

Tests of New Seed Grain.

We request all who received four-ounce packages of seed grain from us last spring, to report to us this month.

Prices of Commodities in 1889.

The course of prices in general this year thus far has been quite unusual. The normal tendency is to maintain about the level of midwinter until after May 1st, because whatever supplies of farm products may have been, whether large or small, nothing can be added until after May, nor can there be any clear indication how much will be added until after the beginning of that month. From May to midsummer prices usually decline, because fresh supplies of perishable products come forward, and prospects for the future render the demands for the holders as to products of other sorts not so unyielding. With definite information as to the probable yield some time in midsummer the markets usually adjust itself to the new conditions rising steadily if crops are scanty, or falling gradually if they are abundant. Contrasted with the normal course of markets, there has been this year a sharp fall in prices through the months of January—May inclusive, amounting to more than 7 per cent., then a gradual rise to over 3 per cent. notwithstanding the certainty of full crops, and more recently a rapid fall already exceeding $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

For explanation of this strangeness of movement, it is necessary to go back to last year. For 1888 began with prices unusually high for late years, and in fact artificially high. With fair crops and healthy manufacturers, in these days, prices are almost 20 per cent. lower than in May, 1860, but before the end of January, 1888, the level was so high that \$87.60 would have been required to buy the same qualities and quantities that \$100 would have bought in 1860. From that point there was but little decline until the end of March, but with the speculative breakdown prices rapidly fell to \$79.80 for the same articles June 30th. Again speculative competitions interfered, and the prices of the same commodities rose to \$82.45, October 14th, but thereafter fell to \$81.52 at the end of the year, showing a decline of about \$6 during the year.

Starting at that point there was an almost continual decline in 1889 through the months of January to May inclusive, as the water was gradually squeezed out of prices, so to speak, until the cost of the same articles and quantities at the close of May was only \$75.66 against \$100 in 1860. This was the lowest point on record for the month of May, and it will naturally be inferred that the pressure of old stocks, carried so long in the hope of better prices before new crops should come forward, caused a depression below the normal level of that season. In fact there was a moderate and gradual recovery during the four following months, with some evidence toward the close of an unnatural inflation of prices for the season, for when the same articles had come to be worth \$78.23, October 4, they fell much more rapidly than they had advanced, and the same articles which cost \$100 in 1860 would have cost only \$76.94 on 15th November. Thus the present level is about 23 per cent. below that of May, 1860.

A little allowance must be made for the fact, however, that the level of prices in May, 1860, was somewhat higher than in November, and is usually higher May 1st than November 1st, provided the crops are not largely deficient. With that allowance, it may be said that prices are now fully 20 per cent. below those of November 1st, 1860, which is not far from the normal relation for recent years, so far as comparisons have yet determined. Low as prices are, it is therefore not to be inferred that they are much

if any below the legitimate and natural level, all classes of articles considered. For some articles the depression is more than is natural, obviously, while for others it is less than the known changes in modes of production, cost of transportation and condition of markets would warrant.

A very great factor in the decline of 20 per cent. during a generation has been the reduction in the cost of transportation. This has affected articles very differently according to their bulk, or the distance of markets from the places of chief production. On wheat, for example, the rate November 1, 1860, was 65 cents per 100 pounds by rail, from Chicago to New York, and is now 25 cents, while a further reduction has occurred in the rates west of Chicago. Probably as much as 25 cents per bushel has been taken from the price of wheat at New York by the change in cost of transportation alone, and about as much in cents and proportionately more in the price of other grain. With such a change definitely known, it is idle to dispute about minor causes. On the other hand, the decline in many manufactured products has been mainly due to improvements in method. Thus the price of iron and its products, and particularly of steel and steel rails, has been reduced in many instances from 60 to 80 per cent. But even in the cost of these products, a considerable reduction is due to the decline in charges for transporting the materials and the products themselves.—[N. Y. Commercial Bulletin.

Farmers and National Development.

BY PROF. J. W. ROBERTSON, GUELPH.

