

AGRICULTURE.

As you all know, there is little to be said about the results of agriculture last year which is not favorable. We were disturbed about the wet weather last autumn in Manitoba, but nevertheless the railroads have already moved twenty one million bushels of wheat out of the North-West, and three quarters of this graded as Nos. 1 and 2 hard and No. 1, Northern, so that, with more wheat not yet shipped, the farmers in that part of Canada have prospered. The figures for cattle exports are still very small and it is disappointing to learn that out of about 60,000 cattle shipped from the North-West, as many as 22,000 were lean cattle sold in the United States, to be fattened there instead of in Canada. This is, of course, a much more serious matter than the mere loss of the profit of feeding them. Considering all sources together, the farmers of Manitoba, and the adjacent territories have in the past two years received thirty million dollars for their products, a very large sum indeed for such a small number of farmers. This bountiful return, in proportion to the labor, points most sharply to the desirability of immigration. Farming is paying better than it did some years ago, and men are again getting the land hunger which seemed to have been dying out. During 1898 about 28,000 immigrants came into the North-West, but in the five months of 1899 about 21,000 have already arrived. It is true we are discussing the desirability of many of these as settlers in Canada, but if they will work at the outdoor labor or farming with only reasonable industry, we need not be afraid of the result. Until we are a great manufacturing country with crowded cities, we cannot afford and do not need to discuss too closely the people who come to Canada, provided they will but work.

In this part of Canada, where our farming, as a rule, is of a higher order, we have another good season for our dairy products. The quantity of cheese exported was 183,288,642 pounds, valued at \$15,916,507, a falling off of 14,961,024 pounds, valued at \$1,983,103; but this is partly due to the great increase in our recently developed creameries, the export of butter reaching 18,974,572 pounds, valued at \$3,492,007. From many places we hear of cheese factories being converted into creameries, although, as a rule, the one industry is growing up alongside of the other. In any event we are putting our dairy business on a firmer basis by manufacturing for export the two articles.

A large and profitable business has been done by the farmer in cattle and hogs, although the buyer has not always been so fortunate as the seller. The sale, in recent years, of lean cattle to the United States has had the effect of lowering seriously the quantity of cattle in Ontario, and both in numbers and in quality we should witness an improvement during the next few years. As to the outlook for the ensuing season, the fall wheat is clearly in a bad way, but the spring crops, about which we were troubled at one time, are now promising a good harvest. The farmers, dissatisfied with price, are holding back a good deal of wheat in many counties; the pasturage, from which most of our wealth comes, is abundant, and there seems to be no reason to think that the majority of farmers will not have as large receipts this year as usual.

TRANSPORTATION.

All these things, wheat growing, cattle raising, mining, whatever the industry may be, in a new country, lead to the one ever pressing question, transportation. It would be well for all of us to consider that we have ahead of us responsibilities in transportation not only pressing, but requiring us to hold wider views of our national destiny than we are in the habit of holding. Russia, according to a recent report, had in 1898 about 25,000 miles of railroad in operation, against our 16,000 miles, and there were in 1898, according to the Journal de St. Petersburg, in course of construction and authorized to be commenced shortly, over 8,000 miles. Of this total, additions to over twenty existing lines of over 3,700 miles are actually under construction. According to the Canadian Government diagrams already referred to, we are not building more than 200 or 300 miles of new railway per annum. Russia, therefore, with only 50 per cent. more railway in 1897, is building at more than ten times the rate of Canada. There is perhaps not much value in comparing two countries, one with five millions people and the other with over 100 millions, but territorially there is certainly some room for comparison.

Clearly we need more railroads, more inland ships, and on entirely new models, quicker transportation at sea, deeper canals, better terminal facilities at our seaports. If we were carrying our own products to the European countries where they are consumed, these needs would still exist, but they would not be so pressing, their absence would not be so much in the nature of a national shame.

FINANCIAL SITUATION.

In surveying the financial situation in the United States there is one ground for uneasiness which appears to have been almost lost sight of for the moment. The advances in the price of mer-

chantable commodities and of stock exchange securities has been, as we all know, phenomenal, thus exciting speculation to a hitherto unparalleled degree. The formation of new companies has already used up a good deal of the money which has been lying idle for some year past, and it is quite possible that trouble may come at any moment, especially in connection with the movement of the crops, because of the rigid condition of the currency system in the United States. It has been seen by the Comptroller of the Currency and other close students of financial affairs, even in the matter of currency of small denominations, used for change making, that there may be something little short of a panic if a remedy is not found. It is really astounding that a nation of such intelligence is willing to go on, year after year, subjecting itself to quite unnecessary danger, merely because it will not face reforms which have long since been admitted to be necessary.

In Canada we have taken a larger share in the flotation of companies, and in other financial operations connected with securities, than ever before, and it would be well for prudent people to bear in mind that the amount of money at the disposal of the Canadian public for investment in new companies is distinctly limited, and if we go beyond the danger line we are certain to be sharply punished.

The motion for the adoption of the report was then put and carried.

The usual resolutions expressing the thanks of the shareholders to the President, Vice-President and Directors, and also to the General Manager, Assistant General Manager and other officers of the Bank, were unanimously adopted.

The retiring Board of Directors was re-elected as follows:—Hon. George A. Cox (President), Robt. Kilgour (Vice-President), James Crathern, Wm. B. Hamilton, John Hoskin, Q.C., LL.D., Matthew Ceggat and Joseph W. Flavelle.

ONTARIO BANK.

The Annual Meeting of the Shareholders of the Ontario Bank was held at the Banking House, Toronto, on Tuesday, 20th June, 1899.

Among those present were:

G. R. R. Cockburn, Donald Mackay, Hon. J. C. Aikins, J. K. Macdonald, A. S. Irving, Dr. J. Carlyle, Wm. Spry, John Hallam, A. P. Choate, F. B. Polson, A. E. Wallace, F. M. Purdy, R. Grasse, Henry Lowndes, J. S. Porter, R. Mulholland, John Flett, and others.

On motion, Mr. G. R. R. Cockburn was called to the chair, and Mr. McGill was requested to act as Secretary. Messrs. J. K. Macdonald and F. M. Purdy were appointed Scrutineers.

At the request of the Chairman, the Secretary read the following Report:

The Directors beg to present to the Shareholders the 42nd Annual Report, for the year ending 31st May, 1899, together with the usual statement of Assets and Liabilities:—

The net profits, after deducting charges of management, interest accrued upon deposits, and making provision for all bad and doubtful debts, were	\$103,117 09
Profit and Loss (brought forward from 31st May, 1898)	22,243 49
	\$125,360 58

Which have been appropriated as follows:—

Dividend 2½ %, paid 1st December, 1898 ..	\$25,000 00
Dividend 2½ %, payable 1st June, 1899 ..	25,000 00
Added to reserve	25,000 00
Reserved for officers' guarantee fund	5,000 00
Written off bank premises	5,000 00
	85,000 00
Balance of profits carried forward	\$40,360 58

During the year branches of the Bank have been opened at Fort William and at Tweed, in the Province of Ontario.

The Retained Account has been increased to \$110,000, and the Profit and Loss Account to \$40,360.58.

The Bank Premises and Furniture Account has been reduced by \$5,000.

All the offices of the Bank have been inspected during the year.

The business of the Bank shows a satisfactory increase.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

GEORGE R. R. COCKBURN,
President.