

REPORT.

AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS.

The Committee are of opinion that the manufacturing and commercial interests of our country should be thoroughly co-operative with our important agricultural interests, in order that the general prosperity be advanced, and that, therefore any protective tariff on manufactures is justifiable only on the grounds that it will improve our home markets for farm products, and that such home market ought to be preserved as much as possible to the agriculturalists of our own country, especially in the face of the exclusive policy of the neighboring Republic. With a view to such co-operation, the Committee corresponded with the Committee on Manufacturing Interests, but, to their regret, without any successful issue. The following resolution embodying the reply received, "That while the Committee on Manufacturing Interests will cheerfully consider any suggestions made to them by the Committee on Agricultural Interests, they are of opinion that having made considerable progress with the inquiry specially referred to them the Committee on Manufacturing Interests would find the introduction of other questions incompatible with the due discharge of their duties."

The Committee having carefully examined the result of the labors of a former Committee on the subject of agriculture, find that much valuable information had been obtained directly from the farmers and millers of the country, through the means of questions addressed to leading men engaged in milling and farming industries, the names and addresses of whom were obtained from the Members of the Senate and of a late House of Commons, as well as from other available sources. The substance of which information as obtained from a Draft Report of a former Committee, the present Committee beg to embody in the Report which they now have the honor to submit.

The replies up to date of last meeting of the late Committee numbered 206, a little more than half coming from farmers, and the balance from millers.

In answer to questions regarding the operation of duties on foreign produce, imposed in April, 1870, and repealed in March, 1871, four-fifths both of farmers and millers replied, that the duties, though too light, were very beneficial, and their removal injurious to the farming and milling interests.

While of remaining answers, nine out of ten are doubtful, as the time of the operation of duties was too short from which to form correct judgment, only four farmers and two millers venturing to say that it was injurious.

To question whether it is in the interest of the Dominion to admit American produce free, while Canadian produce exported over the border has to pay 20 per cent., five-sixths of both farmers and millers reply "No; that it is decidedly against the interests of this country;" and many of the few who answer otherwise appear to believe that the Americans will yet reciprocate and admit our produce free, of which the Committee do not see the slightest indication.

To question what duties should be imposed on foreign flour and produce, the greater number advise the same as the Americans impose on ours; while a respectable number recommend half as high, and only a very few that duties should not be imposed; and the chief part of these latter hold the idea that if we leave our ports open to the United States, that that country will open theirs to us. Of which again we would say there appears no prospect.