

Agricultural Journal

AND

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

LOWER CANADA AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

MONTREAL, DECEMBER, 1848.

It is a fact too well established, that the most successful farming in Canada does not yield a large profit to the farmer, after all expenses are paid. It is therefore essential that the expenses to which Agricultural produce are subjected after the farmer has it prepared for sale, should be as moderate as possible, because every penny of these expenses diminishes by so much the value to the farmer of the produce he raises. The merchant, when purchasing produce, will calculate what it will cost to bring this produce not only to a shipping port, but to a British market, and will unquestionably deduct this amount from the price he pays the farmer. We possess at present the most noble water communication on earth, extending into our fine country a distance of nearly 1,500 miles from the sea, and we cannot understand why, under such favorable circumstances, the cost of transport of our produce from the farthest part of Upper Canada to our sea-port towns, should not be very moderate, and we would also hope that the charge of freight from Montreal and Quebec would be equally moderate in proportion. These are matters more interesting to farmers than to any other class of this community, as their produce has to pay all these charges. There is another circumstance we think it our duty to allude to, that is—the keeping open our great water communication for navigation to as late a period of the season as possible, and we are convinced this might readily be done, without incurring any great expense, by suitable machinery to break the ice upon our canals. Our navigation is closed for about five months in the year, and it must be obvious what an advantage it might

be to our farmers to have an opportunity to dispose of produce in the fall, if inclined to do so, previous to the closing of the navigation. We have in this number recommended the fattening of cattle and swine for exportation in beef and pork. The slaughtering of cattle and pigs cannot well commence before the month of October; and if the beef and pork prepared for exportation in that and the following month, has to be kept over until the spring before it is exported, it will probably be much deteriorated in quality, and perhaps in value, before it gets into British markets. The sooner our beef and pork are brought into English markets after it is salted and packed the better it will be, and the quicker return for the capital employed in that trade. These observations will also apply to our butter and cheese trade, however trifling. It is not without waste, a farmer can keep grain over five or six months, exposed to vermin, fire, &c. We conceive it quite possible to add a month to the usual period of our navigation, by adopting the means in our power; and we are satisfied that if farmers will reflect on the subject, they will see how important it is, that the freight of their produce from the moment it leaves their premises, until it arrives in British ports, should not cost over the lowest possible figure for which it could be transported. The St. Lawrence below Quebec, should have all necessary light-houses provided, to make the navigation as safe as possible. We are unworthy the many natural advantages we possess in this noble Province, if we do not make them available to our prosperity by improving them where necessary. Much has been done, and it only now requires that we should complete what has been commenced on such a grand scale, and on a scale so suitable to the situation and circumstances of our country. A great expenditure has been incurred certainly, but not greater in proportion than the advantages which we may derive from our water communications if we complete them properly, and make a judicious use of them subsequently. Some of our subscribers may imagine this sub-