

enough in the country for both Thoroughbred and Hackney, and that there are many districts in which the average type of mare would suit the Hackney cross much better than the Thoroughbred. The produce of the latter, they say, is a weedy brute, which is good for nothing, while the produce of the Hackney under similar conditions is a useful general purpose horse. Which view will be taken by the commissioners is, of course, undetermined, but they are going about their work in a very thorough fashion, and will no doubt report fairly on the evidence submitted to them.

AGRICULTURAL LEGISLATION.

We have only space left for a brief summary of the legislation of the year bearing on agriculture. In this respect 1896 has been unique. Whatever may be the result of their labors, it will not be denied that the present House of Commons and Government have attempted to do more for agriculture than any legislature we have had here for many years. Three notable pieces of work have been done—the Cattle Diseases Bill, the Act authorizing the construction of light railways, and the Act relieving agricultural subjects of a considerable share of local taxation. Of the meaning and significance of the first of these no Canadian needs to be informed. Its object was and its result is to make permanent the policy of keeping the ports of this country closed to store cattle. Foreign cattle must all come in at for immediate slaughter. This has been followed by a rise in the price of store cattle and an increase in the number of cattle imported fat, so that the result has meanwhile not been favorable to the British cattle feeder. Breeding, however, is being rapidly pushed forward, and there will soon be so many more store cattle in the market, alike from Ireland and the higher lands of Scotland, that prices will come back and be more in keeping with the prices at which fat cattle are sold. Of the effect on Canada it is not for us to speak, but we should hope it has not been at all so disastrous as was anticipated by Sir Charles Tupper and others while the agitation was in progress in this country on the subject.

The Light Railways Act excited very little comment and almost no discussion in Parliament. The success which attended the laying down of these light railways in the West of Ireland was what induced the Government to propose similar legislation for Great Britain. In this country, as a rule, railways are promoted by private enterprise, under parliamentary sanction and restrictions. Naturally, these are only promoted in districts where there is some reasonable probability of a remunerative traffic being conducted. The Act recently passed empowers local authorities to lay down railroads of a light construction in remote districts where there is no such volume of traffic as would pay a dividend, and for this end to borrow money from Government with which to defray the cost of construction and up-keep. The idea is to develop traffic and to encourage trade in these remote localities. The roads are laid down at a cheaper rate than the ordinary railroad, and, of course, the loads permitted to be carried are much less than those guaranteed on the regular lines. The theory is that in course of time, by the development of traffic, these lines, or at least some of them, may become valuable enough to be merged into the ordinary railway system of the country; but even if that should never take place, they bring the remote parts of the country into the main stream of traffic and facilitate the marketing of farm produce of all kinds. Should the Act which comes into operation on the 14th inst., authorizing the running of motor cars on the ordinary highways at a speed of ten or fourteen miles an hour, lead to the invention and production of an engine which can be manipulated successfully, it is just possible that the Light Railways Act may not be much availed of. If produce can be carried along the existing roads at the speed indicated, there will be little sense in expending money acquiring ground and laying down a track for light cars and steam engines. In the meantime, however, we have not seen a motor which is in the least likely to accomplish the end aimed at. Several engineers are, however, engaged in perfecting such motors, and one of them at least in Glasgow promises to be a success. Meantime the means are provided for laying down light railways, and to some extent at least they will be taken advantage of. Of the Rating Bill some account was given while it was before the country, and little good is to be accomplished by repetition. Briefly, it ordains that for local rates agricultural land shall only be charged at one-third of its rental. Farmers think it should be one-fourth, and are agitating for this. In any case, one-third is better than the whole, and the Act is an installment of justice to which agriculture was fairly entitled.

Do your neighbor a good turn by inducing him to subscribe for the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

Most Encouraging.

FARMING IN THE HOME OF THE FRENCH-CANADIAN—A RETURN TO DESERTED FARMS ALREADY TAKING PLACE—THE NEEDS OF THE TIMES.

(BY W. A. HALE.)

The tendencies of farming in this Province within the last thirty years point in a very marked degree towards dairying, and in the last five years of that period far greater advances have been made than during the whole balance of the thirty years, and yet—to what it ought to be if properly fostered—it seems to be still in its infancy. Between the years 1870 and '75 a great boom of cheese factories swept over the Province, with the inevitable result of an overstocked home market, no foreign market to depend upon, and a corresponding collapse, with great financial loss to the farmers and cheese factory owners. Stall feeding of cattle then revived for a time, but dwindled under Western competition till not one basement stable in ten contained the animals it formerly sheltered. Sheep paid well for many years, but a decline in the price of wool (owing, of course, to competition from Australia, the Cape, and South America) and the want of good shipping facilities for lambs to a market, free of duty, together with such unsatisfactory laws regarding sheep-killing dogs, have all tended to reduce the flocks in a very noticeable degree. Fruit-growing, particularly apples, has increased enormously and is still on the increase, and this branch is being well looked after as far as helping the growers to secure good transportation to Europe. Poultry-raising is improving, though still principally as an adjunct to each farm's profits, there being as yet very few specially engaged in the business. Maple sugar and syrup, though cheaper than formerly, are made and sold in greater quantities and, owing to the improved machinery employed, at greater profit. Lumbering, particularly pulp wood, ties, and spruce and hardwood logs, has become so identical with winter work

oil, and we ought to trim our tariff in accordance with that of our cousins across the line.

