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The Colonial Farmer.

SUPPLY OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

READ BY C. S. LUGRIN, AT THE FARMERS' CONVENTION IN SUNBURY COUNTY.

To say that "knowledge is power," is to use a hackneyed phrase; but it is one which cannot be too often repeated, and is worthy of being the watch word of Farmers' Leagues and Granges. These institutions aim at objects the most important in their bearing upon the material prosperity of the country, for vast as are the interests which depend upon our ships, our factories, and our mills, they are small in comparison with our Provincial Agriculture. The crops that were raised and the animals marketed in the past year, that is to say, the total production of the farms of New Brunswick, were worth to the order upwards of \$10,000,000—a very large sum, yet one which might be almost indefinitely increased. Seeing that this is so, does it not appear that anything which will tend to foster and encourage Agriculture, will contribute to the advancement of the most important Provincial industry. And it is to do this that Farmers' Leagues and Granges are instituted. But the success of these Societies to be lasting, must spring from well founded efforts. An assertion of the power of the farmers at the ballot box is well, and must some day or other be made; but it is not enough. A triumph at the polls, if we are not prepared for victory, that is, to make a proper use of victory, is equal to a defeat. How then are we to qualify ourselves to employ to advantage the success which may be ours, if we make an effort to secure it? The answer is easy. By acquiring a knowledge of our position; of what we produce, and what we might produce; of how much we are dependent upon foreign markets, and what can be done to make us self-sustaining; of what branches of Agriculture need stimulating, and which, if any, need pruning. Such knowledge as this in the hands of our farmers would be a power indeed, and to obtain it should be the first great object of our association together.

I propose to consider the different articles of farm produce, in relation to the question of supply and demand. My figures are mostly approximations in round numbers, from actual calculation or statistics, and are nearly correct—quite enough so for the purpose of comparison, which is my object.

We use in New Brunswick every year about \$5,000,000 worth of farm produce, and about \$2,000,000 worth of animals and their products, which we raise; and about \$1,500,000 worth of both, which we import—or in all about \$8,500,000; that is to say, it takes about \$40 per head of the population to feed us and our live stock.

I propose to analyze how this is made up; and first, let us take the "staff of life"—wheat and wheat flour. We use of these about \$1,600,000 worth a year, of which we raise about \$500,000 worth; that is we may safely set it down as a rule, that for every barrel of flour we produce, we import more than two. I do not feel prepared to say to what extent the proportion might be advantageously altered by our farmers; but a few questions naturally suggest themselves, which are thrown out for consideration. Does it pay to raise the nearly half a million dollars worth of wheat which we do every year, and if so, why cannot the production of this grain be considerably increased? The fact that so much is raised would seem to preclude the supposition that it was an unprofitable crop. Of course a large proportion of our cultivated lands may not be fit to raise wheat; but is there any valid reason why much more of it may not be made fit, or that we should not produce one half our breadstuffs? If there is not, then let the fact be spread from farm to farm. If there is, let it be known, so that steps may be taken to raise some other crop which can be sold to pay for necessary importations.

This question of the supply of breadstuffs is of very great importance, and the Leagues and Granges, I believe, should take it into their consideration. Scattered throughout the Province, as I have here long to see them, composed of the best men in every farming community; men accustomed to look at things practically; men who have in their own experience, solved many of the problems of Agriculture which perplex theorists; these institutions can probe this question to the very bottom. And Sir, we may depend upon it, that if they decide that this Province can produce one half or two thirds of its breadstuffs, it will be done. My own observations and en-

quiries lead me to believe that it is possible. There has been a growing disposition with our farmers to sow wheat, and the reports which I find from time to time receive from different sections of the Province, are highly encouraging. Yet no one person can speak with authority upon such a subject.

The point to be settled is—Can wheat be safely and profitably raised in New Brunswick?

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