

bitions, which was specially entrusted to it by the act of agriculture, and has transferred the charge to a committee composed of an equal number of members chosen from the council of agriculture and the council of arts and manufactures. Three successive exhibitions have been held under the new system, and without wishing to decide for or against what has taken place, I think I am interpreting correctly the views of this council when I say, that the results obtained have not fully answered the intentions of the promoters of the new system. For it stands proved by official figures, that the receipts from visitors to the exhibition have never arrived at a satisfactory amount, until the agricultural part of the show has been fully occupied. And this shows more than any other fact, the special interest which our agricultural exhibitions have for our population, composed, as it is, to the amount of at least four-fifths, of cultivators of the soil.

Firm in this conviction, and supported by the experience of 14 years, I desired to study this question in a more special manner, so, accompanied by your secretary, I visited the purely industrial exhibitions of New York and Boston, and arrived at the conclusion that, to make industrial exhibitions profitable, they must be kept open much longer than agricultural ones.

Without undervaluing the services rendered by the permanent exhibition committee, I am, nevertheless, persuaded that its composition leaves much to be desired; and this is proved superabundantly by the absence of unanimity of action (due to a certain want of good understanding), as has been too clearly proved by the resignation of some members, and the inactivity of others, whose practical knowledge is such as to assure the success of any agricultural exhibition.

I am not prepared to suggest, at once, an efficacious remedy for the difficulties I am pointing out. But, with land enough for the present, aye, for ten years to come, with buildings numerous, spacious, and admirably adapted to their destined use, I should with pleasure see this council interesting itself in this important question, and suggesting to the government the opportuneness of replacing the management of our exhibitions in the hands of a syndicate, or of any other association, composed of the persons best fitted to manage the exhibitions in such a fashion as to make them most thoroughly beneficial without their costing the State a halfpenny. The persons constituting the syndicate would, necessarily, undertake, on their own responsibility, the exclusive management and organisation of the exhibitions. The successful experiment in Ontario authorises me to conclude that exhibitions thus conducted would succeed equally in Quebec. This is only the expression of my personal opinion; it is for you, Gentlemen, to discuss the matter, and to suggest any other means which may appear the most likely to forward the end you have in view.

#### FORESTRY CONGRESS.

By special favour, the city of Montreal enjoyed, this year, the immense advantage of receiving a convention for the advancement of science, composed of specialists learned in all its branches. And among these different branches, that which concerns the cultivation and preservation of forest-trees occupied one of the chief places. The special aim of this science are the replanting of our forests, the judicious use of our forest-wealth, the ornamenting of our rural abodes by the planting of trees and shrubs of all sorts, &c. As president of this council, I had the inestimable advantage of being present at several of the interesting meetings, and of listening to many of the essays read on the subject. I confess, Gentlemen, that it was with great satisfaction that I heard the members of the Forestry Congress confirm fully the action of this council in offering, in the regulations for the government of the competitions for the best cultivated farms, ten points to the farmer who shall have planted a certain number of trees in a given space of time.

Owing, probably, to my position as president of this council, I had the honour to be appointed vice-president of the forestry-association of this province. I did not fail, when the opportunity offered, to cause the action of this council as to the replanting of our forests to be remarked, proving thereby that, as regards progress, the council has been always vigilant where the interests of the farmer are in question; and that if its well meant suggestions were attended to, it would be much less exposed to the charge of apathy which is often brought against it without any reasonable cause. I am thoroughly convinced that, before long, our intelligent population will sufficiently understand its own interests to accept with a good grace the recommendations of this council,

dictated, as they are, only by the interest which we all take in every thing which touches, closely or otherwise, the development of our agricultural resources and our personal prosperity.

#### CONCLUSION.

Before I finish, I may be allowed to repeat an accusation, often made by people who ignore the long debates and the earnest discussions which have taken place in this council on the question of imposing the observation of a rule admitted by every one to be just and reasonable, but unacceptable to certain persons, influential enough in their neighbourhood, because they have the misfortune to reside in a part of the country where the advanced ideas of the present time have not yet obliterated the lines (*sillon*) of ancient routine. It is often repeated, though no belief is felt in the assertion, that the council of agriculture is a useless body, composed of men who are ignorant of the first steps in agriculture, or who only know what they have read about it in books more or less well informed. It is not my business, Gentlemen, president of this council as I am, to praise my associates, or to demonstrate the wisdom and opportuneness of your decisions, but I may surely be allowed to affirm, what the most intelligent people admit at first sight (*d'emblée*) that the progress which has been made in agriculture in this province is chiefly due to the good guidance of this council.

Every year, persons not connected with the council bestir themselves, and suggest to the government reforms which, according to them, are of a nature to upset the present system entirely; and they do this, often, after simply reading one or two resolutions, without understanding sufficiently the reasons which have guided the council in passing these resolutions. The task of finding fault is easy enough to them, but they are soon brought to a standstill when they are required to point out a remedy for evils more imaginary than real. Well, Gentlemen, I do not hesitate to say, if the council has not done all the good which seems to have been expected from it, the default arises from the opposition of those who would have had all to gain by favouring the trial of the teachings of the council, instead of hindering their execution.

And this opposition frequently comes from those in high places. You have not forgotten, Gentlemen, how earnestly I have insisted in my previous reports on the importance of watching over the improvement of our cattle by means of our agricultural societies. I leaned, in demonstrating this, on the ever increasing importance of our exportation of butcher's cattle, an exportation which to-day has exceeded our most legitimate expectations.

To gain this end, I suggested the most efficacious means, and those recognised by long experience, as the only ones capable of affording certain results. In spite of the almost unanimous convictions of the council, the means suggested—and observe, Gentlemen, that these means were in perfect harmony and in indisputable conformity with animal physiology—were not allowed to receive general acceptance by our agricultural societies, on account of a misunderstanding between the government and the council.

It is not my business, Gentlemen, to ask from government the reasons for their action in this affair; but I may be allowed, I hope, to lay down a general rule that, if the government has nominated us as the natural advisers of the commissioner of agriculture, and as those whose duty it is to suggest to that minister the fittest means for the promotion of the agricultural interests of the province of Quebec; and if, after our deep investigations and our earnest and repeated discussions, our suggestions are not adopted, our mission as the council of agriculture ceases, and there is no longer any reason for its existence. It is with regret that I express my sentiments so frankly on this matter, but, in my opinion, to keep silence would render me the most culpable of men, and I have not, therefore, thought fit to resist the desire I felt to express my convictions in a manner as emphatic as it is sincere.

Lastly, a reproach has been uttered against the council as being composed of persons who do not represent sufficiently the different districts of the province. In this reproach, Gentlemen, there may be some truth. For, as you know, several districts are represented here by two or three members, while others are not represented at all. For my part, I do not hesitate to say that I see no objection in each of the twenty judicial districts of the province having a representative in the council. But I should be still better pleased if that council were composed of a still smaller number of members, the experience of the past having convinced me that small committees always do the most work.

In order to meet this objection, I will propose then, always with your approbation, that an humble address be presented to the government, pointing out the present position of affairs, with a request that a special committee be appointed, charged with the duty of enquiring into the remodelling of the act of agriculture. The mem-