

AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL,

AND

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

Lower Canada Agricultural Society.

VOL. 2.

MONTREAL, MARCH, 1849.

NO. 3.

There has been considerable discussion lately on the subject of affording encouragement and protection to Canadian manufactures, but as we cannot argue these questions in this Journal, we would propose that some effectual steps would be taken to encourage the growth of flax and hemp, either for domestic manufacture or for exportation. We do not say that we should introduce the cultivation of these plants so extensively as to displace other useful crops, but we believe that, to a certain extent, the cultivation of these plants would be found very profitable, and would greatly augment the value of the general produce of the country. We have for many years recommended their culture, but, like all other improvements suggested, no action has been taken in the matter. The simple machinery necessary for preparing the flax and hemp, after it was grown, although it would not, we suppose, cost two hundred pounds, has not yet been put up in Lower Canada. The machinery for dressing the flax, and the newly invented vats for steeping, are said not to cost two hundred pounds in Ireland. It is not saying much for our inclination for improvement, when this trifling experiment would not be made; and no satisfactory experiment can be made to ascertain the value of flax without suitable machinery to prepare it, after it is produced by the farmer. We cannot imagine that it would be any very great sacrifice, or generosity on the part of our government, to provide at least, one set of machinery for that purpose, as no

private individual or company appears disposed to risk even this small amount of capital for an object of so much importance to the country. Men may be inclined to flatter themselves, that they have it in their power to resort to many more easy methods of profitable employment than agriculture, and hence neglect the latter, but we doubt very much, that were we to discover mines of gold and silver in Canada, whether they would be found so permanently profitable for the country as the judicious cultivation and management of the soil; and we have no hesitation in saying, that the latter employment would be a thousand-fold more conducive to the true happiness of the inhabitants, than digging or washing for gold and silver. If we are sincerely anxious for the permanent prosperity of the inhabitants of Canada, we must do all that is in our power, by instruction and encouragement, to improve our agriculture.— We should never forget that the only legitimate means of revenue we can have at our disposal, must be from a production created annually by our industry, as it is such a production that can alone give us the means of purchasing and paying for commodities that are taxed for revenue. We can easily find employment for revenue, but the great point is to have it to employ and distribute. We do not raise revenue here by direct taxation, and therefore, the amount of our revenue must be in proportion to the means we create to expend on articles charged with duty, and cannot exceed this. Hence in Canada, the