

bitions have, if the reports forwarded to the council are correct, been crowned with full success. You, doubtless, remember that last year, the council of agriculture, faithful to its mission, and desirous of working as much as possible in the interests of the agricultural societies, and, therefore, in the interests of the country at large, passed a regulation exempting those societies which, instead of holding an exhibition, preferred to employ their disposable funds in the purchase of breeding stock of pure blood. Many of these societies have profited by this exemption, and have bought thoroughbred stallions and bulls, thus confirming the wisdom and the opportuneness of the regulation passed by the council, recommending that, in the county exhibitions, no male animal not thoroughbred should be awarded a prize, which regulation the government, for reasons unnecessary to mention here, refused to sanction.

Nobody knows better than you, Gentlemen, that the usefulness of our societies of agriculture, their greatest interest, their progress, and all that concerns them directly and indirectly, have always been the objects most studied by the council; and it is for this reason that no regulations should be imposed on them except after serious and mature consideration of the actual state of things. Thus, for more than five years, the council, seeing that the time had arrived for making certain innovations in the system, or in the reform of the county exhibitions, suggested, in a special manner, the importance of district competitions. To this end, the council asked for the entire re-modelling of the Act of Agriculture, and suggested the establishment of district competitions, presenting, at the same time, an excellent statement of the regulations for the guidance of these meetings. In spite, Gentlemen, of the repeated recommendations in all the reports which I have had the honour to submit to the council, nothing has been yet done on this subject, in spite of the importance, the necessity, and the opportuneness which every one admits belong to this question. In France, the utility of these competitions is well understood; they are assisted in every possible manner. The government takes great interest in them, and the beneficial effects which have resulted from them make themselves still more forcibly felt, by the direct influence which they exercise on the general cultivation of that country. I wish, then, to draw anew your attention to the necessity of establishing district competitions, convinced, as I am, that it is, perhaps, the only way of awakening and stimulating the apparent apathy of our agricultural population. In making this suggestion I do not deceive myself, and I know well that this measure will not meet with the approbation of every one. But is that a sufficient reason for us to draw back, when an alteration is in question which we know beforehand must be followed by beneficial results? I think not.

Great complaint was formerly made of the regulation established by the council, obliging the agricultural societies to hold a competition for the best cultivated farms. But to-day, the greatest enemies of these competitions are reduced to silence, and are obliged to admit the acuteness (*justesse*) and excellence of this order of the council. The wise regulations which have been laid down for their management are so fair and reasonable, and apply so well to the circumstances, that their execution assures, beforehand, the most complete success to those who practise them, and the best managed, as well as the most profitable form of cultivation.

Still, how much dislike and repugnance have people shown before they would accept this innovation, which seemed at first as if it should not be received without distrust, and as if it were the result of study based rather on theory than on practice.

I do not doubt, Gentlemen, that a more special study of the most pressing wants of our agricultural associations will show you that there are many more improvements demanding to be introduced: time and circumstances will bring them to light. And convinced, as I am, that you will always rise to the demands of your position, I hazard nothing in saying that, as in the past, you will know how, by the wisdom which guides your deliberations, to satisfy any new demands as they arise. Still, I cannot leave this important subject without asking for your kind assistance in obtaining from the government the most unlimited confidence in the decisions of this council, and the complete banishment of all obstacles which are thrown in its way; for, after all, the council does its work gratuitously, and endeavours to do the best of its power to develop as much as possible the immense agricultural riches of this province,

CREAMERIES AND CHEESE-FACTORIES.

We have here, Gentlemen, a subject of the highest importance to the material prosperity of our province, a subject which deserves, in every respect, the attention not only of the council, but also, in a more especial manner, the attention of our rulers, more particularly of those of them who are charged with the duty of watching over the development of all our agricultural industries: I desire to say a word or two about our creameries and our cheese-factories.

In this case, as in all others which tend to the improvement of agricultural products, the council of agriculture has devoted itself to the study of the cheese and butter industry of the province; hence, in conjunction with Mr Browning and our secretary, I had the honour, last year, of presenting you with a detailed account of the immense advantages gained by the well managed operations of the creameries and the cheese-factories in the State of New York, and of some of those in Canada. To me it is a source of true satisfaction that enlightened farmers soon appreciated the advantage to be gained by entrusting the manufacture of cheese and butter to the hands of a specialist, rather than to the hands of their wives, who, on account of the care required for the management of their children and of their household, cannot devote the time and attention necessary to secure constant, uniform, and remunerative results from this important industry.

You will, doubtless, learn with pleasure that, in the course of last year, 155 new creameries and factories have been started in the province. The future promises to be still more prolific in these establishments. From a recent calculation, it seems that, at present, 250 cheese-factories, 47 creameries, and 28 butter and cheese-factories, are at work in the province of Quebec. You must have observed with satisfaction the foundation of a powerful society, composed of representatives of our principal creameries &c., regularly organised, and holding annual meetings, in which questions belonging especially to this industry are fully discussed. The associations should certainly be encouraged by this council and by the government, being, as they are, calculated to give the greatest vigour to an industry the advantages of which are only beginning to be visible. But in this, as well as in all other things, it is to be hoped that the government will only lend its assistance and support by favouring the production of a superior style of article. In the United States, the production of an inferior article has already nearly paralysed an industry, which, only a short time ago, used to command for its products the very highest prices on the markets of Europe. By making an article of inferior quality, they have compromised the prospects of this industry over the whole country.

As this new industry seems to be about to assume proportions of, at present, incalculable dimensions, I would suggest to the council the urgency of appointing one or more persons specially charged with the duty of visiting all our creameries and factories, and to make a detailed report, pointing out the results obtained, the mode of operation pursued, and the benefits derived from the different systems of management.

I should have a great deal to say on this subject, which is, perhaps, the one which will lead most surely to the improvement of the cattle of the province, and, in consequence, will force us to adopt a more perfect system of cultivation. For the production of milk being regulated by the food given to the cattle, it follows that all labour devoted to the production of the best sorts of food will also have the effect of increasing the production of milk. Now, to produce anything good necessitates a sound and careful system of cultivation, and it is thus that the manufacture of butter and cheese will be a powerful aid in encouraging our farmers to devote themselves more earnestly to the improvement of their farms by a more improved system of management. The necessarily limited scope of this report, however, will not permit me to enter fully into all these considerations, so I will refer those who desire more ample details on the subject to the different reports published this year in the general report of the honourable commissioner of agriculture and public works.

PROVINCIAL EXHIBITIONS.

During the last few years, you have doubtless remarked, the direction and management of our provincial exhibitions have been left in the hands of a special committee called "The Permanent Exhibition Committee."

The creation of this committee has had the effect of depriving the council of agriculture of the chief direction of these exhibi-