

# CANADA AS A FOOD PRODUCING COUNTRY.

COMMITTEE ROOM 46, HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
Thursday, 20th February, 1896.

The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization met at 10.30 o'clock a.m., this day, Mr. Sproule, Chairman, presiding.

Mr. JAS. W. ROBERTSON, Agricultural and Dairy Commissioner, was present by request, and on invitation addressed the Committee as follows:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I have been invited this morning to give some information on the exportation of perishable food products from Canada, that I might lead up to an explanation of the plan which is proposed for adoption by the Government to improve the methods of exporting—meats and other foods. You will allow me a few minutes to state how this country stands in its capacity and adaptation for the production of perishable food products, in comparison with other countries that compete with us. It is admitted by everybody that the sure way to increase the wealth of a country and to promote its prosperity is for its people to realize on their natural resources, through intelligent skilful labour. The natural resources of Canada are mainly those which can be realized upon through agriculture. The resources of all countries may be classified as, first, those which are inexhaustible, such as soil, climate, and water supply. Fertility of the soil is different from the soil itself; the former is a resource which may be exhausted. Secondly there are exhaustible resources which are not restorable, such as the coal fields, natural gas, and the supply of minerals which once exhausted cannot be restored. Again there are exhaustible resources which may be restored but which are liable to deterioration, such as the supply of fish in our lakes and streams and the supply of water in our rivers,—for water power may be lessened by the denudation of the hillsides of their trees, and the consequent irregularity of drainage and of rainfall. Moreover there are resources which are exhaustible and are still capable of restoration, with improvement and increase by use. Among these are the resources of fertility of soil, building materials, available labour, and educational attainments on the part of the people. These while easily exhaustible, can still be improved and increased by use. Coming to point out the resources that Canada possesses for the production of perishable food products, let me use this chart for a moment to show that, for the production of such fine food products as will give Canadian farmers a fair and good chance with their competitors in other countries, we have excellent resources:

Soil,	} Plants.	} Domestic	} Cost of	} Profits.
Climate,				
Water Supply,				
Building Materials,				
Available Labour,	} quality	} Animals	} Products	
"				
"	} cost			
Markets.				
			Prices.	

In soil Canada has no superior among all the countries where the people follow farming for a living; but fertility of soil is not always a source or assurance of wealth to the people who live on it. I shall use only one illustration to make my meaning clear with reference to that. The people who dwell on the Delta of the Nile live on the richest soil I think, that lies anywhere under the sun; and they are among the poorest of people who follow the tilling of land for their living. Even with the fertility of the land of Egypt the people stay poor, chiefly because they have not realized upon other available resources, mainly perhaps that of intelligent labour as applied to their calling. We in Canada have a climate which is admirably adapted for growing very