

CANADIAN AGRICULTURIST

AND

Transactions

OF THE

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE OF UPPER CANADA.

VOL. V.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1853.

NO. 2.

AGRICULTURAL ADDRESS.

The annual meeting of the Township of PORTLAND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY was held at Spike's Corners January 19 1853, when the following address was delivered by ANGUS CAMERON, Esq., of Kingston, the President of the County Society. The practice of delivering prepared addresses at meetings of this kind, is, we are glad to observe, on the increase, as it tends to give a character and usefulness to the proceedings, which they could not otherwise possess. There are many points in Mr. Cameron's very useful and practical lecture that have a general interest and application:—

GENTLEMEN,—The indisposition which has hitherto prevailed amongst practical farmers generally, in this section of the country, to become members of Agricultural Societies, is matter of regret to the few of them who entertain high opinions of the advantages which such societies are capable of affording. This indisposition is but too plainly verified by the facts, that while some of the Townships maintain no society of this description, the annual exhibitions of those which do, are supported and attended but by a small proportion of the farming community. The County Show, held in the month of October last, although a great improvement on past meetings of the kind, as far as regarded horned cattle, sheep and swine, was quite a falling off in many respects, and especially as regards the number of agriculturists in attendance, and in the quantity of grain, dairy produce, and home wollen manufactures, although the amount distributed in premiums exceeded the average of former occasions of the kind. The office Bearers of the County Society, for the past year, earnestly desirous of a change for the better in this respect, are now making every exertion in their power to awaken a more lively and extended interest in the great work of agricultural improvement in the several townships throughout the County. It has frequently been urged as a plea for not having joined such societies in times past, that the provisions of the Agricultural Society Act were not known generally in the county, and especially that section which limited the period for subscribing as members, of township and county

societies, to the last days of January and February. To remedy this in future, the act has been put into possession of the several township authorities, and there is yet good time for the people in each locality to avail themselves of its advantages for the current year. It has also sometimes been assigned as a reason for refusing to become members, that although the intention of the law was worthy of approbation, the management of the society was bad. In reply to this it may be stated that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to please all parties in a matter of this kind. Improvement in this respect may perhaps be required as much as in our farm practice, but certainly it is not the way to improve in management of any society to give it up altogether. The people have the management in their own hands, as once a year they select their office-bearers; the rules and regulations are subject to small alterations and amendments as the members may think proper, so that past errors may be avoided, and progressive improvement from new sources of information, and from practical experience, may be the result.—Those who the most clearly perceive the errors in the past management, would be contending a benefit on the country by being present at all the deliberations and meetings, with a view to secure all desirable amendment. On the same principle on which agricultural societies have been pronounced by competent authority, to be advantageous to the farming interest in the three separate portions of our mother country, we may safely admit they could be rendered so in Canada. There the practical tenant farmer, under heavy rent, the man of science, and the wealthy landlord, contribute to their support. Professor Johnston, in his "Notes on North America," says of that continent that "as to the condition of agriculture as an art of life, it cannot be denied that in this region, as a whole, it is in a very primitive condition." He also says that "little knowledge of improved agriculture has hitherto been diffused in Upper Canada. In revenge, the farming class are not, as a body, regarded with much estimation by the other classes of society. They do not assume their proper position among a community where, if they only knew how to use it, all political power is in reality in their hands."