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THE ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE

PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

Vol. I.

MONTREAL, SEPTEMBER 1879.

No. 5.

How to improve the state of agriculture in the Province. (1)

I have thus shown, and I say it without fear of contradiction, that what is wanted here, if we are serious if our endeavours to promote the improvement of agriculture, is a "Superintendent"; a man thoroughly up to the duties of his office, one who is endowed both with the authority and with the qualities necessary for the fit discharge of his functions, and not subjected, as regards his place, to be deprived of it by any of the capricious changes so common in the world of politics.

It should, moreover, be the business of the superintendent to afford effectual guidance to the societies of agriculture, to the provincial exhibitions, to the agricultural schools &c., that the government grant may be properly expended, and may bear the fruits that we have a right to expect from its distribution. A select council should be added, as his advisers, chosen, as much as possible from the residents of the senatorial electoral division of the province; a body of men they should be, devoted to the progress of agriculture, in their separate localities first, and then in the entire province.

A system of practical instruction suited to the comprehension of even the humblest *habitant*, and sown broadcast over the whole country, closes the list of the things that seem to me necessary to perfect our official organisation in this most important matter.

It is no new idea, this of appointing a superintendent of agriculture. It has, for more than 30 years, been the favourite notion of those whose opinions on the subject are best worth listening to. An analogous principle was entertained by the Legislature of United Canada, and, afterwards, by our own province, as regards the Department of education. After Confederation, an endeavour was made to confide this office to a Minister of the Crown; but experience soon taught us that, for this post, it was necessary to appoint an experienced head, one altogether untrammelled by political ties, entrusted, only, with the duties of this single function, and irremovable on any change of Ministry. If the Legislature felt, then, the propriety of thus acting as regarded education; why should it not do the same, now, as regards agriculture.

Is agriculture, by which alone bread is afforded to the people, of less importance than public instruction? Has the exodus to the United States been arrested, nay, has it even been diminished, by educational advantages? No; half a million of our friends have left us, in spite of all the efforts we have made to retain them, and, should the neighbouring people ever again renew their once prosperous industries, public instruction will never prevent Canadians from crossing the border which lies between them and a land where gain is more easily acquired than in their own country.

(1) Third part of Ed. A. Bernard's prize essay on *Agriculture*, translated from the French by A. R. Jenner Fust.

The only barrier we can oppose to this emigration, and thus retain our brethren in the bosom of their mother land, is the colonisation of our waste lands and the restoration of the prosperity of our agriculture. Nothing but practical, impressive (*frappant*) instruction in the elements of good cultivation can be taken as the first step in the re-establishment of our agriculture; it has slept so long that, on its awakening from its drowsy slumbers, we must begin at the very beginning. And it is not to the children alone that this teaching must be given, but first and above all, to the farmers themselves, and, if possible, in every parish. *The State, too, must give more of its attention to the agricultural interest of the nation.*

Thus, agriculture, to sum up its wants, requires a skilful supervision; a good system of teaching the elements of the science must be spread abroad over the province, and, to succeed in making this teaching effective, we must have a superintendent qualified to fulfil the arduous task imposed upon him, endowed with full authority, and furnished with wise counsellors and able assistants to aid him in his labours.

The presidents of each senatorial division should have the choice of the members of the Council of Agriculture in their own proper district. It should not be entrusted to the government. A better representation in the Council would thus be obtained, as each member would be on the very best terms with the societies of his division, and those members of the present Council who are the most distinguished for their devotion to the cause of agriculture would not fail to be chosen to serve on the new body.

The opinion of the Committee of enquiry on the subject of the appointment of a superintendent of agriculture, given so long ago as 1850, cannot be wanting in interest at the present time; it is as follows:

"Your committee believes that the nomination of two superintendents of agriculture, one for the districts of Montreal, St. Francis, and Ottawa, and the other for Quebec, Gaspé, and Kamouraska, is indispensably necessary. He would attend to the administration of the whole system, and, with the Professors, would constitute the board of instruction: an annual visit to each of the districts under his control would form part of his duties, in addition to the publication of a yearly report setting forth the style of cultivation therein pursued, and its usual success or failure, together with any suggestions that enquiry and observation have created.

The late Major Campbell, of St. Hilaire, president of the Chamber of Agriculture of Lower Canada, thus expressed himself at this time;

"If a grand scheme for the improvement of farming is seriously contemplated, my own idea is that some one man should be selected as chief, whose whole time and attention would be devoted to the subject. He may be called Commissioner, or Superintendent of agriculture, and he, with the Mayors of the different counties, and the Presidents of the agricultural societies, should be the officers in charge of the