

AGRICULTURE — WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE.

"There is no use of attempting to drive Lawyers out of the Government of the country; do what we will they will rule; it is vain to attempt to carry anything against them, and we must submit to their dictation.—*Extract from a Speech of J. P. Roblin, Esquire, on Agricultural Protection.*

We have strenuously avoided all sectional controversial questions since our connection with this journal, and are determined to adhere to the even tenor of the policy which we have thus closely confined ourselves, but we really consider that we would come short of performing a duty we owe to the Agricultural classes, if we were to allow such expressions as those quoted above go before the public without offering a few remarks in defending the yeomanry from such gross misrepresentation.

We deny that there is no use of attempting to drive the Lawyers out of the Government of the province. Before such a bold declaration as Mr. Roblin's be admitted, an attempt should be made to have the Agricultural, and other producing classes represented in the Parliament of the country. No effort has yet been made to consummate this desirable object. And we ask when can there be a more fit opportunity than the approaching winter for the adoption of vigorous measures to have those interests represented? The only thing necessary to accomplish more than even the most zealous have demanded, is, that the farmers unite in their strength and send persons from amongst them to represent them in Parliament.

Agriculture at present is even looked down upon by the very men who are bound to protect it, and we are sorry to add that in many instances the farmers themselves do not speak so highly of their profession as they otherwise would, if it were an honourable occupation in the eyes of the gentlemen who influence the movements of the Government. Indeed it is not sufficient that Agriculture should be merely represented in the Commons of the country, but we want to see at least four intelligent farmers in the Executive Council.

The cities and towns will afford a field abundantly large, for the profession of the law to be well represented, and the agricultural districts are grossly in error, if they do not at once take efficient steps to enlist in their service, men from their ranks, to represent their interests in the Second United Parliament. There are, no doubt, difficulties in the way—and the most formidable one is that we have been dupes to the designing politicians of the day. We have, in many instances, been made to believe that a species of class legislation is of more importance to the country than the adoption of broad principles based on equal justice. The course which certain legislators have lately pursued, have tended, in a great measure, to open the eyes of the electors to the hopelessness of receiving any attention from the present House. In sentiment, the present parliament are almost unanimously advocates of free trade. The very champion of the resolutions for the proposed

tariff bill, two years since, in a private interview, with a friend of ours, reprobated the principles of protection, and remarked, that he knew no just reason why his family should be taxed an extra penny per lb. for beef, to benefit the greedy farmers.

We understand, that the Gore District have already made up their minds to return two lawyers to parliament, the ensuing election. This savours, in our opinion, of the principle of taking time by the forelock. We regret that the yeomanry of this country are so inactive, in matters relating to their dearest interests. The Home District, the most populous and wealthy in the province, is now represented in parliament by five gentlemen, of the long robe, and one gentleman, office-holder. Is there any probability of a change in these matters? Certainly not, so long as there is no union among the rural population. The position matters of this sort are in at present is such, that it would be madness in the extreme to nominate an intelligent *home-spun* farmer, for the office of M. P. P. There is a species of jealousy existing among them, which is neither based on common sense principles nor justice, which will, so long as it exists, prevent the agricultural districts being properly represented in parliament. The scheme which we have in contemplation, and which, we trust, will be generally acted upon, will ultimately have the effect of preparing the wisest and most intellectual of the producing classes for the several offices, which the people have the power to elect, for these offices.

It may not be out of place for us to mention, that a concerted movement, on a grand scale, is necessary to bring in the forces from every point of the compass, so that the people may judge, from the ability of the parties, whether talent can be found among the agricultural classes, of the proper description, to qualify them for the highest offices within their prerogative to elect. This movement is also necessary to give a character to this country, as one possessing all the necessary natural and artificial resources, to enable the British capitalist to invest his capital and even settle among us, by which means the respectability of the community will be enhanced, and the interest of the money will remain, and be expended in the country.

The best apology we have to offer for the course we are about pursuing, is, that the great interest of the country is almost entirely neglected; and also the very dispirited manner in which all agricultural movements are conducted have influenced us to endeavour to bring into requisition every possible exertion, with a view to infuse a wholesome spirit in the mass of our countrymen. At present, every department of business is unprecedentedly depressed, no man looks on his fellow with much confidence, and a spirit of selfishness has been fostered by the narrow-minded course which both politicians and the press have pursued, which have tended in a great measure to keep the mass in ignorance; as an evidence of which, we hear expressions, almost daily, from the farmers,

from which, together with their actions, a person would be led to suppose that they were of opinion that it is derogatory to their individual interests, that their neighbours should acquire property, by honest means, in a faster ratio than themselves. Nothing could be more preposterous, than such notions as these.

We want to see the profession of Agriculture made respectable,—looked up to as the source from whence both *principal* and *interest* must be realized, and respected as it should be by all classes. To bring about this desirable state of things, a commencement must be made, and the sooner it is made the more speedily will be fully accomplished all that is necessary to make Canada what it should be—the brightest gem of the British Crown.

It is unnecessary for us to draw a vivid picture of the present state of Canadian Agriculture, suffice it to say it is not what it might be; nor will it as a profession attain to any considerable eminence, until more vigorous and united efforts be made by the most interested parties themselves.

Agricultural Societies, as they are at present constituted, will be of trifling service to the country; indeed, in many districts, they have done a vast amount of injury, by introducing stock, altogether ill suited to the wants of the country. The country would have been benefited some thousands of pounds, if the introduction of the blood horse, and the Lincolnshire breed of sheep had been discouraged by agricultural associations. We might dwell on these topics, and add to the list of the improper proceedings of these associations, which have been a source of regret to many of the wisest and most wealthy farmers in the country, who have, in consequence, withheld their countenance and support; but sufficient has been advanced to satisfy the thinking portion of the population, that other steps must be taken to advance the agricultural interests of the country; we shall now confine ourselves to a few plain observations on what we consider the most practical and at the same time the most beneficial method to advance the progress of Agricultural skill and wealth in this highly favoured portion of the British Empire; and at the same time trust that the most fastidious will give it due consideration before they denounce it as being impracticable, and unworthy of their co-operation.

AGRICULTURAL CLUBS.

The organization of one or more clubs for the discussion of agricultural topics, should take place in each populous township forthwith. The officers and members of these clubs might meet once per month, and their proceedings might, with advantage to themselves and the country, be carried into effect in the following order:—

The discussion of an agricultural topic agreed upon the previous meeting; the delivery of a short and spirited agricultural address, and afterwards volunteer remarks, reporting experiments, or the elucidation of any one fact on improved agriculture, or any other