

J. F. Leprohon, Esq.

SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of to-day with a series of questions, to which I have the honor of submitting the following answers for the information of the select Committee appointed by the Legislative Assembly to enquire as to the possibility of cultivating the vine in this country :

1st. I have observed that the cultivation of the wild vine as practiced by Mr. DeCourtenay, has had the effect of increasing the quantity and size of the grapes to an extent that I could not have believed possible if I had not witnessed it ; and having closely observed the system adopted by that gentleman, I am persuaded that the success of the vine culture depends altogether upon the perfect knowledge of the art of pruning and training.

2nd. I have, in two different instances, been a witness of the beneficial effects of his system applied to the cultivation of delicate French vines. One, the "*munier*," is a vine that had stood in the garden of a friend for many years without ever producing fruit in any quantity and that imperfectly formed and unripe. The summer after its being pruned and trained by Mr. DeCourtenay's vine dresser, there was an extraordinary large quantity of beautifully developed ripe fruit.

The second was the "*Chasselas Doré*" cultivated in the open air and bearing magnificent bunches of fully-developed grapes.

3rd. I have examined the manufacture of wine by Mr. DeCourtenay from grapes grown in the open air, which I assisted in gathering, and have no hesitation in expressing my firm conviction that if the cultivation of the vine and the manufacture of the wine as practiced by that gentleman was extensively prosecuted, would be attended by such results, both moral and commercial, as would be of immeasurable benefit to the country.

Having been for many years engaged in the wine trade, I am able to affirm that the wine so produced is such as would be of high marketable value in any country.

4th. I am satisfied that a government subsidy to an intelligent and respectable company who would undertake in the two sections of the Province to develop this important industry would be attended with inevitable success. I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

W. J. BICKELL.

Quebec, 13th June, 1864.

J. M. LeMoine, Esq., Spencer Grange near Quebec.

Question 1. Have you observed the practical results obtained by Mr. DeCourtenay in the cultivation of the wild vine in the district of Quebec ?

2. Are you aware that Mr. DeCourtenay has made wine from the cultivated wild grapes of the district of Quebec, and what is your opinion thereof ?

3. Are you of opinion that the assistance of government would have the effect of developing this industry in a manner advantageous to the country ?

Answers to the questions submitted to J. M. LeMoine, Esq.

1st. The cultivation of the grape in Canada both under glass and in the open air, has engaged my attention for several years past, possessing, as I do, very extensive graperies, at Spencer Wood. I have been struck with the very satisfactory results obtained by Mr. DeCourtenay, from the outdoor culture of the wild grape at St. Albans, on the St. Louis road near Quebec. Vines barren or next thing to it in two years' culture, were soon loaded with immense clusters of splendid fruit.

2nd and 3rd. Mr. DeCourtenay submitted to me during the last winter very delicious wine from some grapes, which, he stated, had been grown in this district. I saw the grapes during several periods of fermentation, and I firmly believe that such wine produced in large quantities would be an inestimable boon to Canada.

4th. I think that government would be found wanting in its duty towards the people, if it shall refuse to encourage the development of such an important element of commercial prosperity.

I see no reason why the wild vine of the country should not improve under proper culture, and other varieties of vines introduced in Canada, sympathetic with the climate and soil.

It is useless for me to dwell on the bearing of the vine question in Canada. I do not believe that it has been fairly tried yet. There are secrets in the manufacture of wine, as there are in all other industries, and failures can be explained by the fact that few if any real vine growers have attempted to make wine in Canada with the wild grape of the country cultivated in the open air. I think I echo public opinion in urging the necessity of having the wine question thoroughly ventilated.

J. M. LEMOINE.

Quebec, 14th June, 1864.