

Q. How frequently do you issue these reports?—In the first year we issued five special reports—in May, July, August, September and November. Last year we issued three—in May, August and November. The May report gave an account of the condition and the area of the land under fall wheat, the condition of live stock, the state of vegetation at the time, also the area of land assessed and cleared, and the area under orchard and garden, prepared from the returns made to us by township clerks.

Q. Are you able to get this information to the public pretty soon after it is obtained?—In the case of the schedule sent to the farmers and returnable on the 15th of June, we have a report, giving the areas of all grain crops, together with estimates of the produce, issued about the 10th or 12th of August.

Q. That is, in about two months?—Yes; but before any grain is marketed.

Q. You do not issue any monthly bulletins or slips, that are distributed generally through the country?—Not monthly, but just as often as we issue reports, our bulletins are summarized from the reports. In the November report we give the complete tables of crops and live stock, with the various estimates of produce. Our estimates of produce are based on the returns made to us by threshers and correspondents, from actual results. This is the same system as is adopted in several States of the American Union, where they have State Bureaux.

Q. Do you keep any statistics of weather and seasons?—Yes; we have statistics of sunshine, precipitation and temperature. These are furnished to us under an arrangement made with the Meteorological Office at Toronto. The Meteorological Office, in 1881, I think, had about 55 rain-gauge stations in Ontario. I secured the establishment of a large number of other stations, so that now we have returns from 150 rain-gauge stations in Ontario. The Government of Ontario also furnished the Meteorological Office with eight additional sunshine registers. The Office had two in the Province previously—one at Toronto and one at Woolstock. In that way we got a complete record of the sunshine in the Province. We also have reports of the temperature from the ten stations.

Q. In what way have you noticed that the agricultural community benefits from this statistical work, or in what way do you expect it chiefly to benefit them?—I think it may benefit them in a variety of ways. It gives to the whole people—producers, dealers and consumers—a knowledge of the extent of supply and demand in the country, and in that way it serves to check the operations of speculators. There are a few leading men in the country who buy up nearly the whole produce of the country. They have their agents, their buyers, all over the country. They are constantly in receipt of information from them, as to the condition and prospect of that crop, and they are able, at the earliest possible time, to avail themselves of the information collected in this way. It is not an uncommon thing for them to buy up nearly the whole available surplus of produce, before the farmers generally have an opportunity of knowing whether or not there is an excess in the supply, or whether the tendency of prices is upwards or downwards. We collect this information, and as we have as wide a circulation, at least as the dealers have, we are able to give it to the people just as early as the dealers can procure it. To give you an instance of what may be done, I would refer to the crop reports of the United States Bureau for 1873. You may remember that in 1873, as in 1881, the fall frosts were unusually early and severe, and they destroyed to a large extent the corn crop of the country. The report of the United States Bureau of Agriculture showed that the extent of the damage done in that year was at least 125,000,000 bushels of a loss to the corn crop, and almost immediately after the appearance of that report the price of corn went up 20 cents. In that case, the farmers got the benefit of the rise, and not the speculators, and I hold that it is the farmers—the producers, the men who earn—who should receive the full advantage of high prices, and not the speculators. The consumers will not be benefited in any way by the speculators buying low, for the speculators and the dealers will sell high if the market justifies it. Then in the year 1879 again, there was a large crop of wheat in the United States, and the leading dealers in Chicago and New York, having been posted