The prospects are most encouraging. It is true the prices of most agricultural products are low, but were it otherwise the chances are that combines and capitalists would "corner" and control any one branch that showed for a time any large profit; therefore let us be content with a moderate price for our coming industry, butter (cheese is established). We need the new bacterial (culture) butter before we can compete with Denmark. Putting the purchasing power of \$1.00 at 100 cents in 1865, it is to the farmer to-day at least \$1.50; and although the prices of some of the farm products have declined, still the cost of production has, by the use of improved machinery, been reduced fully fifty per cent., so that were it not for the tending towards extravagance the farmers generally would be far better off than were those of the previous generation. Take one instance: In 1865 the price of white sugar was eleven cents per pound and the annual consumption was seven pounds per head for each man, woman and child in Canada; to-day the price is say four and a half cents a pound, but the annual consumption has increased to sixty-five pounds per head. Still, on the whole, the farming prospects are most encouraging, and a return to the deserted farms is already taking place. The health and happiness that go hand in hand with a country life cannot be purchased in cities. There is not a single live Londoner of the fifth generation to-day.

The Golden West.

A COMPREHENSIVE AND IMPARTIAL REVIEW OF BRITISH COLUMBIA FARMING—THE SPECULATIVE ERA PAST—WHAT EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT—SETTLING DOWN TO BUSINESS—OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED.

(BY R. E. GOSNELL, PROVINCIAL LIBRARIAN.)

As President Cleveland would say, it is a condition, not a theory, that confronts the farmer of British Columbia to-day. The theory is that the soil is particularly fertile and the climate equable and mild, peculiarly adapted for perfect fruiting. Both assumptions are quite correct. Conditions, however, somewhat modify the theory. Farming in British Columbia has not been the success that might naturally have been anticipated under circumstances which appeared so favorable. I have been asked to write an article on the "present tendencies, needs, and possibilities" of agriculture in British Columbia. The farmer of Ontario, who I consider enjoys the very Eden of America, if, indeed, such a spot in agriculture can be said to exist on this or any other continent, has had his cup full of woes. California, of which the cornucopia might most appropriately be chosen as an emblem, has suffered much. In fact, the farmer everywhere, outside of Utah—and the significance of the exception will be seen later on—has had "a hard row to hoe," more particularly in the Golden West. Therefore, it is not with the intention of giving a "black eye" to the industry that the broad statement has been made with reference to farming in our Province.

Ten years ago, although agriculture was but slightly developed here, the highest hopes of success were held out. On the face of it the conditions were of the most favorable—comparatively limited area of agricultural lands; protection by tariff and freight rates from outside competition; generous, even extraordinary, yield of all kinds of crops; freedom from blights, parasitic diseases and the like; sure crops, and a demand for farm products, which brought high prices and imports per annum amounting to between \$1,500,000 and \$2,000,000 in the aggregate. The drawbacks were those, of course, incident to a new country—imperfect communication, immature methods, the difficulty and expense (in our case peculiarly so) of bringing the accessible land into cultivation, and all the rest of it. On the whole, however, the advantages were clearly in favor of the farmer who could reach the market. For a time he prospered, or should have prospered, like a green bay tree. Just about the time referred to good farm lands began to be at a premium. Knowledge of the conditions referred to above impressed most people that farming some day would become the most prosperous of industries, and it was thought, and with good show of reason, that when the varied resources of the Province began to develop—mining, timber, and fisheries—with the consequent inflow of population, the demand for farm products would place those fortunate enough to have land quite on the "velvet."

It is scarcely possible to imagine a more fortuitous combination of circumstances or better opportunities for success. With, as I have frequently known it, fresh eggs in the winter time 75c. and \$1 per dozen, good butter 35c. to 50c. per pound, Eastern apples \$6 and \$7 a barrel, meats and all other provisions on a similar scale, and a splendid



FRENCH-CANADIAN HARVEST SCENE IN QUEBEC PROVINCE.

on the farm of late as almost to be classed as agriculture, and as the timber disappears and the land is cleared so also will the tendency to dairying increase, furnishing occupation the year round for those who now look to the lumber camps for winter work. The wheat belt has long since swept West, and where the traveling threshing machines have diminished I am sorry to say the hay presses have stepped in, indicating a crying need for an increased dairy industry, for we have heretofore been too apt to work our land more as though it were a mine that had an unlimited deposit of fertility.

Our needs are great, but the difficulty of supplying them is greater. Better education in the rural schools, with agriculture as one of its branches, I would place first as most likely to help in working out its own salvation, supplying better municipal and parliamentary representatives; better laws to regulate the building of unnecessary roadside and farm fences, by which an annual saving might be made that would more than pay the whole amount of the present rural school tax; better roads, with paid Government instructors to show how they should be made, and a law to regulate the weight of the loads in accordance with the width of the tires used on public roads, and a municipal reduction in road taxes to those who use broad tires; less railway subsidies, but more Government road grants to be worked out by the rural municipalities; more care in insuring cold storage, quick, cheap, and safe transportation for fruit, meat, and butter; and, most important of all, continued and increased practical assistance to our dairy industries (particularly the more expensive creameries), such as we have had so excellently furnished by the Superintendent and his staff from the Experimental Farm at Ottawa. The Farmers' Institute system needs encouragement, and plowmen's associations are well worthy of Local Government support.

Among our French-Canadian friends the Roman Catholic clergy are doing good practical work by promoting farmers' clubs, plowing matches, organizing cheese factories and creamery companies, and render good service in transmitting scientific knowledge and the results of Government experimental work. We need free corn, we need free coal