

MERCANTILE AND GENERAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF JOHNSTOWN.

The public dinner in connection with this society, took place on the 4th February in the town of Brockville, and it appears to have been the most spirited affair that we have had the pleasure of recording. The attendance was general, and the collections amounted in all to the sum of £130 5s. This we believe is as large an amount as has yet been raised by any district society in one year. The speeches delivered gave evidence of the highest order of talents, and also, that those who addressed the meeting had the true interests of the country at heart. The merchants of Brockville, have identified the interests of the agriculturist with theirs; and it appears to us, that if a general union of the farmers, mechanics, and merchants, could be brought about, that in less than two years the prosperity of Canada would be without a parallel in any other country. "United we stand—divided we fall," should be the motto of the friends of Canada. Party spirit has hitherto been the order of the day; and the result of this has been, that the best men in the country have been arrayed against each other, and the productive interests have not received that attention that they otherwise would have done, if the people had been more united. A new order of things appears to be drawing upon the people of Canada, and the signs of the times clearly indicate, that all classes and grades of society will ere long unite to promote the agricultural, mechanical, and commercial interests of the province. These classes are so much dependent upon each other, that the whole should be bound together in a spirit of brotherhood. This union can alone be brought about by the powerful influence of associations, such as have been recommended to the notice of the public from time to time in the *Cultivator*, and such as those classes have instituted in the Johnstown District. The speeches delivered on the occasion referred to, together with other proceedings of the society, occupied a large portion of three numbers of the *Brockville Recorder*. We copy the following extracts of Mr. Matthias speech—

The Mercantile interests of our Districts, and we may truly say of our country, from Sandwich to Quebec, are so intimately blended with that of Agriculture, that to speak of the one, we must not only speak but think of the other; for without it, at this age of Canada, Merchandizing would be but a mere shadow. Agriculture is, truly to Merchandizing, in what *Guano* is represented to be to a poor soil, it enriches and makes its produce many fold.

The family connexion that exists between the two, may be more fully illustrated by going back to the early history of the country, and to come nearer home, of our district.

Some half a century ago, Gananoque, Brockville and Prescott, were mere clearings; a few Shanties their only buildings; the country in rear a dense forest, save where here and there the handy settler had found his way, by the Surveyor's blaze to his Lot, and commenced laying the foundation of Agriculture in the district. *Where and what then were the Merchants?* The corner of a log-house their shop; a chest of tea, a keg of tobacco, and a few pieces of cotton their extensive assortment. The producers and consumers being but few, the *merchants and their stock of goods* were in proportion. But watch the increase of the one with the gradual advancement and progress of the other. In 1820 the population of the district was about 15,000, pro-

ducers and consumers; and about 20 merchants. In 1843, the population had increased to about 35,000, and in the whole district there were about 80 merchants. Here, it might be asked, what was then its trade, and how and with what was that trade supported?

By a rough calculation, it is supposed, that the goods sold in the district in 1843 were about £120,000, and of this sum were sold to and paid for by other districts, about the sum of £25,000, leaving a balance of £95,000 consumed in and to be paid for by the district. Now who were the consumers, and where did they get the means to pay this large sum? This may be answered by stating, that 3/4ths at least of the consumers were those engaged in agricultural pursuits; and the means of payment were the labor of their hands, and the productions of the soil. It has been calculated, that the district in 1843 has a surplus, after reserving for the necessary consumption, the following:

210,000 Bushels of Wheat a 4s 9d.	£48,720
5,000 Kegs Butter, a 30s.	7,500
40,000 Bushels of Oats, a 1s.	2,000
Beef, Pork and other surplus products,	5,000

Total. £63,250

And to be added to this £63,250, and which was produced by the labour of the inhabitants in the district, viz:—

2,000 Barrels Ashes a £2 per bbl.	£10,000
Squared and sawed Lumber, say	15,000

Amounting to in all, £88,250

To this sum of £88,250 should be added the profit made upon whatever was manufactured for foreign districts, as foreign Wheat ground for export, Snaths, Hames, &c. and not named before.

By these calculations, Mr. Chairman, which are not by any means given as perfect, it will be seen who are the consumers and producers of the country; and to take away this trade, the greater part of which is created by the farmers, *what would be the use of the Merchant? Their occupation like "Othello's" would be gone.*

This may be more clearly shewn, by comparing the surplus yield of wheat in 1843, with that of 1844. The former, as has been named, gave a surplus of some 210,000 bushels, while 1844, it has been calculated, will not yield of good wheat more than 40,000 bushels, showing a deficit of 170,000 bushels, which at even 4s per bushel would give £34,000. This is, indeed, an immense deficiency in the great staple export produce of the district. This is what may be termed a short crop; and are its effects felt by the mercantile body? I would ask any merchant here present, whether doing business in the town or country, is, or has been much over half as good since the harvest was gathered up, to the 1st of February, as it was during the same period the previous season? Mr. Chairman, do these effects of a short crop not show to you, to me, and to every one here present, more and more conclusively our dependence upon the agriculturist, and that his interest is our interest: when the hand of Providence blights his prospects, ours cannot flourish. This is so, and must continue so to be, while agriculture is the root and foundation of our trade, and Canada remains an agricultural country.

I would ask, Mr. Chairman how is this large amount of *export produce* to be made good: what substitutes can be introduced, which will pay to a foreign market, while the danger from the insect to our Fall wheat is so justly to be apprehended? There are some gentlemen here present, who are