

FOOD ZONES OF CANADA:

THEIR EXTENT AND CAPABILITIES.

ONE hundred years ago England exported wheat ; now she imports one-half her consumption. During the last fourteen years the annual consumption has been 22,500,000 quarters, and the home growth 11,500,000. The present consumption is 24,000,000 quarters. From 1850 to 1870 she consumed annually, on an average, wheat to the value of £55,500,000 ; of this amount £37,000,000 were produced at home, and £18,500,000 imported. From 1870-80 she consumed annually, on an average, wheat to the value of £57,500,000, of which only £24,000,000 were produced at home, and £33,500,000 imported. Thus in the ten years between 1870-80 England produced annually to the value of £13,000,000 less, and imported annually to the value of £15,000,000 more than she did in the previous 20 years, between 1850-70—a difference against her of £28,000,000 per annum. During the last ten years the capital of the agricultural classes has fallen in value to the extent of £500,000,000 to £600,000,000, and their incomes £21,000,000, and the loss is still going on with accelerated speed.

During the last ten years more than a million acres have gone out of wheat cultivation, so that now (in 1882), if the population had remained stationary, England would be in a position to feed three millions and a half of people less than in 1872 ; but during that period her population has increased 3,000,000, and in 1882 she is forced to import wheat and flour to feed six millions and a half more than in 1872. She grows less corn now to feed 34,000,000 than she did forty years ago to feed half that number.

Her dairy farming, market gardening, and small rural industries, if not rapidly disappearing, as some writers assert, are greatly depreciated. Her importation of meat, dairy produce, and vegetables averages £45,000,000 per annum more than it did ten years ago. In 1880 she imported 2,326,000 cwt. of butter, valued at £12,141,000 ; 1,775,000 cwt. of cheese, valued at £5,000,000 ; £10,000,000 of live stock, and meat fresh and salted to the value of £16,429,000.

In 1880 the total consumption of bread-stuffs (grain, flour, potatoes, and rice) was 340,000,000 cwt. ; of this the home supply was 193,200,000 cwt., and the imported 146,800,000 cwt.—the imports being to the whole consumption as three to seven nearly. The consumption, the same year, of meat-stuffs (beef, mutton, bacon, butter, and cheese) was 36,000,000 cwt. ;