

NOVA SCOTIA

JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE

Published under direction of the Board of Agriculture of Nova Scotia.

VOL. II.

HALIFAX, N. S., JANUARY, 1876.

No. 118.

HALIFAX, 20th, January, 1876.

To eradicate couch grass requires repeated ploughing, harrowing, and hoeing. It is the same with prejudices, and we intend to keep at them. In last number of the *JOURNAL* we took the liberty to urge upon our readers, in a very pointed way, the absolute necessity of growing **Root-Crops** in order to make farming pay well in this Province. We did so because it is our belief that no system of farming can possibly pay well in a temperate climate without root cultivation. But we stated that roots cost more to raise than they are worth after they are raised, and we promised to show in what way the profit is obtained. In the recent discussion on cattle feeding at Inverness by some of the most experienced men from the best cattle districts of Scotland, we have produced another paradox like unto that of root cultivation; it was clearly made out that cattle could not be fattened except at a money loss! Yet none of the Scotch farmers there assembled proposed to give up feeding. The profit in this case is in the manure. We know that ideas of this kind are apt to sound strange in the ears of some of our farmers, and they do so simply because the very elements of systematic practical farming have not been acquired. Dexterity in holding a plough, in mowing hay, in hoeing potatoes, in feeding and caring for cattle,—all these, we allow, are most important qualifications,—but men who possess them are apt to arrogate to themselves an exclusive claim to the rank of “practical farmer.” We hold that this is a mischievous mistake. If the man who possesses these qualifications does not likewise possess the higher one of capacity to work his farm on an intelligent system, founded upon the relation-

ships of expenditure to income, of profit to loss, of cost of production to returns of produce, then he is not a farmer at all, but merely a farm labourer. He may be trusted to perform the mechanical work upon a farm, but, wherever a large amount of capital is staked, he cannot be trusted to direct the general system of operations.

We have before us the whole accounts of a Midlothian farm for a period of fourteen years, showing every item of expenditure and every item of income. The tenant paid in money a yearly rental of eighteen dollars for every acre of the 305 acres. He seems to have been satisfied that he made a good enough living, and in every way it is to be looked upon as a fair average Scotch farm. Rents are higher now, labour is higher, but prices of produce are also higher, so that the proportion of expenditure and income must be still very nearly the same. The figures we give are the averages for the whole fourteen years.

In these accounts we find that the whole cost of producing an acre of turnips, (mostly soft white and yellow turnips for feeding), is \$46.00; rent \$18.00—total cost to the farmer of 1 acre of turnips, \$64.00. The value of the crop is \$37.25,—so that there is a loss of \$26.75 on every acre of turnips grown. An acre of grass costs, including \$18.00 of rent, \$19.75, and yields \$12.50,—loss \$7.25. The expense of cultivating one acre of potatoes, including rent and seed, is \$109.00, whilst the value of the produce is \$116.00, leaving a profit of seven dollars. It will be obvious that turnips cannot be continuously cultivated in the same land except at an annual loss of twenty-six dollars per acre, and that potatoes will only yield seven dollars per

acre. Such farming, if confined to grass and turnips, cannot possibly pay, however wisely the produce may be marketed or fed to stock. But the cultivation of these crops has left the fields which they occupied in excellent condition for grain crops. One acre of barley costs for cultivation and rent \$48.00, and gives a return of \$59.50, yielding a profit of \$11.50. One acre of oats costs \$33.50, and gives a return of \$45.50, leaving a profit of \$12.00. One acre of wheat costs \$37.00, and gives a return of \$89.00, yielding a profit of \$52.00.—After paying rent and all expenses, including interest on capital employed, the net annual profit on this farm of 305 acres was \$680.00. We have put all the money in dollars for convenience of comparison.

Now we would like our practical farmers to compare the above figures with the results obtained on their own farms, and then consider whether the oft-repeated statement is true or false that “Nova Scotia is no country for farming.” In Britain those who cultivate tens of acres instead of hundreds, are simply laboring peasants, and are now well nigh extinct. Farming is remunerative only on a large scale. If it pays at all in Nova Scotia, on a small scale, how different would be the results with the proper use of capital. We ought to have mentioned that the capital required for the *working* of the Midlothian farm was \$62.50 per acre, so that \$19,200.00 had to be expended before the sales of the first crop could defray any part of the expense.

The complaint we hear most frequently is that our lands won't yield grain, that this is not a grain country. How can we expect our lands to yield grain, how can we expect this to be a grain country,