As a nation progresses in skilful agricultural methods, so it advances in all the attainments of civilization. You hear farmers called clodhoppers, hayseeds, and nobodies, but if you will gauge the progress of farmers in most nations you will have gauged the progress of that nation itself in all that appertains to civilization. As the farm resources are developed, and as farmers are prosperous, so will the whole nation be strong and wealthy. The progress of agricultural operations, and their success, run parallel with all other kinds of prosperity and desirable achievement in our nation. A nation, or a tribe, whose methods of producing food are very simple and rude, are a people almost semi-barbarous in their nature. You cannot cite me a single instance of a race or tribe employing the cruder methods of agriculture who are not merely emerging from a state of barbarism and its accompanying conditions. A race content to live upon purely vegetable products, roots, fruits and grain, is always a race having little influence in the world. Following up that line of statement, people who live exclusively on vegetables must eventually become "small potatoes," in every sense of the word. Now, if simple tillage of the soil to bring forth vegetable products will not suffice, then we have to provide for other foods, richer in their quality and more invigorating in their properties; because, after all, the intellectual, social and financial power of a community or nation can be gauged by what appears on the breakfast-tables of its people. The reflex of a people on their breakfast tables is a strange and interesting study, and one which I have often enjoyed both at home and abroad. We need to have good butter there, for if we don't, all the rest is spoiled; and the people who eat the most butter are the best brain-workers on the earth. Butter is the brain food of the world. We have been told that fish is brain food, but I don't think so. A man once wrote to a distinguished humorist, asking if fish was brain food, and if it were, how much ought he (the correspondent) to take per meal. The reply was that fish was popularly believed to be brain-producing food, and if it were, judging from the question he asked, it would be advisable for the correspondent to eat a whale entire every day.

Some Things Which Hinder Greater Success in Canadian Husbandry.

BY JOHN CAMPBELL, JR., WOODVILLE, ONT.
(Continued from November Number.)

WANT OF DRAINING

is without doubt blocking the path to the successful and profitable cropping of large portions of many Canadian farms. This is a want difficult to overcome for two reasons:—First, so comparatively few have given any attention to the matter that the majority do not apprehend how possible it is to largely increase the production by this means where too much moisture is present in the ground. Again, thorough draining being expensive, many are apt to look on a large outlay buried out of sight as speculative, with as many chances against them getting the dollars back as in favor of the return. Persons who will not hesitate to expend freely in buildings or stock will pause ere investing in draining, though reliable authorities state that usually the increased yield will, in about four years, repay all the cost of tile draining.

My experience has been that sometimes two years increase of crops has returned the full outlay on land which would give but grass, and that not the best. With such a sure prospect of the expenditure returning in a few short years, and the after benefits all to the credit without a debit, it is indeed strange that this obstacle is being so slowly removed.

CLOSE ATTENTION TO DETAILS

is very important, as it makes smooth the upward path to success, so that the pace may be more rapid. If the little odds and ends of our business are attended to at the right time, it acts like oil upon the axle, as friction is lessened, a hindrance removed, and the advance to a full measure of agricultural prosperity made easier. There are many hindrances to success, which at present I must pass over, as several of them are of sufficient importance to devote an article to each, among which might be mentioned the careless preparation of soil for cropping, thoughtless, and, therefore, unprofitable use of crops when grown, and waste of the manure heap, which ought to contain a large proportion of the annual profit.

It has been well said, "Agriculture must keep pace with other arts; or, rather, the other professions of the world cannot exist without a progressive advancement in the knowledge of the agriculturist."

"The plow and the sickle shall shine bright in glory
When the sword and the sceptre shall crumble
and rust:
And the farmer shall live both in song and in story,
When warriors and kings are forgotten in dust."

I will now proceed to show how obstacles to our securing larger returns for our labor are placed in the way, and while not under individual control, are, nevertheless, within our reach, and subject to us if we exercise our strength collectively.

The system of electing

PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVES

is one not conducive to the farmers' interests, as by it we usually elect, not real representatives, but those pledged to do and vote as the one or other party leader will dictate. Does it not indicate sad lack of judgment on our part when we put forth every effort to elect those whose most commendable given qualifications are that they may be relied on to vote strictly on party lines in parliament? Do we consider any party leader so infallible as to justify us in choosing