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AGRICULTURE.

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

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(Continued from our last.)

CHAPTER VII.

Of the absolute and comparative prices obtained for Agricultural Produce in the different parts and Counties of the Province.

From what has been stated in the preceding Sections, it appears to be satisfactorily shown—

1st. That the soil of New Brunswick is capable of producing food for a very much larger population than now exists upon it; and

2nd. That on the whole, the cultivated land of the Province, in its present state, at least as productive as that of Canada West, of the State of New York, or of the State of Ohio on the whole.

There are reasonable grounds also for believing—

3rd. That the quality of the grain it produces is equal to and will produce as good flour and meal as is manufactured from the wheat and oats of the United States or of Canada.

It seems, therefore, natural to infer, that New Brunswick having the natural ability, ought to grow bread stuffs and other provisions sufficient for its own consumption, and that no importation from abroad ought to be required. But here the prices received for agricultural produce in the markets of the Province, come in as an important element in our reasoning. If these prices are not such as to remunerate the farmer, he may raise as much as his own establishment requires, but he will bring no produce to market; he will leave the markets open that is to foreign growers, and compel intending purchasers to procure their supplies from abroad. In connection with this view of the remunerating character of agricultural pursuits in the Province, and the actual extent of its available capabilities, I have collected from as many quarters as I could, the average prices obtained for produce of different kinds in different parts of the Province; these I have digested into the following Tables, (XIV. and XV.) which exhibit the actual prices obtained in the several parts of the Province, and the average prices obtained in the several Counties, and in the whole Province respectively, for the natural or unmanufactured products of the farm, its grain, roots and hay; and XVI. and XVII., which exhibit the same facts in reference to the indirect or manufactured products, beef, mutton, pork cheese and butter. The numbers in the second column of Tables XIV., XV., XVI. and XVII., refer to the returns indicated by the same numbers in Table IV., in which latter Table, opposite to each number, the names of my authorities will be found.

XVII.

Average Prices of Beef, Mutton, Pork, Cheese and Butter in the several Counties of the Province of New Brunswick.

COUNTIES.	No.	Beef.	Mutton.	Pork.	Cheese.	Butter.
Saint John,	1	...	...	...	...	10d
Charlotte,	2	3d	3 1-2	3 1-2	...	10 1-4
Westmorland,	3	3 1-4	...	3 1-2	4 5-4d	9d
King's,	4	3d	3d	3 1-2	5d	9 1-2d
Queen's,	5	3d	...	...	5d	9 1-4d
Sunbury,	6	3 1-4	5d	3 1-2	4 1-2d	10d
York,	7	2 3-4	3d	4d	5 1-2d	10d
Carleton,	8	3d	...	...	6d	9d
Albert,	9	3 1-4	2 1-2	3 1-2	4 1-2d	9d
Kent,	10	3 3-4	...	...	...	1s
Northumberland,	11	...	...	...	5 1-2d	9d
Gloucester,	12	4 1-2	...	...	9d	10 1-2d
Restigouche,	13	4 3-4	...	...	9d	10

General average of the prices of Beef, Mutton, Pork, Cheese and Butter for the entire Province of New Brunswick.

Beef.	Mutton.	Pork.	Cheese.	Butter.
3 1-4d	3 1-4d	3 1-2	5 3-4	9 1-4

These Tables are instructive in several respects—

1st. The first of them (XIV.) shows that the prices of

produce are subject to considerable variations in the same locality. Thus in King's, No. 20 says that in his neighbourhood wheat varies from 6s. to 9s. a bushel, oats from 1s. 6d. to 3s., and hay from 30s. to 90s. a ton. In York, No. 38 represents wheat as varying in the neighbourhood of Fredericton from 8s. to 15s., Barley from 4s. to 8s. and oats from 3s. to 5s. per bushel. These prices are so far beyond those given by any other of my authorities, that I think they must refer to seed corn, and are not to be looked upon as usual market prices even at Fredericton in any season of the year.

2nd. The same thing appears in Table XVI. respecting beef and butter; the former (beef) varies in Kent, (according to No. 34,) from 1d a pound in the Fall, to 6d in the Spring; in Sunbury, from 2d to 5d., and in other Counties in somewhat less degree. The latter (butter) varies in Carleton from 6d to 1s. a pound; in Sunbury from 7d to 1s 3d; in King's from 7 1-2d to 1s 3d; and in other places regarding which only the average is given, the variation probably is as excessive.

These variations imply one or both of two things—that the beef and butter are much more plentiful in the market at one season of the year than at another, or that the quality is superior in one season to what it is in another.

In the case of beef the practice of slaughtering so largely in the fall of the year, causes both the quantity and quality at that season to affect the market price, and the usually poor feeding of cattle in winter produces a similar result as regards butter. I do not dwell on these points here, as I shall have occasion to draw especial attention to them in a subsequent part of this Report.

3rd. The Tables XIV. and XVI. show that the average prices of produce of the same kind, in different parts of the same County, occasionally differ very considerably. Thus the average price of wheat in one part of Westmorland is 6s., and in another 8s; in one part of Queen's 7s 6d., and in another 10s. So in Albert, barley sells for 3s., and in another for 5s; while in one part of Carleton oats bring an average price of 2s. 6., and in another of only 1s. 6. a bushel.

4th. Again, Tables XV. and XVII., which represent the average prices for each County in the Province, show that similar differences exist throughout the whole year among the different Counties. Thus in Saint John the average price of wheat is 6s. 9d., in Kent 6s. 8d., in Sunbury 8s. 9d., Restigouche 9s. In King's barley sells for 3s. 7d., while in Queen's it brings 5s. 6d. In Westmorland Oats average 1s. 8d., and in Charlotte 2s. 6d. a bushel. Similar differences appear, not only in regard to other grains and to root crops, but in regard to beef, butter and cheese.

