

Average imports of agricultural produce into Great Britain.

525. In issues of this work previous to 1890, tables were given showing the quantities of certain articles of food and agricultural produce imported annually into Great Britain, the figures in which were taken correctly from the British returns; but it was found that these returns did not accurately represent the true facts, inasmuch as articles were credited to the country in which the port of shipment was situated, without reference to the country of production, *e.g.*, articles of United States produce, shipped at the port of Montreal, were credited in the British customs returns to British North America. This practice still prevails, and, as the British returns are for the calendar year, and the Canadian and the United States returns are for the fiscal year, it was decided to take a period of three years and strike an average, which has accordingly been done in the following table, the figures for Canada and the United States being taken from the returns of each country, and those of British possessions and other foreign countries from British returns. It must not be forgotten that, in many cases, the Canadian exports are rapidly increasing, and that, therefore, these average figures do not fairly represent the extent of the present trade in those articles, but they give a general idea of the proportion contributed by Canada to the food supply of England. This table should be compared with similar ones in the Year Books for 1891 and 1890. Enormous as is the quantity of food from other countries annually required by the people of the United Kingdom, yet that quantity is continually increasing, and the figures show what a very small proportion of the whole amount is contributed by Canada, and, on the other hand, what large proportions of many articles are sent from the United States. Canada is just as well, if not better, able to supply these articles, as far as extent of area, climate and natural facilities go, but she lacks the other essential quality of population, and it is evident that energetic steps must be taken towards settling the great North-west, if Canada's contribution to the food supply of the mother country is ever to become an important factor of consideration.