

thawed, a quantity of ammonia not previously present in it. This is accounted for by the porous character of the material, which enables it to absorb ammoniacal or other vapors, thus purifying the air, and at the same time collecting one of the richest and most volatile of manures for the nutrition of vegetation in the spring. Ammonia is also known to enable plants to thrive with less light than they ordinarily require, hence it is not impossible that when under snow and plentifully supplied with this substance, they may actually grow. This, as well as the effect of a gradual thawing of the snow in preventing the leaves from being frost-bitten, may account for the bright green colour which grass often presents after the snow has left it.

Snow like rain falls on the lands of the just and the unjust. It benefits the bad as well as the good farmer. Yet the uses above stated, suggest the question—do we use all the means in our power to receive benefit from this useful gift of nature. Our ordinary clearing and cultivation tend to lay bare the land to the influence of winter storms, and to cause the snow to drift into piles, and to fill up water courses and holes, so that it does not evenly cover the surface. In this way much of its benefit is lost. In nature, on the other hand, the shelter of the forest, and even of the shrubs and withered herbage, ensures a more even covering of snow. If possible, we should imitate nature in this, and by belts of trees or hedge rows shelter those places which by experience we find to drift bare of their natural winter covering. The benefits of such shelter are largely realised in Great Britain, and also on new farms in this country, while still sheltered by the forest; but the bare unsheltered surface of many of the older districts, has this want of protection from the destructive effects of the winter blasts, added to the other causes of its increasing sterility.

Other effects of the more or less equal distribution of snow are also worthy of notice. When parts of a field are bare and other parts covered with snow-banks, the penetration of the frost is unequal, and the snow-water instead of sinking with its ammoniacal matter into the soil, runs off into the streamlets and drains, cutting trenches in the soft ground, and rapidly swelling the brooks and rivers. Thus, two-fold losses are sustained, independently of the manifold winter inconveniences of snow-drifts.

IMPORTATION OF GRAIN, SEEDS, ROOTS, &c., FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

We publish the following correspondence on the subject of the importation of grain, seeds, &c., from foreign countries into Lower Canada for seed. The Honble. the Minister of Agriculture is entitled to the thanks of Agriculturists for this mark of attention to their interests, and it would be very desirable that some action would be taken in the matter to procure some new seed—particularly of Black Sea Wheat, that has been found to succeed so well in Lower Canada, but which requires to be frequently renewed. The Board of Agriculture have addressed Circulars to all the Agricultural Societies in Lower Canada, embodying the letter of the Minister, and recommending the subject to their attention at their Annual Meetings in February, and requesting a reply from each on or before the 15th of March next, in order that arrangements may be made in time to ship grain or seeds next fall from the Baltic or Black Sea, before the closing of the navigation.

BOARD OF AGRIC. AND STATISTICS, }
Toronto, Dec. 17th, 1856. }

WILLIAM EVANS, Esq.,
Secretary B. of A.

DEAR SIR.—I have the honor to inform you that should the Board of Agriculture or the Agricultural Association desire to appropriate any portion of its funds to the purchase of particular descriptions of grain, seeds, roots, &c., in foreign countries, this Department will assume the responsibility of procuring the purchases to be made, through the agency of the British Consul on the spot, should there be any such officer there.

The Minister of Agriculture has every reason to believe that such assistance will be cheerfully rendered by those officers. Of course all expenses must be covered by the Association seeking the purchase. Please mention the matter to the President.

Your's with regard.

WILLIAM HUTTON,
Secretary.

GRANTHAM HALL,
24th Dec., 1856. }

MY DEAR SIR.—Begging reference to my letter of this date, respecting the importation of grain for the Association from foreign parts, I take upon myself to order a small quantity of spring wheat, say fifty bushels in all, of the different kinds, (if more than one be grown) most esteemed where grown; to be good samples of last summer's crop. Particular mention to be made that it is required for seed. It would also be desirable (if the information could readily be obtained) to know about the time it was sown and reaped. You may mention that some samples imported into Lower Canada, a few years ago, did not grow, and request that every precaution may be taken to avoid kiln dried grain or grain which has been submitted to any process which may have destroyed its vegetating

powers. I wish it from the immediate neighbourhood of Riga. If the Consul there finds difficulty in fulfilling the order, and forwarding it at once, he might be instructed to send the order to the Consul at Dantzic, with a request that the wheat might be selected from that grown in his vicinity, and forwarded at once to Hamburg, between which place and Dantzic I believe a rail communication to exist. From that port to England is a weekly steam communication. It may be forwarded thence by our steamers to Portland, so as to reach Lower Canada in April, in time for our spring sowing. By these means a year will be gained. As my object in mentioning the above places for the purchase of grain, is on account of their latitude; I request that care may be taken to avoid the purchase of wheat sent to those parts for sale from more southern districts. Will you see that my letter is forwarded to the Minister of Agriculture, with a request that, if practicable, it may be acted upon at once.

I remain,

My dear Sir,
Very truly yours.

R. N. WATTS,

Pres., B. of A.

To WILLIAM EVANS, Esq.,
Sec.-Treas., B. of A.

GRANTHAM HALL,
24th Dec., 1856. }

MY DEAR SIR.—I have received the copy of Mr. Hutton's letter of the 17th instant, on the subject of the importation of grain, seeds and roots from foreign countries. It is a good practical idea, and can be carried out in a much more efficient and economical manner by the Government according to the plan suggested, than by private parties. The Foreign Consuls are mostly merchants, and well qualified to select what is wanted. In thanking the Minister of Agriculture for his communication, you will inform him that it shall be laid before the Board at its next meeting, which, however, does not take place before the close of the winter or the opening of the navigation.

There can be no doubt that the Board will gladly determine some desirable plan of availing itself of the offer.

In the mean while, it will advance business, if you ascertain from the Presidents of the different Societies whether they are disposed (and in what manner, stating particulars) to avail themselves of the offer on the conditions prescribed in Mr. Hutton's letter. You will request them to send you an answer before the 15th of March next. The Societies assemble in February to re-organize. They will, therefore, have both opportunity to consult and time to reply by that date. The whole summer will then remain for the fulfilment of any orders from the Baltic. We must not lose sight of the fact that the navigation of the Baltic is closed during the winter months, while it appears to me most desirable that any wheat for Lower Canada should be grown in the neighbourhood of that Sea.

I remain,

My dear Sir,
Very truly yours.

R. N. WATTS,

Pres., B. of A.

To WM. EVANS, Esq.,
Sec.-Treas., B. of A.