

CANADA'S AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES AND HER OPPORTUNITY.

BY THE DOMINION STATISTICIAN.

THE world is becoming more and more densely peopled. The population is not standing still. The "hatches, matches and despatches" do not balance each other. The natural increase of the peoples of the world may be estimated to be six per cent. in ten years. It may possibly be greater. Improvement in sanitary conditions and reduction in the destruction of life by war may overbalance that general disposition to put reproduction under bonds which some of our clerical friends believe that they have discovered. The food requirements of the world are therefore increasing yearly. There are more mouths to feed. Further, as the owners of these mouths grow in the grace and knowledge of civilization they require better food. Content with rye or rice during the formative period of their life, the nations become in their later stages of development more and more desirous of wheat products as the highest form of vegetable aliment. The world at large, and the black, yellow and red races, as well as the white race, are doing very much as the people of Canada have done. It is within the memory of living men and women when rye formed a much greater proportion of the food of the people of Ontario than it now does. In 1852 there was an acre of rye for every twenty of the population, and in 1891 there was one acre of rye for every thirty of the population—so rapidly and greatly has rye dropped out of the list of desirable foods. If Russia develops in civilization as rapidly as she has done, the greatest rye-eating population of the world will consume less rye, and the demand for wheat will proportionately increase. The changes taking place in Russia are seen in the fact that while the population increased during the present decade about 10 per cent., the consumption of rye decreased by 16 per cent. If Russia attain to the normal average of the wheat-eating proclivities of other countries, the home demand upon her acreage in wheat would exhaust, within a score of years, all her possibilities under conditions similar to those to-day existing. These are factors making for increase in the consumption of wheat. If all the world's population arrived at the stage of civilization to which Great Britain, the United States and Canada have attained, the demand for wheat would be about 7,000,000,000 bushels a year, and the supply at present rates would be not more than 2,500,000,000 bushels. To meet the world's demand, based upon the requirements of the three countries named, would call for an acreage three times that now sown in wheat.

It must not, however, be forgotten that we do not really know the possibilities of an acre. Regarding it as a bank to be drawn upon without depositing, we all know that there must come a time when the farmer will hear the ominous words, "No funds to credit." Regarding the acre as a laboratory, to be managed scientifically, no man knows the limit of production. Taking only the world's acreage under wheat in 1897 and applying to it the English standard, there would be 4,750,000,000 bushels, or more than double the actual yield, and even England's standard of recent times has been exceeded in her past history, and