

The President of the Board expressed the pleasure the Board had in meeting the Committee, and hoped that the explanations and discussions that might be engaged in would lead to the promotion of the common object they had in view, although unfortunately the delay in printing the Board's report would prevent the Committee having as full information in regard to the proceedings of the Board during the past year as was desirable. The law allowed societies till the 31st December to make their annual returns, and the manuscript of the report had been placed in the printer's hands at the earliest possible moment, but, being a large document (between 200 and 300 pages) the printer had not been able apparently to finish the work. He then called upon the Secretary to read the resolutions in reference to:

1. The prize list and regulations of the Provincial Exhibition, to be held at Truro this year.
2. Application from Mr. Thomas G. Wilbur, Wallace, Cumberland, for a bonus in aid of his efforts in the importation of sheep.
3. Recommendation to discontinue bonuses for importation of sheep, and to add the amount (\$100 to each county) to the annual legislative grants to societies.
4. Recommendation to discontinue premiums on importations of horses, and to reserve the stock farm fund for importation of thoroughbred stock by the Board.
5. To defer any recommendation for importation of Polled Angus cattle for the present, on account of the high prices asked.
6. Recommendation to Committee on Agriculture that the Board be authorized to use the stock farm fund (of which about \$2,000 will be available) for an importation of sheep and pigs from England, to be sold at Truro during the Provincial Exhibition.
7. Recommendation that the Government should be asked to provide a sum sufficient to defray the expenses of transport of live stock and other exhibits of Nova Scotia exhibitors to the Dominion Exhibition, to be held this year in St. John, as was done by the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Governments in the case of the Dominion Exhibition held in 1881 at Halifax.

Mr. Gayton, chairman of Committee, stated that the Committee were under the disadvantage of not having the Board's annual report, the printing of which had unfortunately been delayed by pressure of work at the printing office, but that the matters coming before the Committee naturally arranged themselves under two heads, (1), The amount of money expended, and, (2), the plan of carrying on the agricultural work. They would be glad to have any suggestions from the Board for consideration.

Mr. Matheson, President of the Board, said that the system inaugurated last year of offering bonuses on the importation of sheep by societies in districts had not proved a success. Societies had not the machinery, nor experience necessary to enable them to import to advantage, and

in Pictou county they were reluctant to take the responsibility. There was no paid officer who could be expected to take the trouble and the odium if accidents occurred.

Colonel Blair said that in his county (Colechester) there was no trouble and no difficulty in making a large importation; the plan worked well.

Mr. Whidden thought the importation of sheep, recommended by the Board, was a very important matter, but in reference to Mr. Wilbur's application, would like to ask the Secretary of the Board what would be the probable effect, whether beneficial or otherwise, of crossing our present flocks with Merinos.

The Secretary replied that Merinos, when pure, were a most valuable breed of sheep, yielding fine wool fit for manufacture of the costliest fabrics, but the effect of crossing them with our present long wool sheep and Downs would be disastrous. The progeny would probably have the bones of the Merino, with less mutton than our present breeds, and the wool would be nondescript.

In reply to further enquiries, the Secretary said that he was of the opinion that the Southdowns were the best sheep for Nova Scotia in general, but their good qualities were not sufficiently known and they were not liked generally as well as others. They are small, but they are easily kept and always ready for the butcher. The Cotswolds are the aristocrats of sheep as Short Horns are of cattle, and pay best where there is rich pasturage and plenty of winter feed; but in most parts of the country both the pastures and winter supplies are not sufficiently liberal to make Cotswolds profitable.

Colonel Starratt, said that the bonus of \$100 to each county was not sufficient to induce importations of valuable sheep, which was also the opinion expressed by Mr. McKern.

Colonel Blair said he reluctantly came to the opinion that what had been stated indicated that societies did not want sheep. If they did they would have taken advantage of the liberal offer of 50 per cent. bonus.

Mr. Campbell said that while the cattle in his county had been greatly improved by a sprinkling of thoroughbred cattle, we wanted more than a sprinkling of sheep for the effective improvement of our flocks.

Mr. Whidden did not agree with Col. Blair when he said he thought our farmers generally did not want sheep; but he did agree with Mr. Campbell that our cattle had been much improved by the sprinkling of thoroughbred animals we had scattered over the Province. He further agreed in view of the importance of sheep for the production of

mutton, and especially the requirements of our wool mills, that not only Inverness, but every county in the Province wanted not a sprinkling of sheep, but a thorough immersion, a universal improvement of our flocks. Whilst Mr. Blair was correct, so far, in saying a bonus of 50 per cent. was offered, yet the amount was limited to \$100 for each county. His ideas in regard to Merinos corresponded exactly with what was stated by the Secretary, which was the experience of Merinos he had heard of elsewhere. He thought the Board should ascertain whether sheep adapted to our wants could not be obtained cheaper from Ontario than from England. He did not see the propriety of importing Merinos. If they were imported they should be kept by themselves. The Board should consider the breed best adapted for Nova Scotia before making an importation. The experience of Antigonish was largely in favor of importation from Ontario.

Colonel Blair said that, in corresponding with societies in the counties in his district, they did not generally favor importation. The encouragement he thought sufficient, being 50 per cent., and no district of three counties was likely to import over \$600 worth of sheep. We should, if possible, get the farmers to take hold of sheep improvement, as probably one-third of the wool required by our factories in the Province will have to be imported this year. Ontario wool, as a rule, was 5 per cent. more valuable.

Dr. Munro said he believed the real difficulty rested on this, that societies had not taken advantage of the bonus because their members had first to be convinced of the benefits to be derived. If the bonuses were thrown open to individuals as well as societies, then the members with more advanced ideas could import for themselves without waiting until they had convinced others. As to the kind of sheep adapted to the Province, he had seen Merinos mixed with our flocks in Nova Scotia, and the mixture gave a very poor result. He had seen the statement, however, that a cross of Merinos and Cotswolds yielded a progeny good for mutton, and especially wool. The Downs he thought best for our purposes.

Mr. Whidden disapproved of bonuses being given to private individuals, as they might in some cases, through ignorance or lack of judgement, import sheep that would prove an injury rather than a benefit.

Dr. Munro said the kinds for which bonuses were given could be subject to approval of the Board.

In reference to making provision for conveyance of Nova Scotian exhibits to the Dominion Exhibition at St. John,