

they can be beaten by Canadians and other colonists, as with grain. Many farmers exclaim: "I wish Canadian beasts were not allowed to land." This may be the wishes of our farmers, but the millions say to Canada: Send us your beef and mutton.

I think 1889 will prove one of the worst years ever known to farmers. Root crops have been considerably better this year, but the potatoes are greatly affected with disease, and sell at a very low figure—prices which would apply to root crops in general. In fact, the future of the farmers around looks very bad, and hundreds in every county must seek homes anew.

The owners and cultivators of land must lately have a somewhat anxious time. The farmers have heard deliberate proposals made to deprive them of their property; the latter have had to fight against a constantly increasing colonial and foreign competition. Both these sources of disturbance have had a tendency to depress the value of land. And the treatment of the tithes question by the Government has had a very unsettling effect on the affairs of landowners. It is interesting at such a time to know how agriculture has been affected by these influences, and this information is partly supplied in the official agricultural returns, which have just been issued. It is true that the returns tell us nothing about rent, and, therefore, do not enable us to gauge the exact position of the landowners, but they do show, whether the land is or is not going out of cultivation, and they supply details of agricultural changes which are important as well as interesting. One striking fact brought out in these returns is that the number of occupiers who rent land has increased since the same period last year nearly six thousand. Against this there has to be placed a decrease of about a thousand who own the land they cultivate, and of nearly two hundred who rent and own land. The general result is a very considerable increase in the number of holdings, which proves that land is in greater demand than it was. Upwards of one thousand acres of land are now in the hands of the tenants, in excess of the land they held last year. The returns show that, while the area of cultivated land is increasing, the area of our crops is decreasing. The increase has been chiefly in the direction of permanent and temporary pasture. The cultivators are gradually accommodating themselves to the new conditions.

For small fruit culture, such as currants and gooseberries, there is an increased acreage in south-western counties of upwards of one thousand acres. The number of horned cattle shows an increase of over ten thousand, and the increase of sheep and lambs is nearly four hundred thousand. As the area for cultivating corn is diminishing, the numbers of sheep and cattle, and the fruit orchards and market gardens, are increasing. Another item of interest in the returns has relation to ensilage. There are now in Great Britain nearly two hundred more silos than last year, and the total capacity of the silos shows an increase of more than six thousand cubic feet. Wheat comes to Bristol in enormous quantities from Canada, America, Russia and India; and fresh meat and canned goods from Canada, America, Australia and New Zealand, form a large item in the food markets of this district. Dairy produce, fresh meat, butter, eggs and fruit are likely to receive more attention from farmers than they have yet done. The returns demonstrate that the tendency is in this direction. As the competition with the colonies and foreign countries grows keener, it may be expected that all restrictions which embarrass the English cultivator will be brought up for examination.

There has been a great increase this year in the Canadian cattle trade. As regards beasts and sheep, there has also been, I am pleased to state, a marked improvement in the quality. I would strongly urge shippers to ship quality, as they would then be sure of a remunerative price. The necessity of raising only the best class of animals is very easily shown. The cost to the farmer should not be any greater in raising a fine class of stock, as compared with ordinary animals, though, perhaps, involving a little extra care and trouble at the start. In the next place, the cost of buying and handling a poor animal is nearly as great as it would be to handle a choice one. In the matter of ocean freights, for instance, this charge is by the head. An animal weighing, say 200 pounds above the average, would be carried to Liverpool or Bristol at the same rate as a light one. This means that the extra