

J. F. Leprohon, Esq., the Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee on Wine.

Sir,—I have the honor to acknowledge your communications propounding certain questions in relation to Mr. DeCourtenay's success in the cultivation of the vine, and in producing wine from the fruit. I subjoin my reply.

Question 1. In the fall of the year 1861 I went to examine some wild vines, then about to be taken into cultivation by Mr. DeCourtenay. The plants were of considerable age, and had been growing for several years where they stood. They had several branches of fruit, scarcely any of the grapes being larger than the head of a common pin.

Late in the spring of 1862 I again visited the same vines, still standing on the same exact spot. They had been pruned with a very unsparing hand, and showed a very handsome promise of fruit that year. The cause of this last visit was a very severe and unseasonable frost, and I went to see the effect produced on the vines. They were in very full blossom, but, though icicles were still hanging on some parts of the vines, they had suffered nothing. I again visited the same vines in September, 1862, when they were loaded with bunches of grapes highly colored, and the grapes, individually, as large as I have seen them in the wine-growing parts of France. I had the curiosity to watch the gathering, and the making of those grapes into wine, which wine would have been pronounced good in any wine-growing country. In 1863 I again watched the making and fermentation of Mr. DeCourtenay's wine, and I kept two bottles of it till the spring of 1864: it proved of superior quality.

Question 2. I consider it highly desirable for Canada, in which country I have now resided 43 years, that the fostering hand of the Government should be extended to encourage the cultivation of the vine, and thus produce the inevitable result of a new, a very extended, and a very beneficial national industry.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

R. B. JOHNSON.

Quebec, 13th June, 1864.

To J. F. Leprohon, Esq., Clerk of Committee, Legislative Assembly.

Sir,—In answer to your communication of the 13th inst., I beg leave to return for the information of the select Committee

upon vine culture the following answers to questions which they have done me the honor to propose—and have the honor

To remain, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

W. P. DECOURTENAY.

Quebec, 14th of June, 1864.

Answers.

1st Question. In March, 1863, I published a pamphlet upon "The Culture of the Vine, and Emigration" which I forward for the information of the Honorable Committee, hoping it may prove that since the publication of the sessional papers, alluded to, of 1860, No. 22, "I have demonstrated in a practical manner the corrections of my views."

In the first instance:—

By cultivating successfully, not only the wild vine of the country (now so fully appreciated in Europe), but moreover several delicate varieties of European vines, and proved that they may adapt themselves without difficulty to the vigor of this climate.

And in the second instance by the manufacture of good sound qualities of wine from the produce of the above-mentioned cultivation.

I must now beg leave to call the attention of the Honorable Committee to the happy results obtained in Canada West by the indefatigable exertions of my much esteemed friend, Mr. Henry Parker, of Clair House; from whom I beg leave to present a letter containing facts of such importance as to render any further observations of my own upon question No. 1 altogether unnecessary.

I can not, however, refrain from expressing my conviction of the incalculable services rendered to Canada West by the energy and perseverance of Mr. Parker in bringing to a successful issue so great an enterprise, and which will one day render his name a "household word" upon this continent.

At the same time I beg leave to forward for the information of the Committee, a statement I have just received from Paris of the proceedings of the agricultural delegates of Europe there assembled, by which it will be seen that experiments upon a large scale and in numerous localities have satisfied the learned delegates.

"That a general introduction of the North American vines, would be of the greatest advantage to the wine-growing interests of Europe.