

COLONIAL.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS IN U. CANADA.—As very many persons of the Agricultural class in this Province, have recently manifested a spirit of discontent with Nova Scotia, as an Agricultural Country, and as this disposition has produced a copious Emigration to U. Canada, the enquiry has been thrust upon us, what hopes can they have of bettering their circumstances in that Country? and, we must confess, that we have been all along of opinion that they were committing very serious mistakes, as well for themselves as for the prospects of their families.

In occupying a new country, men generally find that the best portions of it produce great Crops for a few years, without the aid of artificial means, but in a few years this exuberance of native fertility becomes exhausted, and unless skill and science is applied to it, to reproduce and keep up its vigour, barrenness ensues; this has been the case here and in Prince Edward Island, and it will be no less certainly the case in Upper Canada. Unless, therefore, these Emigrants carry with them that scientific knowledge of Farming, which will enable them to keep up the fertility of the soil, they must in a few years be in a worse condition than they were in here, in as much as the price of labour in Canada is at least as high, and the value of produce is less than half its value here, owing to the distance from market; add to this, that the price of British and West India Goods are, in the same ratio, increased to the settler, from the same cause.

Farther, they are in error when they suppose that the Climate is more genial than our own, except a very small portion of it included in the angle between Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron. Any person who has examined the range of the Thermometer in Upper Canada, will be satisfied that the rigour of a Canadian winter is equally durable, and even more severe than in Nova Scotia.

We would therefore recommend to those who are under the influence of a spirit of restlessness, to peruse with attention the following report of a Select Committee of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada. It speaks volumes on the subject, and can be depended upon as an authentic and true picture of the present state of that country.

Let them reflect, that if they possess Agricultural knowledge to enable them to keep up fertility in the soil of Upper Canada, the same knowledge—if applied skillfully to the soil of Nova Scotia—will not fail to produce abundance, and comfort to themselves and families.

The Committee referred to, was appointed in consequence of numerous Petitions having been presented to the House, complaining of agricultural distress, and praying for relief; any remedy, we should think, the local government can apply must be of little avail, unless they can prevail upon the Imperial Parliament to repeal certain Acts, regulating the internal trade of the country,—and even then, local remedies must be extremely partial in their effects, while the price of labour continues so out of proportion high, when compared with the value of the products of the soil, and while there is a redundancy of cheap land, this evil will be less or more felt.—**ED. BEE.**

AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL DISTRESS.

First Report from the Select Committee on the Commercial state of the Province of Upper Canada, together with documentary evidence.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE:

Messrs. James Wilson, (Chairman,) Mackenzie, Shaver, M'Micking, and Durand.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.—On motion of Mr. Mackenzie, seconded by Mr. Roblin, ordered, That a special committee be appointed to enquire into the state of the trade and commerce of this Province with other parts of the World, and to consider whe-

ther any, and if any, what alterations and improvements should be made therein, that the Committee be entrusted with power to send for persons, papers, and records, and with permission to report to the House by address or otherwise, and that to this committee be referred His Excellency's Message accompanying Mr. Secretary Rice's despatch on grain and flour.

[Truly extracted from the minutes of the 26th January, 1835.]

Ordered, That the petition of William Cunningham and others, on the subject of a Loan Office, be referred to the Committee on Trade, with power to send for persons and papers, and to report by bill or otherwise.

[Truly extracted, &c.]

[Other petitions from bodies of the Agricultural population were referred to the same Committee.]

REPORT.

The Select Committee appointed to enquire into the condition of the Trade and Commerce of this Province with other parts of the world, and to consider whether any, and if any, what alterations and improvements should be made therein, and to whom was referred his Excellency's message sent down with Mr. Secretary Rice's despatch on grain and flour, and the petition of certain inhabitants of this province, complaining that at a time when a great part of the population are involved in debt to an alarming extent for lands they have purchased, a great and unexpected depression has taken place in the price of agricultural produce, and praying for such relief as it may be within the power of this Legislature to extend—have made some progress in the investigation of matters referred to them, and agreed to the following as a first report:—

The case submitted to your committee by the petitions of the proprietors of the soil, is one of severe distress, affecting those interests of this country which are of a fixed and permanent nature as compared with the usual objects of commercial enterprise, and which will require the early and careful consideration of the House, and the efficient co-operation of the government to lessen and alleviate.

With a view of ascertaining the extent of the depression under which wheat and flour, the chief staple commodities raised for exportation have fallen in the Montreal market, your committee put the following questions to fifteen of the members of the House, practical farmers, residing in various parts of the Province.

What is the average cost or production of twenty bushels of merchantable wheat in your country, (without taking into consideration or making a charge for interest or capital invested in the land.)

The result of these calculations was as follows:

	Halifax Currency.
Mr. Gibson, York County,	£2 12 6
Mr. Wilson, Prince Edward,	3 0 0
Mr. Alway, Oxford,	2 0 0
Mr. Gilchrist, Northumberland,	3 0 0
Mr. Cook, Dundas,	2 15 0
Mr. Shibley, Frontenac,	2 17 0
Mr. Wolberton, Lincoln,	2 10 0
Mr. Hopkins, Halton,	3 10 0
Mr. Smith, Wentworth,	2 0 0
Mr. Chisholm, Glengarry,	3 0 0
Mr. Roblin, Prince Edward,	3 0 0
Mr. Waters, Prescott,	3 15 0
Mr. Shaver, Dundas,	2 15 0
Mr. Yagar, Hastings,	2 10 0
Mr. Perry, Lennox & Addington,	2 15 0
The average result is,	2 15 11-2

or two shillings and nine pence halfpenny per bushel. On the shores of the Lake Ontario it ranges from half a dollar to three shillings; Eastward, in Glengarry and Ottawa, it rises from three shillings to three shillings and ninepence; and Westward, in the Gore and London Districts, falls to between half a dollar and two shillings of our currency.

