

The Carleton Sentinel;

AND FAMILY JOURNAL.

Devoted to Agriculture, Literature, and General Intelligence.

Published and Edited

"Our Queen and Constitution."

By James S. Segee.

NUMBER 5.

TUESDAY, JULY 23, 1850.

VOLUME 3.



AGRICULTURE.

REPORT ON THE AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITIES OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

BY J. F. W. JOHNSTON, F. R. S., S. L. & E.

(Continued from our last.)

In my tour through the Province I have frequently observed how little attention appeared to be paid to the proper housing of the stock. Wide chinks between the boards or logs, of which the cattle houses or barns are built, or large openings about their feet, too often admit currents of cold air in the winter season. The most of the prevailing winds also find their way through the walls, and the comfort of the cattle is thus continually liable to be disturbed, the chance of their thriving interfered with, and their consumption of food increased. Those who allow such a state of their cattle houses to continue, unjustly blame the winter for what arises from their own want of care.

One of the opinions regarding the winter, which I have inserted above, makes it a matter of complaint that much care, attention and experience are required to keep cattle in condition while the winter lasts; this is no doubt true, but the same qualifications are necessary to success in any other branch of husbandry; and he who is not willing to bestow all he possesses of them upon the business in which he is engaged, may happen to thrive, yet scarcely deserves to prosper.

Again, the winter feeding in the Colony is generally very much in the condition in which it was over a large part of Scotland some sixty years ago. To keep his stock alive was then the chief ambition of the Scottish farmer during the winter months, and he trusted to the nourishing grass of spring and summer to make up for the starving system of the colder part of the year. Such is very much the practice now in many parts of New Brunswick, but it stunts the cattle in their growth, and even in a money point of view is a false economy. The working ox, when spring arrives, has not sufficient strength to do all the work which the urgency of the season requires; while the animal which is sold for beef has so small a weight of muscle and fat, compared with that of its bones, and the quality of its meat is so inferior, that it is comparatively worthless in the market.

Thus not only does reason prescribe, but the profit of farming in the Colony requires—not that the winter should be blamed, from which no good can come—but that proper means should be taken for keeping cattle warm, and feeding them better than has hitherto been generally done.

Again, the impossibility of employing paid labour—the labour of hired servants that is—economically during the winter months, is alleged by some as a drawback to the profits of farming in New Brunswick. This is a question which experience only can determine; and from all I have been able to learn, experience is not so decidedly or generally against the profitable employment of agricultural labourers in winter as to justify a stranger in at once adopting this opinion.

The usual work of the farmer and his male assistants in the winter, is thrashing corn, carrying produce to mill and market, tending cattle and pigs, preparing artificial food for them, where this is done; collecting marsh, sea, mussel and bog mud; dressing flax and hemp; cutting down and clearing new land; cutting, splitting and hauling wood for fires and fences; and upon stony land, hauling the stones that have been previously piled up for the making of fences. These are purely rural operations. Besides these they are often employed in making shingles, and getting logs for making sawn lumber; in hauling provisions for the lumberers; in hauling ship timber, spruce logs, cord wood, lath wood, handspikes, staves, and other small wood to market.

In the present condition of the Province an industrious farmer, I am told, will always find something to do; and those who do all they can in winter are always most ready with everything which is necessary to enable them to take the greatest possible advantage of the first departure of winter in preparing their land, and getting in their seed.

At the same time, in the employment of farm servants, a more careful attention to the collection of manure, and to

the feeding of stock, would in many localities afford the means of turning their labour to subsequent profit more effectually than is now done. The collecting of marsh mud, bay mud, mussel mud, and bog stuff, for the preparation of composts, might very profitably engage the attention of the farmer, in various parts of the Province, more than it has ever hitherto done. More time might also be advantageously given to collecting and keeping together the manure made by the stock during the winter. In fact, the New Brunswick farmers, from their general neglect of manures hitherto, are scarcely aware of the large share which the preparation of manures occupies among the other kinds of farm labour in Great Britain, and how well the labour bestowed upon this branch of husbandry pays.—Lime might also be burned and hauled in winter, and advantageously mixed up with the bog stuff and earth into compost heaps.

The art of feeding cattle has now received great improvements; and the time and attention which the profitable feeding of stock requires, cannot be even imagined by farmers who have rarely given them anything but coarse hay. To this feeding of stock I shall return in a subsequent part of this Report, only observing here, that this mode of tending and feeding cattle, though more expensive in the labour and in the kind and quantity of food it requires, is yet found to be far more profitable to the farmer than the older and less costly method.

The culture of flax to a small extent on every farm is to be recommended on other grounds, as I shall hereafter more particularly explain; but very much also, because of the employment it gives to members of the farmer's family when out-door labour is unsuitable.

The same may be said of hemp, to the growth of which some parts of the Province are specially adapted, because of the rank rapidity with which vegetation proceeds upon them. Wool combing is also a winter employment to a certain extent—to an extent in fact which will every year become greater, if the alleged adaption of the climate to the rearing of sheep be properly taken advantage of. The prepared wool, like the dressed flax, will afford new employment to the females of the household, in spinning and weaving those domestic fabrics, the production and the use of which, in the present state of the Province, it is so desirable to encourage.

