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NOTICE.—The subscription to the *Illustrated Journal of Agriculture*, for members of Agricultural and Horticultural Societies, as well as of Farmers Clubs, in the province of Quebec, is 30c annually, provided such subscription be forwarded through the secretaries of such societies.—**EDITORIAL MATTER.** All editorial matter should be addressed to A. R. Jenner Fust, P. O. Box 254, Sorel—or to the Director of Agriculture, Quebec.

OFFICIAL PART.

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DE OMNIBUS REBUS.

Sorel, Box 254, Que.—March 28th, 1887.

The "Vermont Watchman," now no longer enjoying the privilege of being edited by the erudite Dr. Hoskins,(1) in its issue of the 23rd March, founds a leading article—not in the page devoted to agriculture, by the bye—on the speech of the Hon. W. W. Grout in the House of Representatives, on the establishment of agricultural experiment stations in every state of the Union.

After speaking at some length of the deterioration of the soil in Vermont as the result of wasteful husbandry, General Grout proceeded to discuss the remedy, and argued that to

improve the soil the farmer must know what ingredients were lacking, whether of nitrogen, potash, *nitrate of sodium*, phosphoric acid or superphosphate of lime. The average farmer knows little of agricultural chemistry, and has neither money nor time for experiments. "Nevertheless, this information is essential to his success, and how is he to acquire it? How, except from the agricultural experiment station, such as is provided by this bill, to which he may send samples of his soil for analysis and from which he may learn the relative value of fertilizers and their adaptability to the wants of his soil? The work of the experiment station is educational in character, and, upon every principle of sound public policy, entitled to the support of the state."

Now there are a good many things chemistry can do for the farmer, but if he dream that on sending a sample or samples of his soil to the station he will receive back a recipe of like value to a doctor's prescription for a case of catarrh or sciatica, he will find himself vastly mistaken. The analysis of a soil is one thing, the requirements of a certain soil is another. The experimental station, properly conducted, can reply to the farmer's question: "what does my soil require?" only in one way, and that is by showing him how to make the soil itself answer the question. If it attempt anything more, it lays itself open to the charge of being an imposition on the public.

And, should any of my readers desire to follow out a regular course of experiments on a large or on a small scale, I think if they will attend to the following suggestions, they will have no difficulty in finding out in what specific constituents their soil is deficient.

In the first place, it must be noted that experimental plots—large or small—should invariably be duplicated, or even

(1) I am happy to see that Dr Hoskins has undertaken the agricultural editorship of the "Rural Vermonter" A. R. J. F.