The price paid by the merchants in Toronto and the County of York during the present winter, is from 2s. 6d to 3s., and the cost of conveyance of a bushel of wheat from hence to Montreal, is from fourteen to fifteen pence.—The prices there have ranged between 4s. and 4s. 6d. during the last half year, and there is very little prospect of improved prices. The cost of conveyance is increased from the London District so as to counterbalance the superior productiveness of the soil; and although there is less expense of freight and charges between Montreal, the Ottawa, and Glengarry, yet the natural disadvantages of climate under which the Eastern Districts labor, seem to place them but on a level as to the prices with the country near Lake Erie.

Mr. Cawthra, a merchant of extensive dealings here, stated in evidence, before your Committee, that the expense of conveying a bushel of wheat from Cobourg or Toronto to Montreal, was 1s. 2d. to 1s. 3d.; from Prescott to Montreal 9d., and from Kettle Creek on Lake Erie 1s. 7d.

The immediate cause of distress is thus shewn to be an inadequacy of return; the chief product of the soil does not now obtain, in any market, foreign or domestic, a price which replaces to the producer the cost of production, nor is there a return of interest on the capital originally invested either in buying and clearing of waste lands, or in the purchase of improved estates.

Your Committee have not made a very minute inquiry as to the values of ashes, beef, pork, and other staple exports, although it is a well known fact that they do not bring to the agriculturist a remunerating price for his capital and labor.

The average, last season, at Quebec, for pearl ashes, was about 25s 6d. the cwt.; and for pots 24s.—pork was met in that market by a supply from Ireland, and the prices fell in consequence. Lumber appears to have been the only staple which commanded favourable prices; but there are many sections of the Province which receive little or no benefit from it as an export to places abroad. Although 1122 vessels, measuring 315,803 tons arrived, last year at Quebec, the greater number being for cargoes of lumber, yet there is such an uncertainty as to the course the British Government may pursue with regard to the discriminating duty in favour of American timber, that the disposition to embark capital in that very precarious article of traffic is much lessened, of late years.

Another case of distress is to be found in the restrictions laid on all the trade of the Colony and the disadvantages under which the land owners and merchants labour, as compared with the same classes on the opposite frontier.

Laws for the regulation of our trade and commerce are enacted in the Parliament of the United Kingdom and continually changed and varied without our being consulted for our interest, although the value of our labour and property is unduly affected by this ever-varying system of legislation.

In the United States, the different sections of the several states are fairly and equally represented according to their numbers in the body which regulates their commerce, and thereby raises or depresses the value of their industry and estates.

By the fiscal regulations of Great Britain affecting the commerce of Upper Canada, customs duties are ordered to be levied at our shipping places, of 7 1-2, 15, 20, and even 30 per cent on the value of imported articles of the first necessity to an agricultural community, if those articles are not imported from England or some of her Colonies, but if imported from England or her Colonies, they are only subject to 2 1-2 per cent on the £100 value, and in some cases duty free.

Some articles of general utility are prohibited to be imported unless in British ships or from a British port.

Our trade by sea is carried on almost exclusively in British shipping and for the advantage of capitalists residing in Europe.

Although it is obviously the most convenient and suitable for us to raise a revenue for state purposes by customs duties levied on articles of foreign growth or manufacture of a like kind with those which form the staple commodities produced and manufactured in this Province and although England regulates our trade so as to protect her manufactures against all foreign competition in our markets, yet it is declared by the Imperial Acts of late years, that heavy duties shall be charged on the importation of those foreign articles which we require, but do not produce, while the importation of the staple commodities of the neighbouring Republic, being the same as ours, shall be duty free.

England claims an exclusive monopoly in our markets—she allows us none in hers. Our beef and pork are prohibited in her home dominions and our pot and pearl ashes subject to the same rates of duty at London or Liverpool as the pot and pearl ashes of the South shores of Erie and Ontario. The shipping of Great Britain at Quebec give no preference to timber, live stock, flour, beef, and pork brought from Upper Canada over the same articles brought from the United States, if we sell cheapest, they buy from us, not otherwise.

By the ninth section of an Act of the Imperial Parliament passed on the 28th of August 1833, which has not been placed on our statute book, and which it is probable that not one of a hundred of our population even heard of, (the 3rd and 4th of William 4. Cap 50) it is enacted that United States wheat, wheat flour, beef and pork, may be imported into the Canadas either by sea or inland navigation, free of duty—as also, that the wheat, wheat flour, beef and pork, thus brought into competition with ours, may be shipped at Quebec in British Ships only, to any part of the British West Indies, there to be admitted on the same terms as the like produce of Upper Canada is admitted. United States flour may be sent to Halifax or St. Johns in British ships; there it is warehoused,