

the extra work put upon them, and the system was changed last year, and we adopted, to its full extent, the English system; that is, receiving the returns, and tabulating them in the office.

Q. They are direct returns from the farmers in answer to the schedules?—Yes; this schedule we sent out last year, and it was returnable the 15th of June. You will see from it the information we collect direct from the farmers.

“A.”

CIRCULAR TO THE FARMERS OF ONTARIO.

BUREAU OF INDUSTRIES, TORONTO, 1st June, 1883.

The object of this circular is to procure information for the second Annual Report of the Bureau of Industries. Last year the schedules were sent to farmers through the schools; and, when filled and returned to the teachers, school section reports were made up for the Bureau. There were some objections to this system, and there is reason to believe that fuller returns can be obtained by distributing and receiving the schedules direct, as in England. The return for each farm will, by this plan, be known only to the Bureau, and it will be treated strictly as confidential information, to be published in bulk form with all other returns for the county. I need hardly add that it has nothing to do with assessment, with taxes, or with party politics. The main object of the Bureau is to benefit the farmers themselves, by collecting and publishing useful facts about farms and farm-work, crops, live stock, etc. This benefit is chiefly two-fold.

(1.) By knowing whether there is a likelihood of abundance or scarcity of crops or stock, farmers have a good guide to prices. It often happens, for instance, that some kinds of crops are excellent in one part of the country and a failure in another part. Much depends on the rainfall, on local storms and drouths, and on weather effects generally. So, too, with the supply of fat and store animals. Farmers may have large numbers on hand, or they may have none to sell. Dealers know pretty well the state of the country in these respects, for it is part of their business to keep posted, and they have correspondents to supply them promptly with information. And so informed, they may, and often do, buy up the surplus grain, fruit, roots or live stock of a neighborhood before farmers know that there is either scarcity or abundance elsewhere to have any effect on prices. The Bureau, in collecting such information from all parts of the country and publishing it in special reports and through the newspapers, enables farmers to judge for themselves as to the course of prices, instead of selling or holding on in the dark.

(2.) By comparing results in their own and other countries, farmers are better able to judge of the value of their property, and less likely to part with it too cheaply, in the hope of getting richer lands and making fortunes easier elsewhere. Large numbers of Ontario farmers have sold out and gone to the North-West and to the Western States, no doubt believing that they were going to improve their circumstances by growing better crops. But it is more than doubtful if their expectations have been realized. Last year was a good year for grain crops in the United States, wheat yielding a bushel and a-half above the average. Yet the best States in the Union are found to be far behind Ontario in the staple grains. In Ohio the average of fall wheat last year was 16·7 bushels per acre; in Michigan, 17·8; in Illinois, 16; in Indiana, 15·7; in Missouri, 14·6; and in Kansas, 19·5. In Ontario, as shown by the Report of the Bureau, the average was 26·3 bushels per acre. The figures for spring wheat, barley, oats and rye are almost equally favorable, thus showing that grain-growing in Ontario must be considerably more profitable than it is in those States.

The knowledge of such facts as these must lead Ontario farmers to set a higher value on their lands, and make them less ready to leave comfortable homes here for a life of hardship on the prairies, where every stick for fuel and every board for farm-house or stable has often to be drawn a distance of ten or fifteen miles, and sometimes a great deal farther. Neither can it fail to draw the attention of British