Such differences as the above exist to a certain extent even in the oldest cultivated and most improved Counties of Europe. It is chiefly to difficulty of transport from one market to another that such differences are owing. They prevent the farmer from carrying his produce to the highest market; and the consumer from obtaining his supplies from the cheapest source. Good roads not only add to the general comfort of the whole population, and hasten forward the development of the general capabilities of a country, but they are of direct money-value both to consumer and producer in a degree which is very generally under-estimated.

I have already expressed my surprise at the great extent of good roads which the Province now possesses, but every year will open up new roads, and will improve existing means of communication; as these progress, not only will the country through which they pass advance along with them, but the inequalities of the prices paid or received for agricultural, and other produce, in different parts of the country, will gradually be lessened.

5th. But the general averages for the whole Province are most worthy of attentive consideration. These are for the different kinds of grain per bushel and per quarter—

XVIII.

per bush.	per quar.	per bush.	per quar.
Wheat, 7s 6d	60s 0d	Rye, 4s 10d	38s 8d
Barley, 4 2 1-2d	33 8	Buckwheat, 3 9	30s 0
Oats, 2 0	16 0	Indian Corn, 4 8	37 4

For root crops and hay the averages are—

XIX.

Potatoes, 1s 11d per bush.	Carrots, 2s 5d per bush.
Turnips, 1 2 do.	M. Wurtzel, 2 1 do.
Hay, 49 0 per ton.	Marsh Hay, 20 0 per ton.

For the manufactured products of the farm they are as follows—

XX.

Beef, 3 1-4d per lb.	Cheese, 5 3-4 per lb.
Mutton 3 1-4 do.	Butter, 9 3-4 do.
Pork, 3 1-2 do.	

I do not presume to give an opinion as to how far, in

the existing circumstances of the Provincial farmer, the above prices are or are not absolutely remunerative. But when we consider at how much less cost these crops are raised in this Province than they are in Great Britain, and compare the prices in the two countries, it will appear that the New Brunswick farmer, with no rent and few taxes to pay, ought at least to be as well off as the English farmer. Thus reducing the New Brunswick currency to sterling money, and taking the averages of the London Corn Exchange for the six months, ending the 3rd of November, being the most extensive English averages to which I can at present refer, the prices of the grain in the two countries are as follow per quarter—

XXI.

	New Brunswick.	London.
Wheat,	48s 6d	41s 6d
Barley,	27 3	28 7
Oats,	13 9	16 10
Rye,	30 11	22 9

I do not find any argument or conclusions on the general superiority of the numbers in the second to those in the third column of the above Table.

It may be said that the English prices are at present unremunerative to the English farmer, and this may possibly be the case. No safe inference, therefore, can be drawn as to the sufficiency of New Brunswick prices, from any comparison of them with those now realized by the English farmer.

I have before me the Appendix to the First Report of the Canadian Board of Registration and Statistics, published at Montreal during the present year, in which is given (p. 43) a statement of the average prices of produce in Canada in 1848. I insert a comparison of these prices, and of those obtained at the Toronto market on the 10th of October of the present year, with the New Brunswick prices already given:—

XXII.

	Upper Canada.	New Brunswick.	
	Average for Toronto Market.	1848 and 1849.	
	1848.	10th Oct. 1849.	
Wheat,	28s 0d	27s 0d	60s 8d
Barley,	18s 0	14 0	34 0
Oats,	10 0	9 4	16 0
Buckwheat,	32 0	...	30 0
Rye,	18 0	25 6	38 8
Indian Corn,	20 0	...	37 7
Potatoes,	1 6	1 9	1 11

XXIII.

Beef	...	0 2 1-4 per lb.	0 3 1-4
Mutton,	...	0 3 1-4	0 3 1-4
Pork,	...	0 3	0 3 1-2
Fresh Butter,	...	0 8 1-2	0 9 3-4
Firkin do.	...	0 5 1-2	0 9 3-4
Cheese,	...	0 4 1-2	0 5 3-4

From the superiority of the New Brunswick prices taken alone, over those of Western Canada, exhibited in the above Table, we must not draw any hasty conclusions as to the better condition of the New Brunswick farmer. But if in respect to climate, or productiveness of soil, or cost of labour, and so on, he be on a level with his Canadian neighbour, we may reasonably say, that as he obtains a better price for his produce, he ought also to be more comfortable in his general circumstances.

Now the comparative productiveness and the market prices, as between Upper Canada and New Brunswick, according to the data already given are as follow:—

XXIV.

	Upper Canada.	New Brunswick.		
Produce	Price per acre	Produce Price per quarter.		
Wheat,	12 3-4	28s.	17 3-4	60s 8d
Barley,	17 1-2	18	27	34 0
Oats,	24 3-4	10	33	16 0
Rye,	11 1-2	18	18	38 8
Maize,	21 3-4	20	36 1-2	37 4
Buckwheat,	16 1-4	32	28	30 0
Potatoes,	84	1 6d p. b.	204	1 11 per b.

If the numbers in this Table are at all to be relied upon they compel us to the conclusion, that both as to the productiveness of their soils, and to the prices obtained for produce, the New Brunswick farmers, as a body, have a decided advantage over Canada West, taken collectively. This of course is quite consistent with the existence of richer and poorer districts in either Province, to which the average numbers above given do not apply, and in respect of which the above general conclusions would be untrue.