I might have considered the special question of employment in the winter, to be included in the more general one, whether paid labour can be employed at all to a profit in this Province. The profitable application of labour in winter, however, though it has much in common with the general question, is in some respects a different inquiry, and not undeserving of the brief consideration I have given it.

The substance of the reasonable results, to which this review of the relations of the New Brunswick climate to the operations and profits of the farmer leads, may be expressed in this summary:—

1st. That the length of the winter limits very much the period for out-door operations; but that it also opens and makes friable the soil to such a degree, that the same labour of horse or man expended upon it goes much farther than in the mother country; and that the number of dry working days is also greater in proportion than it is in Great Britain and Ireland. That the rapidity with which crops come to maturity, leaves a considerable period for ploughing and other out-door work, both before the seed is sown and after the crops are reaped; and that by diligent attention and method, and by the use of animals which have a quick step, and of workmen who know the value of time, much more land might be kept in arable culture with the same force, than is now done.

2nd. That though a large provision of winter food is required to maintain the stock during so many months, yet, that by the saving of manure upon farms of all kinds, even the newest, and applying it to the grass land in spring, and by the more extended cultivation of green crops, this food may be raised more easily than heretofore, and from a much smaller proportion of the cleared land of the farm. From this would be derived also the incidental advantage, that a better feeding of the stock and the production of more manure would insure the production of better beef and mutton, of a greater weight of butter and cheese, and of heavier harvests of grain.

3rd. That although to many it appears difficult to find profitable employment in winter for the members or the farmer's family, or for his paid servants, yet that more profit than is generally supposed may be derived from labour expended in the collection and saving of manure, in the preparation of composts, and in the proper tending of cattle, especially in the proper adjustment in time, kind, quantity and mode of preparation of the food with which

they are fed. The dressing of flax, hemp and wool, also are means of winter employment, one or other of which in most districts may be made profitably available.

This summary of the question ought to be satisfactory at least to the New Brunswick farmer. How far it is fitted to induce others to settle in this Province, is not for me to decide; but for those who are here, or who come to settle, the true course is not to hunt up causes of complaint, which can always and everywhere be abundantly found, but to inquire how the existing condition of things, in respect to soil and climate, can be most skilfully met and turned to the greatest profit. Now whatever evils in connection with the climate of this colony may ultimately be insurmountable by the farmer, it is quite clear, I think, that the climate at present is blamed by many for what is only the result of their own ignorance or want of care; and that by more skill and attention, the winter months might in nearly all cases be more profitably employed than they have hitherto been.

Temperatures below zero, observed at Woodstock in the Winters of 1848 and 1849, and the days of observation:—

1848.	1849.
Dec. 21, 17° below 0	Feb. 6, 29° below 0
" 22, 10 " "	" 9, 15 " "
" 24, 4 " "	" 10, 8 " "
1849.	" 11, 12 " "
Jan. 1, 2 " "	" 12, 28 " "
" 2, 13 " "	" 13, 5 " "
" 3, 8 " "	" 14, 31 " "
" 4, 8 " "	" 15, 25 " "
" 7, 11 " "	" 16, 31 1-2 " "
" 8, 3 " "	" 17, 32 " "
" 10, 6 " "	" 18, 29 " "
" 11, 11 " "	" 19, 13 " "
" 12, 14 " "	" 20, 22 " "
" 19, 20 " "	" 21, 20 " "
" 22, 19 " "	" 22, 2 " "
" 27, 17 " "	March 2, 17 " "
" 30, 15 " "	" 5, 13 " "
Feb. 1, 24 " "	" 12, 8 " "
" 4, 16 " "	" 15, 5 " "

These were the only days in which the mercury ranged here. At some exposures, however, the range was lower than by my thermometer.
(Signed) C. D. Rice.

CHAPTER IX.

I. The practice of Lumbering. II. The alleged want of Markets, and of centres of industry—in their relations to the practical Agriculture of the Province.

I. The practice of Lumbering.
The cutting of timber in the forests of New Brunswick, and the subsequent hauling and floating of the logs and rafts to the mills and harbours, has hitherto been the main resource of the labourers of the Province. The sawing and preparing of this timber has been the chief manufacture of the country; and the lumber thus obtained or produced, in its various forms, has been the staple article of export, and of traffic with foreign markets.

Such a trade as this, it is obvious, can only be carried on permanently in parts of the world which are by nature unfit for agricultural purposes. In all other countries it can continue in a state of vigour only during the transition period—longer or shorter according to circumstances—which is necessary to convert the wide forests into settled farms, and to replace the wild animals and the native timber trees, by civilized tillers of the soil, and nutritious crops or corn.

The decline of the timber trade of New Brunswick, therefore—supposing it not to have been overdone, and the forest resources of the Province not to have been injudiciously squandered—is a natural and necessary consequence of the progress of agricultural settlement.

Whatever may be the future fate of the lumber trade, and of those engaged in it, there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who candidly considers the economical history of the Province, that it has been of much service, not only in making known and developing the general resources of the Colony, but in especially contributing also to the advancement of its agricultural interest. Thus—

1st. It has provided a more ready market for farm produce in many parts of the Province.
2nd. It has kept up the prices of such produce so that when the lumbering trade has been good the prices have been generally higher than in neighbouring Provinces.