

THE AGRICULTURAL AND ARTS ASSOCIATION.

II.—ITS EXISTENCE.

MR. EDITOR,—Having in my last considered at some length the question of the financial management of the Association, I now pass on to the second mooted—that of its existence. From present circumstances the two have been thrown into close connection. It is asserted that the financial management has been bad; that “the whole thing costs more than it is worth;” that it is needless applying a remedy, for “the usefulness of the Association is gone;” other agencies are doing its work more efficiently; and as the easiest way to a speedy dissolution, the recommendation is made that the Legislature should withhold the yearly grant of \$10,000.

The reasons given for thus placing the Association under the guillotine may be summed up in two:—

1. The financial reason.
2. Its usefulness is gone.

1. The financial reason.

The first part of this was fully considered in my last, and the remedies for any defects pointed out. The question is not at all new, and the interested public have become periodically virtuous regarding it regularly every few years for the last quarter of a century. The Association has lived under some four different legislative enactments, marking four different eras in its existence. These are from 1846 to 1858, from 1859 to 1868, from 1869 to 1876, and from 1877 to the present year of grace. The following tables show its financial record for the last two eras, covering a period of twelve years:—

Year.	Receipts.	Place.
1869.....	\$18,327.93	at London.
1870.....	20,800.03	“ Toronto.
1871.....	7,593.51	“ Kingston.
1872.....	16,261.77	“ Hamilton.
1873.....	19,346.36	“ London.
1874.....	22,613.83	“ Toronto.
1875.....	12,603.98	“ Ottawa.
1876.....	13,697.93	“ Hamilton.
1877.....	21,734.75	“ London.
1878.....	23,498.89	“ Toronto.
1879.....	11,656.96	“ Ottawa.
1880.....	13,960.16	“ Hamilton.

TABLE II.

Year.	Expenses other than Prizes.	Money paid in Prizes.
1869.....	\$15,923.25	\$12,441.70
1870.....	15,800.14	12,289.50
1871.....	11,237.02	13,008.00
1872.....	15,167.07	12,935.00
1873.....	15,378.81	14,935.00
1874.....	15,905.68	14,574.00
1875.....	16,678.37	15,243.00
1876.....	—	15,631.50
1877.....	15,918.31	14,943.50
1878.....	16,073.51	15,419.00
1879.....	15,455.47	12,909.00
1880.....	15,917.02	13,476.50

The basis of calculation adopted is that of my previous letter—that of any district exhibition,—and the receipts and expenditures are those of the exhibition alone. It will be seen that the expenses have always, with one exception, been greater than the amount of prizes, and that the annual average loss of the exhibition, as an exhibition, has been about \$11,000. In my last the financial management of one of these years was chosen for consideration, and the remedy for this state of affairs pointed out.

But it is said, even suppose that to be remedied, the Association “costs more than it is worth.” The consideration of what it is worth brings us at once to the second reason adduced for dissolution, viz:—

2. Its usefulness is gone.

But what is the use of the Association? This inquiry can only be met by stating what the Association is, and what the objects of its existence

are. It is, in the first place, then, a society composed of the following members:—

1. The Council of the Association, both elective and *ex-officio*.
2. The Presidents and Vice-Presidents of all Electoral District Agricultural Societies.
3. The Presidents and Vice-Presidents of all Horticultural Societies.
4. The Presidents and Vice-Presidents of all Mechanics' Institutes.
5. Life Members.
6. Ordinary Members, of whom about 1,600 join annually.

In the second place, the primary object of the Association is “the encouragement of agriculture, horticulture, arts and manufactures,” and the more detailed and specific objects are:—

1. Holding an annual exhibition.
2. Importation of new and improved breeds of animals.
3. Importation of new varieties of grain, seeds, etc.
4. Importation of new and improved implements of husbandry.
5. Testing all new varieties of grain, seeds, etc., and all improved implements invented or imported.
6. Holding Provincial ploughing matches.
7. Nominal supervision of a veterinary college.

And practically the work done for the last twenty years by the Association has been:—

1. Holding an annual exhibition.
2. Holding Provincial ploughing matches.
3. Nominally supervising a veterinary college.
4. Managing a herd-book.
5. Examining farms and essays for prizes.

