

REPORT OF MR. WM. McDUGALL TO THE MINISTER OF
AGRICULTURE.

To the Honorable John Rolph,
Minister of Agriculture, &c., &c., &c.

Sir,—I received the following communication shortly after the day on which it bears date :

Bureau of Agriculture,
Quebec, 24th March, 1853.

Sir,—As I desire to make the Bureau of Agriculture useful to Canada at as early a day as possible, and to keep up that spirit of improvement which has evidently been awakened, I have taken various means to obtain information, and I now desire your services for a short time for the same purpose.

I therefore authorise you to proceed to New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and other cities of the United States, where such information is likely to be obtained, and to examine and report to me upon the various implements that have been introduced and deemed worthy of Patent; and also upon any new variety of seeds and vegetables, of which you can obtain any information, and which you may consider adapted to Canada; and generally to report upon such other articles as you may deem useful to Canadian Agriculture, with a view to action by this Department, and the Boards of Agriculture, in promoting their introduction into this Province.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,
(Signed) MALCOLM CAMERON,
Minister of Agriculture.

Wm. McDougal, Esquire,
Proprietor of the Canadian Agriculturist.

I have now the honour to state for your information, that upon the receipt of the above, from the late Minister of Agriculture, I proceeded to make the necessary arrangements to perform the service required of me. The New York exhibition of the Industry of all Nations, was expected to open in the month of May; and believing that I should there find all the important new inventions in Agricultural Mechanics, not yet introduced into this Province, as well as other objects to which it might be desirable to direct the attention of the Minister of Agriculture, I determined to postpone my departure for a few weeks.

I afterwards learned from the Honorable Malcolm Cameron, that it was his wish to meet me at the Crystal Palace, on the subject of my mission, and other matters pertaining to the Bureau of Agriculture. The opening of the Exhibition was delayed some weeks beyond the appointed time, and when finally opened it was understood to present for examination a portion only of those articles for which space had been appropriated. After a considerable delay from the causes mentioned, and learning from the Honorable M. Cameron that he would not be able to visit the Exhibition as he had intended, I proceeded, on the 9th of August, to execute the mission with which that gentleman had honored me.

Looking at the terms of Mr. Cameron's letter, I found that I was authorised to "examine and report upon such Implements, Seeds, Vegetables, and other articles, as I might deem useful to Canadian Agriculture, with a view to their introduction into this Province," through the agency of the Bureau and Boards of Agriculture.

Assuming that the interference, or assistance of Government, was intended to be confined to those cases in which private enterprise would not be likely to achieve the end desired, except perhaps after long

delay and consequent loss to the Agriculture of the Province, I felt bound to limit this branch of my enquiries, to a comparatively small class of objects. Boston and Philadelphia were suggested as cities which might be visited with advantage, and it would have given me, personally, great pleasure to have acted upon the suggestion; but I could not learn that information on the subjects contemplated in my instructions was likely to be obtained in either of those cities, which was not equally accessible in Albany, the Crystal Palace, or other sources in New York. I did not therefore extend my investigations over so wide a territory or protract them for so long a period as the general terms of my commission might be held to warrant.

The Agricultural machines and implements of recent invention, that came under my notice, or of which I could obtain reliable information, were neither very numerous, nor, in an economic point of view, very important. The number of those which I felt warranted in recommending for importation at the public expense, is small indeed; and if my report were limited to a mere description of this class of objects it would comprise but a few pages. My observations will, therefore, be more diffuse and suggestive than I had expected to make them.

The progressive increase in the wages of labour; the rapid exhaustion of the soil, under a rude and wasteful culture, which has prevailed over this continent, and is probably incidental to all new countries; the certainty of sale for all his productions; the better price and the "quick returns" which a dense population at home, and never-glutted markets abroad, secure to the farmer, have rendered necessary as well as profitable the employment of machinery in Agriculture, of a more complicated and expensive kind than has ever been practicable at any former period. In Great Britain the same necessity has grown up, though from somewhat different causes.

The astonishment created among the farmers of that country by the successful operation of the American Reaper at the World's Fair, in 1851, which was in no degree lessened by the discovery, that this identical Reaper was the invention of Mr. Ogle, of Rennington, near Alnwick, as far back as 1822,* while it showed the existence of a blind unreasoning prejudice in the Agricultural mind, against the most valuable offerings of mechanical ingenuity, indicated also that this prejudice was fast melting away before the convincing logic of necessity. The same instinctive hostility to new inventions and new processes in agriculture prevails in Canada among a large class of farmers. But every year extends the conquest of innovation, and though we are still behind our inventive and enterprising neighbours in the use of Agricultural Machinery, I firmly believe we shall soon overtake them—nay that we shall surpass them in the superior construction, and more economical use of such implements and machines as are adapted to our wants.

During the last two or three years, manufactories of farmer's tools and implements have been established in all the principal towns and cities of Upper Canada. So great is the demand for improved machinery that even American manufacturers have set up branch establishments in Canada, with very profitable results.

Labour and materials being much cheaper here than in the adjoining States, enterprise seems all that is necessary to produce, at home, every implement that is required. This favourable movement in the mechanics of Agriculture, (I speak more particularly of Upper Canada) is undoubtedly attributa-