

With respect to the United States, the following, quoted by Mr. Gough, reporting to the Earl of Kimberley, sufficiently indicates the condition of agriculture in that country :—

“ A committee of the United States House of Representatives appointed to inquire into the causes of the prevailing agricultural depression has recently prepared a report in which it says :—

“ ‘ It is unnecessary for the committee to enter into or dwell upon the fact that agriculture is depressed in every branch of this most important industry, that the values of land and farm products, unless under exceptionally rare conditions, have depreciated steadily as the purchasing power of the dollar has increased. But while the value of property owned by the American (United States) farmers has decreased in thirty years from nearly one-half of the total wealth in 1860 to less than one-fourth in 1890, of which 30 per cent is now under mortgage, taxes have steadily increased, and debts now require four times the labour to be paid off than was then required.

“ ‘ The purchasing capacity of the dollar to secure the farmer’s land and produce has increased four-fold, while power to pay his taxes and debts has remained at a standstill. In 1873 wheat sold for \$1.55 to \$2.25 a bushel in New York ; in 1894 it sold at 50 cents.’ ”

486. Many measures of relief have been suggested. A royal commission has been sitting to consider the depressed condition of agriculture in Great Britain. The Imperial, German and Prussian Governments propose measures which include the reduction of the land tax, the construction of canals, the reduction of railway freight rates, light railways, further protection of the sugar industry, stringent measures for the prevention of cattle diseases, &c., &c.

In France, where there has been a great decrease in the value of farm lands,* and where prices of agricultural produce (which began to drop about 1880, and have scarcely ceased to decline since) are at a low ebb, the government have energetically endeavoured to alleviate or counteract the depression by imposing import duties and by other means amounting to prohibition of imports of many articles whose free admission would reduce the price still further. Under the operation of these efforts, production has increased considerably, both as regards stock and crops.

In the United States the Department of Agriculture has endeavoured to assist the farmers by keeping them informed of the markets for agricultural products in all parts of the world, by the inspection of meat products with guaranty of their purity, by giving advice through bulletins on the best methods of cultivation, while the several states have been active in efforts calculated to widen the intellectual horizon of farmers. The Federal Government has afforded assistance by means of tariffs on agricultural products from Canada and other countries. Bounties have also been given on sugar production.

487. Canada has met the difficulty very much in the way Germany proposes to do and as France has done. She has built canals to enable the grains of the interior to reach the seaboard at the lowest possible cost for transport. She

*Sir Joseph Crowe’s report on the agriculture, bounties, and general trade of France for 1894.