And this work is carried on by the active exertions, co-operation and subscriptions of the members of the Association, and an annual grant from the Province of \$10,000. Such is the Association, such is its work, and such are its means for carrying on that work.

Now, surely those “uses” will remain even if the Association is gone, and the mere statement of its aims and objects is sufficient to show that none of the District Exhibition Societies pretend to undertake one-half of the duties prescribed for the Provincial; and whether even in the one matter of holding annual exhibitions, they are to be permanent successes, remains yet to be proved. That the Association has done good work in the past no one denies; that it has performed all its prescribed duties, or performed those it has undertaken always economically, few will assert. But as the aims and objects of the Association are, in an agricultural province like ours, so important—as it is capable, if rightly handled, of carrying out those aims, surely it would be the part of wise men to point out new or untrodden old paths of usefulness, rather than join in any hasty cry of destruction—to act the part of reformers rather than that of radicals. But in what way, it may be asked, should reform begin? What definite proposals would you make? Allow me, then, Mr. Editor, with all deference and brevity, to submit the following:

1. Let the Association at this juncture give its undivided attention to non-exhibition matters—to those, in the first place, specified but not previously undertaken. At the last meeting of the Association the list of specified duties was increased by others taken from those of the Royal of England and the Highland and Agricultural of Scotland. So far it is on the right track. Let the Secretary now place himself in communication with the Boards of Agriculture in the various States of the Union; with the Agricultural Departments at Washington, at Paris, and at Vienna; and with

different European Agricultural Societies—such, for instance, as the Royal Danish, that of Prussia, of Saxony, of Wurtemberg, and of Belgium—and the Council will find many features of work which, if undertaken by their Association here, would be of lasting benefit to agriculture in Ontario.

2. In the meantime, allow the District Societies to do the exhibition business, and let them do it alone. I very much doubt if the Toronto Industrial—the largest of them all—continue successful for half a dozen years more, and in less than that time the popular cry will be for another Provincial Exhibition, undertaken by the Provincial Association.

3. Let the Council of the Association be decreased to nine elected members alone, three retiring annually as now; those members elected by a wider constituency than at present, and by a more perfect exercise of the franchise within that constituency.

But even when this is done the root of the whole matter is not reached. There must be a more complete affiliation of all the agencies assisted by the Province for the encouragement of agriculture, etc. Leaving out of view—as representing the mechanical side of the industrial classes—the Mechanics' Institutes, the Government now gives grants to the following, having this main object in view:—

1. Township Agricultural Societies.
2. Electoral District Agricultural Societies.
3. Horticultural Societies.
4. The Agricultural and Arts Association.
5. Dairymen's Associations (2).
6. The Fruit Growers' Association.
7. The Entomological Society.
8. The Poultry Association.

And under its own sole control, working for the attainment of the same end of encouraging agriculture, it handles:—

9. A Bureau of Agriculture.
10. A Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (lately created).
11. An Agricultural College and an Experimental Farm.

Now, all those agencies except the first two are at present assisted independently. They should all be affiliated to the Agricultural and Arts Association, or, as I should prefer to call it, the Board of Agriculture, and that should be, as it were, the right hand of the Minister of Agriculture. In order to accomplish any change, amendment must be sought to the Agriculture and Arts Act of 1877, and instead of amending I would rewrite it.

But the encouragement by a grant of public money of any industry in a country is decidedly outside the direct sphere of governmental action; and surely any Government has a right to ask that the class of the community that is to be benefited shall have agreed amongst themselves on the manner in which the benefit is to be conferred. If these two papers of mine will have any influence in bringing about that unanimity of opinion and action, they will have served the purpose for which they were written, and the wanton appropriation of your space, Mr. Editor, may in that case, I hope, be condoned.

I have the honour to be,

Yours faithfully,
WM. JOHNSTON.

Toronto, Dec. 27th, 1881.

Our Angus cattle thrive beautifully in their new homes. Nothing on the farm has so far done so well as our doddies; and no breed that we have ever had upon the College farm has received so much attention and favourable notice from visitors as our Angus beauties.—Kansas Agricultural College Industrialist.