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ADDRESS OF H. RUTTAN, Esq.

PRESIDENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF
UPPER CANADA,*Delivered at Kingston, Sept. 20, 1849.*

GENTLEMEN,—It has become a custom (copying after the usage in similar institutions in Europe and the United States) to exact from the president of the association, an address, to be formally delivered at our annual meeting.

In fulfilling this duty to-day, it is not my intention to inflict upon you a long dissertation upon the science of agriculture, much less to discuss the abstruse subject of chemistry as applicable to this important art. Indeed had I the temerity, surrounded as I am by such an array of talent and erudition to grapple with these subjects, I should consider their discussion by me as out of place upon an occasion like the present. A few practical and very general remarks are all that can be expected at such a time.

My intention, therefore, is merely to take a glance at a few prominent and general features of the state of the crops for the present year, so far as I have been enabled to judge of them, and to make some suggestions as to the feasibility of varying and extending our farm productions. I shall also revert to a few incidents in the early settlement of the country—especially as they bear upon the state of agriculture from that period down to the present time—and of the prospects which are before us in our efforts for the future; and if I cannot find matter for much congratulation in the farming history of the province for the last twenty or thirty years, I hope I shall not give offence in honestly saying so—nor be deemed presumptuous in attempting to point out a course for the future, through which alone, in my own opinion, we can attain a state of prosperity, wealth and contentment. I shall also, I trust, be excused for adapting my remarks more especially to the farmers in the immediate neighbourhood of whom this exhibition is held.

So far as I have been enabled to learn, the wheat crop has, during this season, been rather over than under the average of the last five years. Most kinds of spring grain, as also hay, have evidently fallen short of an average crop—especially on the heavy clays around the bay of Quinte—and a scarcity may be depended upon.

Indian corn, which I consider as standing next to wheat in point of importance, I am happy to see, is, after a lapse of more than twenty years, again coming into general cultivation; and I hope that,

by the blessing of Providence in ordering the seasons, whose alternations have so long deprived us of this valuable plant, we shall again see surrounding our barn-yards and out-houses, the old-fashioned corn crib. Peas, rye and buckwheat, are not so generally grown as they formerly were, but oats have steadily increased in quantity, and so also has barley. The regular growing of turnips upon old land dates from the first general immigration of old-country people, about twenty-five years ago, and I am happy to see the cultivation of this valuable esculent becoming general amongst my own countrymen. The potato blight, which has caused so much distress in some portions of Europe, and has, more or less, affected every country where the growth of that root was known, has, we have reason to hope, exhibited symptoms of giving way, and this valuable root will once more fill the blank in our farm productions which it was wont to do. Our pork and beef are a better article than formerly, but it appears to me that there is not the quantity in proportion to our cleared land that there was. I attribute the falling-off in these articles, and in peas, to the decline of the lumbering business, which, except perhaps up the Ottawa and its tributaries, and the river Trent, is becoming unprofitable. From the year 1800 until about 1840, this business created and steadily maintained a ready cash market for those indispensable items of a lumberman's breakfast, dinner and supper; one proof amongst many, of the advantage of a home market for our produce. Rye is nearly out of cultivation in the upper part of the Province, and by the time that Father Matthew shall have gone his rounds will, I suppose, have received its final blow so far as regards its cultivation for whiskey; but as our old fields become exhausted this valuable grain must necessarily supply the place of wheat for food; for which purpose indeed it is no doubt a more healthy article. As it respects barley and oats, the quantity grown has steadily kept pace—the one with the immigration of old country people—the other with the increase of horses. The manufacture of pot-ashes and lumber, depending altogether upon the unbroken forests for their production, must, with those forests, recede and finally become annihilated; so that two out of the three staple productions of the Province can no longer, I think, be reckoned upon as sources of wealth to the country.

Butter and cheese have hitherto never received that general attention which both their importance, as well as the markets, have demanded. One