

In Austria, we find 69 agricultural schools; in France, 3 colleges; in Scotland 43 agricultural schools. This last-named country is the most advanced in agriculture, and a publicist rightly says that in the most humble college in Scotland, you will find a treatise on agriculture, and that the Scotch farmer owes to the fact of his reading such essays, the skill which he displays in his agricultural pursuit. In the United States there are to be found 32 agricultural colleges besides several model farms. In 1862, the American Congress, which occupies a position somewhat similar to that of the Federal Government in Canada, passed a Bill granting about 9,000,000 acres of land to the different States in the Union, on condition that each State should establish a mechanical or an agricultural college. As everybody knows, a board has been established in Washington to gather every information and take cognizance of every new discovery relating to agriculture. In Massachusetts a similar board exists, and it is so with several other States in the Union; and the French Consul in his report, made in 1867, to the agricultural investigation held in France, said that the diffusion of agricultural science in the United States had had a great deal to do with the improvement and increase of the agricultural production in the United States; and he remarked that this increase in the agricultural production was felt, not only in the western States, but also in the eastern States, where farming has been going on for many long years. Could not the Federal Government lend a helping hand to the Local Governments to propagate agricultural knowledge? I do not wish to say that agriculture has made no progress in this country; in fact, if I ventured to make such an assertion, statistics and facts would contradict me. Our agriculture has been enriched by the cheese industry, which has wrought a very happy transformation in our mode of culture. In fact, in 1867, we only exported cheese to the amount of \$193,554; in 1871, our export of this commodity amounted to \$1,109,906 and in 1881 it amounted to \$5,510,443. Now if we examine our exportation of farm produce we find also that the increase of the agricultural production has been a great deal more rapid than the increase of the population and of the acreage of farms improved and tilled in the country. In 1871 our exportation of farm produce only amounted to \$22,436,071; in 1881, ten years later, it amounted to \$42,628,546. If we refer to the census which was taken in 1871 and 1881, we find that the total number of acres of improved land in Canada was, in 1871, 17,336,288 acres, and in 1881, 21,899,181 acres, or an increase of a little more than one-fourth, while our agricultural production has more than doubled during that period of ten years. Our Local Governments have done a good deal towards the improvement of agriculture by circulating agricultural newspapers and also by giving subsidies to schools; but, owing to their limited pecuniary means, I think that they have not done all that could have been done to promote to a larger extent the improvement of agriculture, I think that our Federal Government might do well to imitate the American Congress and to annex a Board of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture. The direction of that Board might be put into the hands of our best agriculturalists, who would gather the information and distribute reports giving the new inventions and all information, generally, considered by them as useful to promote greater improvement in the system of culture heretofore followed in the country. Far from me the idea of pretending, Mr. Speaker, that theory alone will make good farmers, I say that skill in agriculture, as in any other calling, lies in a combination of practice and theory. I know that a theorist, having no knowledge or practice, is greatly inferior to a practitioner without theory. But on the other hand, it seems to me that the Government, by putting at the disposal of our farmers all the resources of modern science, would furnish to the farming community

M. GIGAULT.

the means of giving back to the soil, exhausted as it often is, the elements of fertility of which it has been deprived by a production often too active, or by exhausting crops. It has been proved, Mr. Speaker, that often, and I may say always, the fate of the merchant or of the manufacturer is intimately connected with the success or reverses of the farming community. The crops have hardly sprouted from the ground, when both the merchant and manufacturer are figuring on the prospect of the yield; and according to the appearance of the crop, according to the hopes of the farmer, the merchant regulates his importations, and the manufacturer the production of his manufacture. Thus it is shown, that the interests of agriculture are the first of social interests. Thus it is clearly proved that agriculture is the basis of public prosperity, and when we find that to be the case, it seems to me that we ought not to be afraid to sacrifice something in order to improve the condition of those who till the land. The present Government has certainly done much for agriculture by favouring the construction of railways. By so doing, they have given to farmers great facilities for the sale of their products. They have, moreover, encouraged agriculture by the fostering of our industries, and by so doing they have given to the farming community a greater number of buyers and consumers; but it seems to me that they might crown this very patriotic policy by encouraging, in a larger measure, the diffusion of agricultural science. While discussing this question, let us not forget that four-fifths of our population belong to the farming class; that our agricultural resources are immense, and that to be developed they only want strong arms and intelligent labour to largely increase our public wealth. Mr. Speaker, the idea to which I now give expression is not a new one; it is contained in several of our Statutes authorizing agricultural societies, boards of art and boards of trade, to circulate and distribute books and essays on the agricultural and mechanical arts; but, unfortunately, owing to the want of means, it has been impossible to give effect to the provisions of those Statutes. I hope that the Federal Government, with the mighty resources at its disposal, will find the means to propagate the agricultural knowledge of which our farmers are in such great need, to increase the fertility of our soil.

Mr. LANDRY (Translation). Mr. Speaker, the statement just made by the hon. member for Rouville (Mr. Gigault) makes it unnecessary for me to enter into the details of the question. However, I feel that it is my duty to say a few words in support of his speech, and to ask, on behalf of the farming community, that the Government may be pleased to direct some of their energy towards the progress of agriculture in Canada. Each year the Government prints a large number of pamphlets. We, the representatives of the people, receive a certain number of these to distribute among our constituents, and I think we might willingly dispense with some of these pamphlets, whose place might be taken by other works on agriculture and the mechanical arts. I am satisfied that these pamphlets would be received with much more satisfaction by our farmers than the reports on explorations or trips made in the North-West. I remember that not very long ago we had the report of the Scotch delegates who, at the request of the hon. Minister of Agriculture, visited the prairies of the North-West. These delegates have certainly done their duty, and they have made, on the incidents of their journey, a report as accurate as could be. But I have observed, not without wonder, that they had commenced their observations on the border of the Province of Quebec; they have not found it in their power to say one word in favour of this Province. To make up for this, they have praised up, perhaps beyond measure, Manitoba and the prairies of the North-West. I have seen one of these documents, the shrewd writer of which had discovered that in our rural