

THE PUBLIC GRANT TO AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES.

In reply to inquiries from various Agricultural Societies, we have to say, that in consequence of the necessity, under the present depressed state of the public finances, for retrenchment in every department of public expenditure, the Government has deemed it expedient to limit the amount of appropriation in the public estimates for Agricultural Societies, to \$60,000, one-half of which, we presume, is intended for either section of the Province. This would give to Upper Canada a considerably smaller amount than was drawn by this section of the Province last year, when, owing to the forming of Electoral Division Societies, under the Act 20 Vic. cap. 32, the amount of the grants was largely increased; but it will not be very much less than was drawn in 1857 and preceding years, under the old Act. We are not in a position to state the precise mode intended to be adopted by Government for carrying out the reduction; but the general effect will probably be, that each Society will receive some 20 or 25 per cent. less than the amount to which they would otherwise be entitled.—Of course the Societies should not neglect to secure the full amount of subscription necessary to obtain the maximum grant available.

Correspondence.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FLAX CULTURE IN CANADA.

St. CATHARINES, March 5th, 1859.

GEORGE BUCKLAND, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,—For a number of years back I have taken notice of many ably written articles on the cultivation of flax; but as yet have seen nothing done for the encouragement of its culture.

When I arrived in this country in 1818, I soon began farming in this part of the country, and it was my intention at the time to have gone into the cultivation of flax somewhat extensively; but when I came to ascertain that no market could be had for it in Canada, I of course abandoned the idea of raising flax to any extent. At the time I am speaking of, there was considerable flax raised in the old Niagara district; but it had to be broken and scutched by hand, which was rather a laborious operation; in consequence, the culture of the flax plant was soon abandoned.

I am well satisfied in my own mind that the climate and soil are well adapted for the cultivation of flax in Canada, and if a market was once established in the Province, and one or two sets of breaking and scutching mills were introduced, the time would not be far distant when they would be found in every part of the Province, which would soon add beneficially to the resources of the country. At an early period of my life, I was on a farm in the Province of Ulster, Ireland, but a short distance from Belfast, in the very centre of the linen trade, where flax was raised very extensively, and subsequent to my coming to America, I had charge of a flax mill for some years, and at the present day I could give instructions for building a breaking and scutching mill, such as was in use in the Province of Ulster, in 1816. The cost would not be much, I should suppose not to exceed £60, exclusive of building, which need not be large, and any horse-power used for thrashing purposes would answer to propel the mill. One of those mills, placed nearly in the centre of a township, with three hands, would clean all the flax likely to be raised in any one township, and that, too, in the winter season. Having been employed in the summer season in the cultivation of flax, and in the fall and winter seasons in the management of the mill, I am well persuaded in my own mind, that from the cultivation of the plant till prepared for the heckler, I know the whole minutæ of the operation.

It appears to me that something ought to be done to counterbalance the loss of the wheat crop, which has been the chief source of our wealth, and that crop having failed