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# A FORECAST OF THE FUTURE OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

BEING A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE ST. JOHN MECHANICS'  
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It has been the boast of the people of the Maritime Provinces of the Dominion that they own a ton of shipping for each inhabitant. This is a remarkable and unexampled standpoint from which to estimate our wealth and commerce, but at the same time it must be remembered that in the aggregate we do not raise three-quarters of a bushel of wheat for each individual of our population.

Therefore, however high we may rank as shipbuilders and ocean carriers, we can but claim a very inferior position as agriculturists supplying ourselves with food.

As a remarkable illustration of the opposite extreme, in which agricultural industry claims overwhelming pre-eminence, we find in the State of Minnesota a still greater effort determined in one direction. Seven-tenths of the cultivated area of Minnesota is put in wheat, and more than one-half, or 57 per cent., of her population, is engaged in its cultivation, and 8 per cent. in sending it to market—thus making about two-thirds of the entire population of that State chiefly engaged in the one operation of cultivating and sending wheat to market. But this is not all: There are in Minnesota 14 per cent. of her people occupying themselves as mechanics and manufacturers; but in what kind of industry do they find their chief employment?—in the building of mills for the grinding of wheat into flour. But where so large a proportion of the population is engaged in one kind of industry, the remaining portion (which, in the case of Minnesota, amounts to 21 per cent. of

professional men) expect much of their income from the sale of the wheat crop. If these statements were not based on high authority, which is no less than that of the statistician in the U. S. Department of Agriculture, we should scarcely credit them.\*

Newfoundland furnishes us with another illustration of a people devoting themselves almost exclusively to one branch of industry; and for the purpose of this evening's lecture I shall consider Newfoundland as one of our Maritime Provinces. Possibly the time is not far removed when it will be allied to us by stronger ties than at present bind it, and form an integral part of our wide-spread Dominion.

In the 'Maritime Provinces' we usually include Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, but in a general review of the industry of an entire State, such as the Dominion of Canada, we cannot isolate certain parts of the Province of Quebec which border on the ocean, just as much as many parts of New Brunswick. Nor in a forecast of the future can we forget the Island of Anticosti or the vast extent of coast line which affords harbors for our fishing craft on the Labrador, and which, like Newfoundland, may become of great importance in relation to mineral wealth.

Therefore, in attempting to penetrate, however feebly, the veil which hangs over the future of the Maritime portion of the Dominion, I do not think that the subject can be fairly dealt with,

\*Address on Agricultural Statistics, by the Statistician of the Department of Agriculture, 1874.