

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL BOARD OF AGRICULTURE, FOR THE YEAR, 1877.

To the Hon. the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY,
Halifax:

I have the honor herewith to submit, for the information of His Honor the Lieut.-Governor and the Legislature, the Annual Report of the proceedings of the Central Board of Agriculture for the year 1877, together with the Treasurer's Account of Income and Expenditure, for which vouchers are also submitted.

A tabular statement, shewing the membership, total paid up subscriptions of, and Government Grant apportioned to, each society in the Province, is appended; and an abstract of the Annual Reports of the several Societies, including their accounts, is also furnished.

The comparative usefulness of each Society, in the careful and judicious management and expenditure of its funds, and the benefits conferred by it on the Agriculture of its district, can thus be readily ascertained. The County and District Societies in operation under the Act for the Encouragement of Agriculture, and thereby entitled to participate in the Legislative Grant for the year 1877, are 74 in number, the paying members are 4144, and total amount of subscriptions actually paid (as shewn in the attested returns) \$4860, the total amount of grants in aid being \$6292.50. It will be seen that the number of Societies has actually doubled in the course of 14 years, a very satisfactory proof that interest in agricultural improvement is reaching the more remote localities, as new Societies are, as a rule, organized in neighbourhoods beyond the bounds of the older Societies in the more highly cultivated districts. This will explain the additional claims for the Government Grant, as hitherto unappropriated County Grants are now being claimed. At the same time it is with regret that the Board notice that the effect of hard times is to be seen in the reduction of membership and of subscriptions in many of the older Societies; this is the more to be regretted, as, during these times of extreme business depression, it is to the farming community that the country must and does look to find employment and furnish a living for the mass of its inhabitants, and it would have been more satisfactory to have recorded an increase of membership in Societies as pointing out an increase of zeal in the agricultural community.

Whilst on the subject of the numbers and membership of Societies, the Board feel it to be their duty to point out that by Provincial Statute the sum allotted to the Societies of each County is \$400, and, as the several Counties are, as a

ready mentioned, now claiming nearly the full amounts to which they are entitled, the amount required to meet this grant is thus \$7200. Hitherto the full amounts have not been called for, as the conditions of the Statute have not in every case been complied with, and \$6000 has sufficed, but, as pointed out, the amount claimed under the Statute for the year 1877, is \$6292.50, whilst through some misapprehension the amount placed in the estimates for this purpose was only \$4000, leaving a deficiency of \$2292.50; this amount being fixed by Statute must, of course, be supplied.

The Statutory Grant to the Societies is very clearly laid down, and the grant in aid, not to exceed \$400 to each County, is so small that it will not bear reduction without seriously injuring the interest it aims at fostering; the Board, therefore, respectfully urge that due provision be made to meet this charge.

The Societies are gradually but steadily acquiring a more definite idea of the work devolving upon them; their members recognize the imperative necessity that exists for improving stock, and Agricultural operations generally, and it is only through association as Societies that our farmers can practically hope to obtain these ends; to take any steps, such as reducing the Legislative Grant in aid, would be a most ill-advised step, and would work serious injury to the whole community by discouraging the farmers on the path of progress on which they have entered.

The Second Annual Provincial Exhibition was held at Kentville in October, 1877. The Report of the Exhibition Committee, and the Prize List, are also appended, from which it will be seen that there was a remarkably full and satisfactory exhibit of the Agricultural productions of our Province, indicating rapid advancement, especially in the improvement of live stock.

The marked success that has attended these Annual Exhibitions shews the wisdom of the policy enunciated by the Legislature in their establishment. The interest excited by one Annual Exhibition continues unimpaired till the next, and the almost surprising increase in thoroughbred stock, and in the improvement of other exhibits, shew the wonderful effect that a healthy emulation and rivalry have produced amongst our farmers, inducing men of spirit, capacity, and means, to turn their attention to farming, as a profession which affords scope for fame as well as fortune.

The Board feel satisfied that the Legislative grant of \$4000 for the Annual Exhibition Prize Fund brings in a tenfold return in the value it has added to the agricultural property of the Province.

Owing to an Order in Council issued by the Dominion Government, the Board were unable to take any action for an importation of cattle, &c., from England; and, in any case, it would have been impracticable to do so, as no funds were provided for the purpose, and the deficiency in the stock-farm fund was not made up at the last session of the Legislature. The wants of Societies have to a large extent been met by the thoroughbred stock breeders in our own Province, but, as it is most important to give our herds a high character, thus giving our breeders a market beyond the limits of the Province, the Board prefer importing entirely fresh cattle from England, instead of purchasing animals of strains of blood already common in the neighbouring Provinces or States. Should the restrictions on importation from England be removed, the Board hope to receive a grant towards, and to take action for, the purchase of cattle, sheep and pigs, which, in such case, they would propose to sell under the same conditions as heretofore, that the animals should be kept for a fixed time in the Province.

The Board are at present bound by law to apportion the County grants to each Society according to membership and subscription, without reference to the excellence or otherwise of the work done by each Society; they would ask for such an amendment in the law as would empower them to apportion the grants according to the work actually done, as they feel that the best working Societies well deserve the additional encouragement, whilst the more backward would be roused up to the purposes for which they were organized.

Several matters requiring legislation will be submitted, and it is hoped will meet with approval.

The Secretary of the Board, Professor Lawson, has, from time to time, visited such Societies as have expressed their desire to hear him, and his addresses, always practical and abounding in common sense, have been much appreciated; it is to be hoped that a still larger number will seek his services during the present year.

In view of the large increase in the number of high-priced thoroughbred cattle now owned in the Province, the Board record with pleasure that a competent Veterinary Surgeon is now resident here. Mr. Byrne holds a diploma from the EDINBURGH VETERINARY COLLEGE, and proposes to establish a Veterinary College here. It is to be hoped that his efforts may receive Legislative sanction and encouragement, as the course of training proposed would be very valuable to the practical farmer and stock-owner.