

By Mr. Fisher :

Q. Are they required to do so by the municipal law of the Province?—Yes; they are required to do so by section 6 of this Act, which reads as follows:—

"(6.) The officers of all societies, institutes and associations organized under the Agricultural and Arts Act, and of all municipal councils, school boards and public institutions, and all public officers of this Province, shall promptly answer all official communications from the said Bureau; shall, from time to time, collect and tabulate facts, according to instructions to be furnished them; shall make diligent efforts to supply correct information on all questions submitted to them; and generally shall act, as far as practicable, upon the recommendation of the Commissioner; and any officer of any such society, institute, association, council, school board, or public institution, making a false return of information, or refusing or wilfully neglecting to answer any question, or to fill up, tabulate and return official schedules according to the instructions and within the prescribed times, or to furnish any information relating to the industries of the Province, when required to do either by the Commissioner or the Secretary of the Bureau, shall for every such offence incur a penalty of forty dollars, which shall be recoverable by any person suing for the same before any court of competent jurisdiction, and shall be paid to Her Majesty for the use of this Province."

That refers only to officers of bodies incorporated under the Provincial Statute, and it is only to that extent that the operations of the Act are mandatory. The information we ask from our farmers is given voluntarily on their part. Many farmers, however, I have no doubt, hesitate to give the information, fearing that it has something to do with local taxation. Of course, we anticipated that before. It has been met with in every country where similar statistics have been collected.

Q. Can you give us a short outline of the information which you obtain in this way; what ground will your statistics cover? You have, to a certain extent, answered that question already, but perhaps you could state it a little more definitely?—In the special report of the Bureau we make a digest of the information given to us by our correspondents.

By the Chairman :

Q. Do you make enquiries respecting the ravages of insects?—Yes; and also with respect to drainage and the prevalence of noxious weeds, and any other matter of special interest to farmers.

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Q. Can you tell us what expenditure is requisite to maintain the Bureau?—In the first year the staff was not fully organized, and the expense was a little under \$8,000. Last year it was considerably more, owing to the change of system. We had to employ a much larger staff of clerks to tabulate the returns. You can understand that 50,000 returns of this nature coming in, involve a great deal of work in the tabulation. We employ a number of extra clerks, for a couple of months, to carry on that work. In addition to that, a large number of reports were printed for circulation among the people, with the object of informing them as to the character of the work we were doing, and a large number, also, were sent to the old country, to be distributed there by the immigration agents. We also collect statistics of the dairy industries of the country, especially of cheese made in the cheese factories.

Q. You also obtain information in the schedules in regard to private dairies, do you not?—No; that is not asked for there. We ask for the quantity of butter made in the preceding year.

Q. How do you disseminate through the country the knowledge which you thus obtain?—Every correspondent of the Bureau is entitled to a copy of the report. We also send copies of the reports to the Granges, officers of agricultural societies, municipal clerks, and to nearly all public officers in the Province; but in addition to that, we make out a summary of each report, giving all the leading facts that it contains, on printed slips, which are sent to every newspaper in the Province simultaneously. We give no advantage to one newspaper more than another; all are served alike.