

Agricultural Situation in Quebec.

BY H. WESTON PARRY.



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The agricultural progress which has been made in the Province of Quebec during the past ten or twelve years is remarkable. The most agreeable feature of this progress is that it is general and not confined to a few lines only.

Undoubtedly, improvement is more marked in some things than others, notably dairying, but still a substantial advance can be shown all along the line. Perhaps the chief cause for congratulation lies in the increase of population as compared with the increase throughout the Dominion since the census of 1890. This increase has more significance than, at first thought, one would imagine. Whereas the peopling of the Territories and younger Provinces has been largely a process of settlement, the addition to the population of the Province of Quebec is an increase of her own sons and daughters. The policy of the Provincial Government, indirectly, and that of the Roman Catholic church, directly, has been directed to the settlement of the entire Province with her own children—the French-Canadian. Large families are encouraged, and early marriage is preached from the pulpit with good effect.

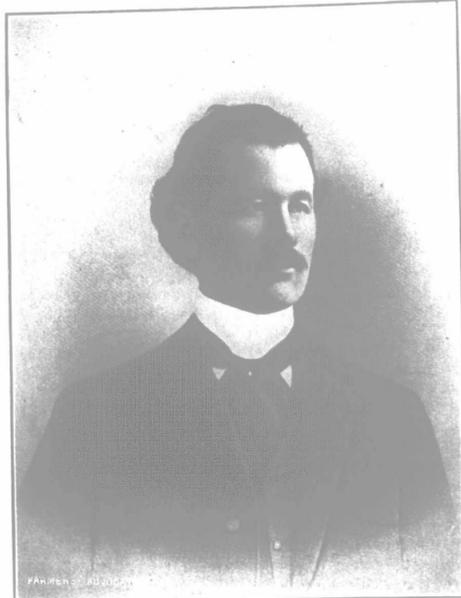
With the increase of population has enlarged the area of land brought under cultivation, and owing to more help growing up in the large families than can be employed profitably on the home farm, the young men as they grow up acquire farms of their own, and soon settle down to housekeeping.

In this connection, the banks have been willing to make liberal advances; in fact, there is a tendency among the French-Canadian farmers to assume rather too heavy incumbrances in the acquisition of new property. I do not wish to infer that their obligations are not conscientiously and reasonably met, but too heavy indebtedness is antagonistic to progress and is apt to efface public spirit pro tem. However, the French-Canadian farmers are great workers, their large families are, as a rule, self-contained. The men and boys can do their own shoe-mending, and making too, if required. The farmer's good-wife is generally an adept at spinning and weaving, and is an ever-ready counsellor and treasure in all his domestic affairs. The boys grow up strong and willing; the girls are bright and attractive, and the French-Canadian home on the

farm constitutes a bright ray of sunshine which it is impossible to obscure for long at a time.

Good law-abiding citizens are the French-Canadian farmers, and their honesty and industry is vouched for by the willingness of the banks to assist them when required. Devoted to their religion, Sunday sees every member of the family at church, and the great influence of their priests has been used very wisely in spreading agricultural as well as spiritual suggestions. Conservative by nature, new ideas are accepted with reserve, but when adopted are pushed to a successful issue without misgiving. More attention is being paid to education than formerly, and as is the experience in all civilized countries, the tendency is with increased perception to become alienated from agricultural pursuits in favor of city life. But it is on the farm the French-Canadian is seen at his best.

As I have already mentioned, our greatest progress has been made in the dairy industry, and dairying is now nearly universal. In the oldest-settled districts, where formerly grain and hay were raised only, the farmers have been com-



Hon. A. Turgeon.

Provincial Minister of Agriculture, Quebec.



A Quebec Farm Home.

Property of Mathias Ferland, Berthier-en-haut (Upper Berthier), near Montreal, who produced and shipped 7,000 bushels of potatoes this year.

elled to turn their attention to dairying in order to restore fertility to the soil. Every little community or parish has its cheese or butter factory.

Even in the eastern townships, where at one time prime beef was raised extensively and is even at the present day, to a far less extent, the principal occupation of the farmers is dairying, and in this section are to be found some of the most noted creameries of the Province.

The eastern townships comprise some of the best agricultural districts in Quebec. The English-speaking population is most numerous in these parts, but the fine farms are rapidly passing into the hands of the French.

Much of our progress is due to the establishment of farmers' clubs. Where a club is organized, a creamery or cheese factory is soon built, if there was none before.

Lecturing and the increase of the circulation of agricultural literature have both added their quota to the general progress of the Province.

The Dairy School of St. Hyacinthe has done much good work and may truly be styled the backbone of the dairy industry of the Province.

Great improvement is noticeable in the class of stock now raised, not only in quality, but also in numbers, and registered stock is to be found on many farms in nearly every parish.

The Department of Colonization has done a lot to ameliorate our agricultural conditions, both in the way of repatriation and the opening up of new districts. Of these districts, the most promising are the townships and country situated along Lake Temiscamingue, Lievre River, Lake St. John (Albanel, Peribonka, St. Cœur de Marie and surrounding country) and the Metapedia Valley. The Bay des Chaleurs and other counties situated on the south shore also offer a good field for agricultural purposes, particularly Temiscouata and the eastern townships (the latter already referred to). An effort is being made to settle these new districts first mentioned, the soil and location being evidently well adapted to agricultural operations. In order to turn to the best possible account the Government works (opening roads) in these districts, notably along the River Lievre, Ottawa country, a certain number of lots have been reserved, to be disposed of under the management of the Colonization Branch, only to approved, bona-fide settlers.

The idea is to retain lots to place at the disposal of new arrivals, with the object also of grouping them, so that the road opened up will be kept cleared on either side, and not fall into disuse at places by the resident settlers being so widely scattered. Some of the advantages which should result from this system are the prevention of:

1. Scattering of the settlers.
2. Grabbing of lots by speculators.
3. Want of roads.
4. Defective distribution of the grant.
5. Troubles with the lumber merchants.
6. Selection of bad lands.

This policy of colonization should do much in future, and should find a field in the older parishes where there is need for throwing off swarms. It is common to meet families with three or four sons, and the Department wishes to be in a position to offer very clearly to the fathers of such young men lands relatively easy of access at the ordinary prices of twenty and thirty cents per acre. In the words of the Deputy Minister of Colonization: "Our lands are becoming more valuable every day; why should not our own people be the first and best served?" Many settlers are ignorant of the fact that there are still fertile lands in this Province remaining to be cleared. They could as readily spare themselves the sacrifices and hardships of the pioneer, and in a relatively short time share in the general prosperity produced by the agricultural resources and progress of our Province.

Wild White Cattle.

The wild white cattle in Somerford Park, Congleton, Cheshire, owned by Sir Walter Shakerley, Bart., are beautifully illustrated on the preceding page. These are the only herd of their kind in existence in England. They are of great, though unknown age, and are a polled variety, of the old wild White Park cattle, of which there are only a few herds left, the most notable being the Chillingham herd. They are most difficult to photograph, and the photo from which our engraving is made is considered by their owner to be the best ever taken of them. They are pure white, with black ears, eye rims, muzzles and hoofs.

Strength of character consists of two things—power of will and power of self-restraint. It requires two things, therefore, for its existence—strong feelings and strong command over them.—E. W. Robertson.

"Glad to hear of your weekly 'Farmer's Advocate.' I think it will be welcomed by every farmer."—W. F. Jackson, Durham Co., Ont.

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Agriculture dates back to the beginning of the century. In the British Empire, a number of farmers were mostly from the Eastern Province. The property was public. The wooded, so-called patch and by a log house, tile, and enough of the family.

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