

reference. They contain a record of the lien number, name, age and location of each settler, together with the name and age of each member of every family. The number of acres under cultivation of wheat, oats, and potatoes, average per acre, yield and market value of the same. Total acres under cultivation, breaking, backsetting and summer fallow done during the year, and grand total of acres that can be brought under cultivation during the spring of 1896, as well as the live stock on the farms, value of improvements, &c. on each homestead, present approximate value of the Board's security, amount advanced (principal) by the Board and general remarks.

Recapitulation.

A comparative statement has been added for the years 1890 and 1895, which shows that the total acres brought under the plough in 1890 was 188, and for 1895, 191, an increase of 3 acres, also that the total number of acres under cultivation for 1890 was 129, and for 1895, 162 acres, an increase of 33 acres. In 1890 the acreage under wheat was 47½, which yielded over 16 bushels, and in 1895, 58 acres, which is estimated would yield 25 bushels to the acre. In 1890 the number of acres under oats was 73½, with an average yield of over 23 bushels to the acre, and in 1895, 86 acres, with an estimated average yield of 35 bushels to the acre. In 1890 the acreage under potatoes was 8½, which yielded 1,480 bushels, and in 1895, 18 acres, which yielded 4,365 bushels.

The cause of the crofters not having sown a larger area of grain is explained by the settlers having practically given up grain growing, and devoting their attention to the raising of live stock, which they say "pays best, and allows us to go out and earn money" during the sowing and harvest seasons."

As already pointed out in my letter of the 15th October last, the crops sown in the Colony were almost a total failure owing to hail (15th June) and frost (25th August). The hail storm not only retarded the growth of the new wheat and oat blades, but was directly the cause of the crops not ripening before the first general frost (25th August). Owing to the small acreage of grain sown by each crofter the owners of threshing machines refused to thresh the settlers' crops; they have, therefore, had no threshing done, and any grain required for gristing purposes has had to be flailed. Although the wheat and oat crop has been damaged, it is estimated the former would yield 25, and the latter 35 bushels to the acre, and should sell respectively for 35 and 12 cents per bushel.

The potato crop has fortunately been an abundant one, and nearly every crofter has more than sufficient for his requirements. Last autumn they were selling for 12 cents, and at the present time are worth 25 cents per bushel.

It will be further learned from the comparative statement that in 1890 the crofters had no horses, and in 1895 they had in their possession 21 horses. In 1890 the number of I.C.B. oxen was 28, and in 1895 15, a decrease of 13. Again, in 1890 they had no other oxen than those supplied to them by the Board, while in 1895 they had 8. I.C.B. cows, 1890, numbered 19, and in 1895, 12, a decrease of 7 cows. Cows purchased by the settlers, in addition to those supplied by the Board in 1890, numbered 6, and in 1895 this number was increased to 54, an increase of 48 cows. The number of young stock, poultry, &c. is as follows:—Heifers, 1890, 15; 1895, 57, an increase of 42. Steers, 1890, 14; 1895, 11, a decrease of 3. Bulls, 1890, 1;

in 1895, 34, an increase of 33. Poultry, 1890, 176; 1895, 513, an increase of 337. Pigs, 1890, 0; 1895, 4. Sheep, 1890, 0; 1895, 14. In 1890 the settlers put up in stack 290 tons of hay, and in 1895, 664 tons.

Owing to the damage done to the crops by frost, and the small acreage of grain under cultivation, and also the high prices paid for stock (2½ to 4 cents per pound live weight) by cattle buyers for shipment to England, the number of live stock in the Colony during the period 1894 and 1895 has slightly decreased.

Repayments to I.C.B.

As instructed in your letter of the 27th March 1895, every crofter in the settlement was personally called upon by the agent for the amount due to the Board. Their replies will be found in the individual reports.

As mentioned in the agent's letter of the 15th October last, the settlers had, previous to their visit to the Colony, decided amongst themselves that they never would be in a position to pay off their obligations to the Board, and that on his visiting the Colony they requested him, as their agent, to ask the Board to take over their present homesteads for the amount they owed, and to arrange with the Dominion Government to allow them to make entries for new homesteads. In accordance with the instructions contained in your letter, 30th November last, the crofters have been notified that the matter has been under the consideration of the Board, and that negotiations are taking place with the Government on the subject. The solicitors of the Board (Macdonald Tupper, Phippen and Tupper) have informed the agent that, owing to the introduction of important Government Bills, which occupied the time of the Minister of the Interior, they were unable to complete arrangements with his department—which is hoped will eventually grant the crofters' request.

Patents and Sale Abandoned Lands.

The solicitors of the Board have informed the agent that the department of the interior at Ottawa are issuing the patents for the abandoned lands as quickly as the procedure exacted by that department will permit.

With a view of disposing the abandoned lands by sale, lists have been made and posted in the different post offices in the district in which they are situated, stating that for particulars of sale apply to the agent of the Board, Winnipeg.

School Taxes.

In accordance with instructions received from the Board's solicitors, the agent offered the trustees of the Meadowvale school district the taxes due upon those sections on which the settlers earned a patent prior to abandoning their lands, by cultivation and residence. To date the trustees have not accepted the agent's offer, and the matter remains in *statu quo*.

General Remarks.

It is gratifying for the agent to be able to inform the Board that he has been told by a Saltcoats citizen whose store the crofters patronise that, with very few exceptions, the crofters now never ask for credit, and where credit is given they seldom allow the promised date of payment to pass without discharging the debt.