

## AGRICULTURE IN LOWER CANADA.

The Colonial Legislature has shown a just appreciation of the importance of encouraging improvement in agriculture, by voting funds for Public Exhibitions, and Meetings for Discussion, Lectures on the Theory and Practice of Improved Husbandry, the circulation of Agricultural Periodicals and Prize Essays, together with the introduction of improved Stock, Seeds, Implements, and Machines, and by aiding in the organization of County Societies, and Township Societies, whose members and office-bearers are placed in direct communication with the Board of Agriculture, whose duty it is to watch over the interests of agriculture, and to act as far as may be practicable, in improving its condition, and promoting its prosperity.

The great Exhibitions at Sherbrooke and at Cobourg, in the months of September and October, have afforded us opportunities of observing the progress and comparing the activity of the Societies in both Provinces. It must be obvious that however perfect the plans may be which are devised by the collective wisdom of parliament, and however faithfully they may be carried out by the Boards of Agriculture, no practical good can be accomplished without the hearty and earnest co-operation of the farmer himself, and of the Societies who represent the interests of the different districts.

At the meeting at Cobourg no less than sixty delegates attended to represent every portion of the Upper Province, and so keen was the competition for the honor of obtaining the next Agricultural Show, that more than one place offered each £1,000 towards the expenses, and the honor was eventually acquired by Kingston, after a vehement and prolonged discussion, by forty-four delegates voting for Kingston in opposition to sixteen who voted against it.

In the same way at the recent Agricultural Fair in the State of New York, the small town of Elmira came forward with an offer of several thousand dollars, and in the United States Show at Boston, the municipality at once voted 20,000 dollars, to induce the managers to fix the Exhibition in that city. We could quote other instances to show how highly the advantage of such gatherings is esteemed, and how ardently it is desired by the inhabitants of different localities, but the advantages are so self-evident that it cannot be necessary to dwell upon them. At the Exhibition at Sherbrooke not a single delegate from any County Society, except those of the place attended, although the important business of electing officers, and determining the place of meeting for the ensuing year, had to be discussed at the close of the meeting. We are utterly at a loss to understand, or account for this apathy, and up to this time we cannot

hear that any more than two places—St. Andrews and Three Rivers have applied for the honor of having the next Provincial Exhibition held in their localities. We perceive that our very able friend the Editor of the *Three Rivers Inquirer*, claims it for his town, and expresses a doubt of the soundness and prudence of the principle which would make the eligibility of the site depend upon the amount of the bribe offered for the honour. But surely our astute contemporary must see that the amount of the subscription is a most material element for the consideration of the Board. The expenses of the Provincial Exhibition are of necessity large, and its success depends to a great extent upon the amount of the disbursements. This has been proved over and over again in other localities, where the advantages were equal in population, produce, and convenience of access. Besides when the people of a locality come forward liberally with their purses to sustain an exhibition of such vast importance to the community, it affords satisfactory and irrefragible evidence of their determination to aid the constituted authorities in their efforts to render the show successful. We have no means whatever of knowing whether Three Rivers, or St. Andrews is most likely to be selected. We believe in the advantages of the perambulating system for agricultural exhibitions, as fully as we believe in the disadvantages of the system for governmental purposes. Three Rivers is admirably situated in a thriving district, and with the great commerce of the noblest river of North America flowing past it. If our contemporary wants the Exhibition, let him exhort his neighbours to show themselves worthy of it by their activity, intelligence, and liberality. We have but one wish on the subject, and that is that the best place may receive the preference.

While upon this subject we would beg the attention of our readers to some valuable suggestions of Mr. Evans, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Agriculture. This experienced agriculturist in his monthly report draws the attention of the Lower Canadian Farmers, to the necessity of sufficient draining and good ploughing in the cultivation of the lands, and affirms that both are extremely defective. He remarks:—

It will be admitted by all experienced agriculturists that sufficient draining and good ploughing are most essential to good farming, and that remunerating products cannot be expected from arable land where the draining and ploughing are imperfectly executed. In Lower Canada it is quite certain that both draining and ploughing are very defective in general, and in sections of the country where it is most required that both should be as near perfection as possible. A large portion of Lower Canada is of very level surface, and the soil is a strong clay, naturally of excellent quality; but to make it productive, careful

draining is of the first importance. No doubt draining has been executed to a considerable extent, but in most cases not sufficient, and in almost every case the drains that are made are not regularly cleaned or kept in proper order. Their construction is also objectionable: the sides of the drains are almost perpendicular in numerous instances, when they should be sloped—the excavated earth is allowed to accumulate on the banks of the drains, and the land is highest where it should be lowest, and the levels and out-lets are not carefully attended to. Drains will not act, if they have not sufficient fall, and if the grass and weeds are not constantly cleared out of them. In a flat level country, the draining requires much more attention than where the surface is undulating, and a sufficient fall for the drains almost always attainable.

As regards ploughing, according to my ideas, I would consider it to be very generally defective. The ploughing and ridges are not straight, the furrow-slice is too wide in proportion to its thickness, and consequently is too flat to dry or harrow well; and the furrow between the ridges is too wide and shallow, because it is not finished properly by running the plough in the subsoil of the furrow after the surface is all turned over. When the furrows are not properly cleaned out, the moisture remains in and under the ploughed surface, and cannot run off, because the bottom of the furrow is only level with the under-side of the ploughed soil, and the furrow left in this unfinished state causes a waste of nearly a third of the land. The obvious remedy for these defects is,—to plough straight and have the furrow-slice in due proportion, 5 inches deep by 8 or 9 inches wide, or 6 inches deep by 9 or 10 inches wide, carrying out the same proportion if ploughed deeper; and when the ridges are finished pass the plough deeply in each furrow, thus making a sufficient drain to carry off the water from the ploughed soil to the head land. The head land should be carefully ploughed, and a deep furrow between it and the ridges, and the furrow be made so as to carry off the water from all the furrows of the field, with outlets from it into the main drains at the end or side of the field. By adopting these simple and easy improvements, the land would be in good condition at the first commencement of the spring, and the farmer would be able to sow and plant in the proper time, and not waiting for the sun to dry up the vast quantity of superfluous moisture accumulated in the soil for months, for want of drains and water furrows. There would be no waste by wide furrows, because the plough in finishing the furrow would loosen sufficient soil in each side to form a seed bed for the grain, and hence the furrow would be only one foot wide, instead of two or three feet, as at present. I do not propose impracticable improvements, but such as any farmer may adopt, with very little additional expenditure of labor or money; and these improvements must precede all others. Manure is little better than wasted if the land is not sufficiently drained and properly ploughed. From my own experience, I am persuaded that insufficient draining and defective ploughing is the main cause of deficient crops in Lower Canada.

Mr. Evans also insists upon it that green crops, and summer fallow are essential to profitable farming, and suggests to all farmers who desire to keep their stock in good condition, the necessity of making a larger