

Horticultural Societies Act

It is understood that at the present session of the Ontario Legislature some important amendments will be made to the Horticultural Societies Act along the lines recommended at the last annual convention of the Ontario Horticultural Association. In the address delivered by Mr. H. B. Cowan, managing editor of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST, it was recommended that the Act be so changed that the horticultural societies would be allowed to hold their annual meetings during the first week in November, instead of in January as is now required.

In this direction it was pointed out that the enthusiasm of the work had not died out in November, and more interest would be taken, therefore, in the election of the officers for the following year's work. The election of directors in November would enable them to plan their work for the following year at an early date. Another benefit derived would be that the annual reports would be in the hands of the Government about the first of the year, enabling the society to receive their annual grants early in the year, instead of late in the summer, as has been the case heretofore.

Another advantage recommended was that the clause in the Act requiring that, on or before the first day of May, the officers of every society shall send an affidavit to the Department in regard to the past year's work, should be eliminated and embodied in the clause requiring that the annual reports shall be sent to the Government within one month after the annual meeting of the society in January. A third suggestion was that the clause requiring that the special grant of \$800 to the four city societies, which is divided among them in proportion to their membership during the current year, shall be changed so that the grant would be divided upon the basis of the membership of the preceding year.

These matters were discussed at the recent convention, and the advantages recommended were endorsed, and it is understood that Hon. Nelson Monteith will adopt the amendments to the Act accordingly. It is probable, also, that the clause which restricts a society by requiring that it shall not expend more than one-third of its funds in any one line of work, will be amended to read "not more than one-half of its funds."

At the time of the convention Mr. C. C. James, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, gave a very interesting address bearing on the Horticultural Societies Act. He said, in his address: "I do not know of anything definite that is not workable. It would be most extraordinary if a perfect act were to be worked out, one that would not permit of any amendments. The points brought out in discussion at this meeting will be taken into consideration." He said, also, that the societies must give good reasons for wanting to know earlier what their grants are to be, for as the question stood now, no good reason had been given. It meant a radical change in the basis of distribution of the \$8,000. He referred to the one-third clause and said if they wanted it out, he was quite willing to take it out, but it always seemed to him to be a clause worth keeping in. One member suggested that the one-third clause be changed to one-half, and Mr. James said that as far as the department was concerned, and as far as their relationship with the present society was concerned, they were quite willing to leave that with the members to work out for themselves. He then referred to the exhibition at St. Catharines, and said it would have been a most lamentable proceeding if any section of that act had been enforced to prevent the holding of that exhibition, for it was a rare treat.

NOTE—At the last moment before going to press, we received a copy of the proposed amendments to the Horticultural Societies Act. The suggestions mentioned in this article have been adopted in full and will be placed before the Legislature at an early date.—Editor.

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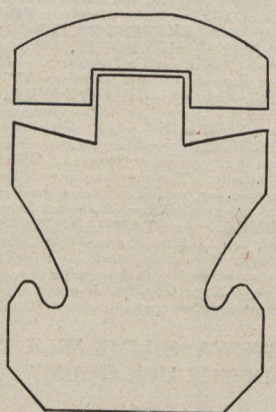
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