bright harvest prospects a gradual lowering of values took place until the price of spring came down to \$1 12 in the beginning of September, and it is remarkable that at the same period \$1 12 was also the ruling figure for fall, notwithstanding the heavy importations of Western Spring, which were called for by the extreme scarcity of the home product. The new crop of spring wheat did not entirely come up to the expectations that were formed of it, and instead of sending prices any further down than the point above indicated, there was a slow but sure advance to the end of October, when our quotations for spring stood at \$1 23, and for fall at \$1 34. The fall wheat crop must be regarded as one of the largest ever produced in this country, while the sample was also superior to anything that has been seen for several years. This fortunate circumstance enabled us to export to the English market the great bulk of the surplus at good paying prices. The quantity of white wheat shipped to England since the crop began to offer freely is estimated in round numbers at three-quarters of a million bushels, but of spring wheat not more than 50,000 bushels were exported; and of red, 100,000 bushels.

The market has been generally quiet and steady during December, closing with a tendency to more moderate prices, in sympathy with a slight falling off in the English market.

The trade in barley this year has also been quiet. The balance of the crop of 1870 went out slowly at moderate prices, which never exceeded 70c., ranging from 58c. at the beginning of the year to the higher rate towards the middle of August, when it was generally anticipated that the light yield of the new crop, along with its excellent quality, would ensure higher prices in the American market. The Americans, however, had a large crop of their own, and not much inferior in sample to that of last year. The opening price (62½c. in car loads) was considered unsatisfactory, and farmers were long in making up their minds to accept it, but as it did not improve, they had to submit, and at length the receipts became quite liberal, followed by a slight decline in prices, which recovered again for about a week towards the end of November, reaching to 75c., subsiding again to 65c. While the delivery of this important cereal has been liberal, it is considered that farmers have still on hand a large percentage of the crop, held in anticipation of higher rates in the spring.

There is very little of interest to note in regard to coarse grains, with the exception that peas were never before offered in smaller quantities in this market, or so entirely

neglected by buyers. The old crop was marketed slowly at advancing rates, ranging from 66c. to 90c., which latter was the prevailing quotation from the 1st of April to the middle of May, when there were promises of a prolific yield, but owing to the extreme dryness of the season these promises seem not to have been fulfilled, and a moderate crop was the result. This, however, did not have much effect on prices, which have continued since harvest to fluctuate between 60c. and 73c. Some are of opinion that a large proportion of the crop has yet to be delivered.

Oats have been generally firm in price and in active demand, chiefly for local purposes. From the beginning of January to the middle of March the price rose from 42c. to 55c. From that period until harvest the range fluctuated from 47c. to 52c.; but when it was understood that the crop would be a very large one, the price went down to 34c. From the middle of September there has been a gradual advance, and quotations at the close of the year were pretty steady at 43c. to 44c., with increasing supplies.

The price of hay, though one of the shortest crops of the year, has only within the last two months advanced beyond a moderate figure. The scarcity has at length, however, told on the market, as it must have done sooner or later, and \$25 per ton has been paid in Toronto, while still higher prices have been reached in other places. Good sleighing will probably for a time again reduce the value, but when the bad roads and busy time of spring are added to the nearly exhausted supply in the country, it is probable that the price will be still higher. Straw has, under these circumstances, naturally been scarce and high. Farmers will learn, perhaps, to value it more than they have done for feeding purposes. They may also from the experience of the year learn the necessity of greater economy in feeding their stock. The steamer and the straw cutter will perhaps come into more general use than heretofore.

The dairy interest has been affected somewhat by the drought; but the production of cheese has notwithstanding been very large, and though prices ruled low during the summer months, there has been a considerable advance lately, and the market has been firm at good paying rates.

A matter very closely affecting the agricultural prosperity of all new countries is the extent of immigration; and during the past year, in spite of the supineness of the Government, there have been large accessions to our population from this source. The urgent need of labourers, and the great importance of the subject in other respects, have led to the formation of more than one association for promoting immigration to this country; and counties, or townships and municipalities, will act wisely if they follow the example very generally.