

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 1, 1890.

EXPORTING EGGS.

Under date of November 10th the Department of Finance at Ottawa has issued a commercial bulletin on egg and poultry export business, which is well worthy of a careful perusal by parties engaged in that trade, and is altogether a piece of valuable information, which the Department have acted wisely in collecting, compiling and disseminating.

The operation of the McKinley bill in placing a serious barrier in the way of exporting eggs from the Dominion to the United States has prompted the issuing of the bulletin, and it commences with a table showing the rapid growth in the export of Canadian eggs, mainly to the United States, since 1865. The following is the table:—

YEAR.	DOZENS.	VALUE.
1865	1,893,872	\$205,971
1874	4,407,334	537,590
1878	5,262,920	646,574
1882	10,493,082	1,643,709
1886	12,758,532	1,728,089
1887	12,955,288	1,827,143
1888	14,170,859	2,122,283
1889	14,028,893	2,159,910
1890	12,311,610	1,795,913

The bulletin admits that the production of eggs in the United States is gradually creeping up towards the home demand, so that even with a free market there the demand for Canadian imports must steadily fall off.

In search of another market the bulletin fixes upon Great Britain, and in support of the selection furnishes an official table showing the imports of eggs in that country to have been in 1889 the immense number of 91,325,630 dozen, at a customs valuation of \$15,220,938, which supply was collected from Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain and other foreign countries. Against this it places a United States official table showing the egg imports of that country in 1889 to have been 15,918,809 dozen, at a customs value of \$3,418,976, and these were collected from every continent of the globe except Australia.

Taking these figures as a basis of comparison, the British market last year called for about six times as many imported eggs as did the United States market, and to this must be added the fact that the British demand is steadily on the increase, while that of the United States is steadily falling off. Thus an incontrovertible argument in favor of catering for the British market is supplied by the actual official figures of that country and the United States, which is strengthened by the fact of an increasing market in the former and a decreasing one in the latter, and is further strengthened by the fact that the valuation of eggs in Great Britain is one cent a dozen higher than in the United States.

On the question of shipping and delivering in Great Britain in good condition, the bulletin very logically reasons, that if eggs can be brought to that country from Russian Black Sea ports, through hot latitudes of the

Mediterranean, and from Spain and Portugal across the Bay of Biscay; and that eggs are brought from Northern and Southern Europe, Hong Kong and China to the United States, a voyage across the Atlantic through the northern latitudes and cool waters traversed by Canadian trans-Atlantic shipping, is but a simple means of transit in comparison, and should enable Canadian shippers to secure for their goods what they have always secured in the United States, namely, a high grade price for their eggs. Not stopping with this piece of convincing logic, the bulletin contains the results of shipments already made from Montreal and Halifax since the enforcement of the McKinley bill, from which we quote the following:—

"1. Eggs may be sent across the Atlantic with perfect safety during the entire season without cold storage of any kind. The testimony of both shippers and carriers unites on this point and seems to place it entirely beyond doubt. The eggs are carefully stowed in the cool portion of the vessels below the water line, or between decks, where an equable temperature of about 50 degrees is maintained, and they arrive on the other side in good condition. Some of the steamers are provided with huge ventilators, which maintain a constant volume of fresh cool air.

2. The eggs are packed either in compartment boxes, or in cases with hulls, saw-dust, or fine chopped straw, and if then carefully handled, the percentage of breakage is almost nil. The cases contain from 30 to 120 dozens each, and are stowed away compactly and freights charged upon the ton measurement of 10 cubic feet space. One company instances a carriage in which the breakage was found to be only 6 eggs in 180 dozens. A movement is now on foot to have all egg cases made uniform, in which case the rates of freight could be more satisfactorily arranged. These cases are not returned by the carriers and have to be disposed of in Great Britain. It is quite probable either that a means of disposing of them can be arranged whereby the total cost need not be charged against the eggs carried, or that a much cheaper form of case can be made sufficiently strong to carry for one trip. In fact a firm of case makers in Ontario has offered to produce cases at a cost of 17 cents each, instead of 50 or 60 cents paid for cases used in the United States trade.

3. The freights at present rate at 15 shillings sterling per ton measurement, or, counting 13 cases to the ton and 30 dozens to the case, less than one cent per dozen. This is probably the lowest rate that can be quoted. The cost of placing eggs upon the Boston and New York markets would not on an average be much less than this.

4. Shipments already made have, so far as reported to the Department, netted a return quite as favorable as could have been obtained in the United States in years before the McKinley tariff became operative, and have demonstrated the fact that a profitable trade can be carried on in eggs to Great Britain and to an extent which is practically unlimited. An examination of the price lists shows that, for similar qualities, eggs in Great Britain have rated higher than in the United States. From enquiries made it is ascertained that to command the best prices in Great Britain the size and quality should be particularly attended to. Large and well assorted eggs are displacing the smaller kinds in the English market, and France and Denmark owe the strength of their egg exports to Great Britain largely to this cause. Two and one half pounds to the score is the lowest weight that can be relied upon, to secure a superior position in the English market, and if a greater weight than this can be attained, still better results will follow."

Lack of space forbids our quoting more fully from the bulletin, but we have given enough to

show that the Finance Department have made out a clear case in favor of catering for the British market for eggs, and while we have not touched upon the poultry question, we are safe in assuring our readers that in that field the arguments of the bulletin are equally convincing in favor of a similar course.

As yet the question of exporting eggs has not seriously troubled the people of the Northwest, as the small surplus available after filling the home demand has found a ready and even a greedy market on the Pacific coast. But the day is not far distant when we will have to seek a foreign market for our surplus eggs, as we now have to for our surplus grain. It would be well therefore for parties in that trade to carefully note the arguments contained in the bulletin, and be ready to act upon them as soon as the surplus production warrants so doing.

This bulletin must impress many people with the dwarfed ideas Canadians have had of their country in a commercial sense. For a century the highest aim of our people was to produce enough to feed themselves, and have enough of their products left to trade to their nearest neighbor for a few other necessities. It is only within the past seven years that hopes of taking any place as an importing country have been entertained, and it seems as if a tithe of the capabilities of the Dominion in that respect cannot be learned until force of circumstances such as have been produced by the McKinley bill compel attention to export trade. It may sound incredible to many Canadians to hear the statement that the Dominion could in a very few years become the greatest exporter of food products among the countries on this globe. Yet one million more settlers in the Northwest, with its great agricultural possibilities, would inside of five years place Canada in that position. Legislation for the past twelve years has tended to encourage this dwarfing of opinions; for the bolstering of manufacturing industries, while it has placed crushing burdens in some ways on the producer of natural products, whose efforts are accomplishing great things in the way of increasing exports, it has nurtured these same manufacturing industries into a collection of imbeciles, that are powerless to compete even in a free foreign market. In fact the energy and enterprise of Canadian tariff bolstered industries seem to furnish a parallel for that of the seven lazy lousy farmer's sons, who loafed shiftlessly around their old home, until poverty drove them and their helpless old parents to a poor house, while at the same time the sons of neighboring farmers, who started out with push and energy into new fields, had all reached prosperity and some affluence. This whining over the closing of the United States as a near market for eggs and poultry is only another proof of the shiftlessness which the tariff bolstering policy has developed even among our farmers. It has been the aim of the tariff advocating politician to try and make the farmer believe that he like the manufacturer is protected by tariff, and does not require to compete with the outside world. Every now and again the deluded farmer gets a rude waking up from this delusive dream, and the trouble he is experiencing over the working of the McKinley bill is only one of those rude awakenings.