

CANADIAN ASHES FOR CANADIAN FARMS.



THE agricultural papers are well supplied with standing advertisements of dealers in Canada hardwood ashes, and to us at a distance the question occurs, "Where do all these ashes come from?" Not from the marts of trade, because the fact that they are ashes indicates a large destruction of the products of the soil of Canada. They must come from the farms of Canada, but one can hardly understand why the Canadian farmers should thus sell for present advantage the fertilizing elements from their soil, which sooner or later they must buy back at a much greater cost. For although the Canada ashes cost the consumer at a distance far more than their percentage of potash is worth, we are told that the price received by the Canada farmers for these ashes from collectors is very low. We once bought a car load of these ashes, which analyzed much higher than the samples now offered for sale. They were delivered to me for \$15 per ton. With the freight taken off, the actual price paid to the importer was not over \$5 per ton, at which price the actual potash they contained was cheap enough. But if the importers were satisfied to get this price, for how little a sum must the Canada farmer have parted with the fertility of his soil, for the expense of the collection and storage and importation of these ashes must be very heavy. So I have figured out in my mind, that the Canada farmer got, not over two cents a pound, for the actual potash sold in his ashes, to say nothing of the lime parted with. Now when he finds his cultivated soil getting deficient in potash, as he invariably will, he must buy back that potash at four and a half to five cents per pound. At the same time the purchasers of the Canada ashes, as now sold at a guarantee of five per cent. potash, pay exceedingly dear for the whistle. It looks to me like a hard bargain for the farmers on both sides of the line. The farmer on this side can buy his potash in the form of potash salts much cheaper than in the ashes, and the Canadian farmer is parting with his potash for less than half what he or his children must pay to get them back. In selling off these mineral elements of fertility, lime and potash, the farmer sells what he *must* buy back in some shape. We lose enough of the matters in the crops we sell, which is unavoidable, but when we add to this the sale of the products of combustion, by-products, that should go back to the land, we are burning our candle at both ends, and will reach the point of exhaustion sooner. Canada farmers as we look at it, cannot afford to sell these ashes at the price they are paid for them, and American farmers can buy their potash at vastly cheaper rates. Out of the difference the importers grow rich, while the farmers pay the bill. While we have had good results from the use of these ashes, we have become satisfied that we got the results at a far greater cost, even considering the value of the lime, than we could have gotten the same results by purchasing lime and potash in