

VIII.—PRODUCTION.

In this section are included the statistics of agriculture, the fur trade, forestry, fisheries, minerals, manufactures and water powers. A sketch of the development of each of these branches of production is prefixed to the statistical tables.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN CANADA.

By J. H. GRISDALE, D. Sc. A., Deputy Minister of Agriculture,
Ottawa.

Agriculture in Canada dates back to prehistoric times. When Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence in 1535 he found fields of maize growing around the Indian village of Hochelaga at the foot of Mount Royal where Montreal now stands. Later travellers reported similar fields in many parts of what is now Ontario. More especially the Huron Indians, who occupied the territory around Georgian Bay and Lake Huron, and were not as warlike as the other tribes, cleared large patches of land and grew corn, peas, beans, and other crops.

The Beginnings in Acadia and Quebec.—In the whole area now constituting Canada, the first settlement, and at the same time the first effort at agricultural production made by white men was most probably that begun at Port Royal, now Annapolis, Nova Scotia, by the French under de Monts in 1605. Here some of the settlers cultivated patches of land and grew maize, pumpkins and beans, while cows were brought here by Poutrincourt in 1606. The Indians also grew maize to a small extent to supplement food obtained by hunting. According to the census of 1671, the Acadians, then numbering 441, had 429 arpents under cultivation, together with 866 cattle, 407 sheep and 36 goats. Thereafter the settlers continued to clear the lands and reclaim the fertile marshes from the sea, chiefly along the Basin of Minas, on which hay grew abundantly.

In the valley of the St. Lawrence farming on a small scale appears to have been carried on by Champlain, the founder of Quebec, as early as 1608, when cattle were imported and hay and fodder grown, together with wheat and other grains. In 1626, Champlain established a farm at Cap Tourmente for cattle which he sent from Quebec.

The first real farmer, however, was Louis Hébert, who landed in Quebec in 1617 and immediately began to clear and cultivate the soil on what is now part of Upper Town, Quebec. His only tool was a spade, but he worked away till the soil was ready to receive the seed and also planted some apple trees. Hébert was followed by other farmers, among them Guillaume Couillard, Abraham Martin and Robert Giffard, the latter of whom was said to have had in 1635 large crops of wheat, peas and Indian corn. In the district of Three Rivers, Pierre Boucher had large crops of grains and vegetables, and in 1648, Pierre Gadbois and others commenced farming on land where Montreal now stands.