



## THE CULTIVATOR.

"Agriculture is the great art which every government ought to protect, every proprietor of lands to practice, and every inquirer into nature improve."—Dr. JOHNSON.

**Toronto, April, 1841.**

### THE ENCOURAGEMENT WHICH OUGHT TO BE GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO AGRICULTURE IN BRITISH AMERICA.

The general state of the rural population in these Provinces,—the deficiency of capital—and the want of education and agricultural skill that prevails amongst a large majority of them, point out the necessity for the Government adopting decided and active measures for the encouragement of agriculture, if it is desirable that it should improve and prosper in this country.—The agricultural class; who ought to possess the greatest influence of any in British America, are, from the above causes, unable, and unqualified to assume that station they would be entitled to occupy, from their numbers, and the property they possess. The consequence is, that they possess scarcely any influence in the conduct of the affairs of the country, and therefore have no chance of introducing any measures that might be necessary for the encouragement and improvement of agriculture, and the protection of their interests. It is true, five hundred pounds are appropriated annually to the several Agricultural Societies throughout the Provinces, which is generally distributed in premiums for animals, but we know by experience that this mode of proceeding will never effect the encouragement and information required to insure us a prosperous and improved agriculture in British America.

In England the rich and powerful landed proprietors take care of the interests of agriculture—they encourage every improvement by experiments made at their own cost, and the farmer has ample protection from foreign competition. The capital employed in agriculture is abundant to afford the very best chance of success. The farmer has land and buildings provided for him by the proprietor, and in many cases the proprietors pay for drainage and other improvements necessary for the tenant, and the farmer has only to provide stock, seed, implements and labour.—Together with all these advantages, premiums and encouragement is held out for every species of improvement that can be conceived necessary or useful in stock, seed, implements, labour, the dairy, the destruction of vermin injurious to agriculture, and the improvement and judicious management of land. Good and faithful servants are rewarded. In fact nothing is neglected that could possibly improve agriculture, or promote the prosperity of those engaged in it as proprietors, farmers, or labourers. In British America we have no rich and powerful landed proprietors to encourage improvements, or take any active interest in agricultural prosperity. There are many good farmers in this country certainly, who cultivate their lands in the best manner, and thus show a good example to the uninstructed, but this is not sufficient to effect the general im-

provement of husbandry, with the sort of population we have here. If our agriculturists, who are generally proprietors of the soil they occupy, were sufficiently educated, the progress of improvement would be much more certain and rapid, but this is a good that we cannot expect to attain for many years to come. It requires that men should receive a liberal education to free them from prejudice, and enable them to view new plans of cultivation and improvement without jealousy. Persons who have only received the first rudiments of education, and can merely read and write, without practicing much of either during their lives, are not much better qualified to form a correct judgment on subjects of interest to themselves and the community, than the totally uneducated. Indeed they are generally less qualified, because the little instruction they have received, make them confident and presumptuous, and it is impossible to reason them out of any opinions which they have once formed.

A Board of Works have been very wisely established in Canada, for recommending and superintending all public works of improvement that may be necessary for the country. We humbly conceive that a General Board of Agriculture, would not be less necessary to promote the improvement and prosperity of agriculture.—This Board might produce the same good to British America, that the Royal Agricultural Society of England, is now producing in that country. Here we cannot have such a Society as that of England, because we have not such a class of rich proprietors. Our Government will, therefore, have to do for us, what the Royal Agricultural Society of England are doing for that country, and this we humbly conceive, can be best effected by the institution of a General Board of Agriculture. We have already, in a Magazine published by us in 1838, suggested the establishment of such a Board, and we beg to copy here, a part of the article that appeared on the occasion referred to:—"The organization of a General Board of Agriculture in each Province would, we feel convinced, produce much good, provided the Board was composed of men who understood the theory and practice of agriculture, and who would not be influenced by any other motives than a sincere desire to promote the general improvement of agriculture, and the prosperity of the country. The following outline of a plan for organizing such a Board, was suggested to the author, by having seen a report made by the Committee on Agriculture for the State of New-York, assembled in Albany in February last.

"There shall be organized a Provincial Board of Agriculture to consist of three or five members, who shall be appointed by the Governor, and shall hold their office, for at least five years, and shall receive, while necessarily employed in the duties of their office, the same compensation as Members of the House of Assembly did receive. They may choose a Secretary, if deemed necessary; and shall hold quarterly meetings in Canada, at Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, and Toronto alternately; and may also meet at such other times and places as may be found expedient to fulfil the duties enjoined upon them by their office.

"There shall be assigned for the meetings of the said Board of Agriculture, and as a museum for models, geological specimens, and agricultural productions, suitable apartments, both in Que-

bec, Montreal, Kingston, and Toronto; which museum shall be kept in order by the Secretary, or by some person appointed by the Board, and shall at all times be open and accessible to the public without charge.

"It shall be the duty of the Provincial Board of Agriculture to examine all reports and returns made by the Presidents of the County Agricultural Societies, and Boards of Agriculture; to select for publication such of them, and such other essays as they may judge advisable; and shall annually publish a volume, to be distributed in the several counties of the Province by the County Agricultural Societies. And they shall examine, when in session, and determine by practical experiment on the merits of all new farm implements or machinery offered for their examination, and they may award discretionary premiums upon all such as may be found truly meritorious and deserving of public patronage, provided the whole amount expended in any one year shall not exceed \_\_\_\_\_; and provided further, that no such premium shall be delivered to the person claiming the same until he has deposited with the Board a model of his implement, machine, or improvement.

"There shall be deposited in the room assigned to the Board, specimens of choice and rare agricultural productions, models of implements, drawings of choice animals, books, and all other articles which may be presented to the museum, a registry of all which shall be made by the Secretary, and open to the public inspection.

"The Board of Agriculture shall report annually to the Governor in the month of January, a statement of their expenditures and of their proceedings during the previous year; and also all matters that they may deem calculated to promote the improvement of agriculture and of domestic industry.

"That the Board of Agriculture, constituted as aforesaid, shall have the authority, at their discretion, to award premiums for the production of extraordinary and valuable crops of grain, roots, or any other agricultural or horticultural productions, or household manufactures, which, in their view shall, by such encouragement, add to the productive wealth of the country, not exceeding, however, a fixed amount, which shall be placed at their disposal.

"The mode of organizing County Agricultural Societies might be as at present, namely, that all subscribers should be members. The members to elect annually such and so many officers as they may deem proper; none of whom should receive any emolument from his office. It would be the duty of such officers annually to regulate and award premiums on such articles, productions, and improvements, as they may deem best calculated to promote the agricultural and household manufacturing interests of the Province; having especial reference to the nett profits which accrue, or are likely to accrue, from the mode of raising the crop, or the animals, or the fabrication of the articles of household, or Canadian manufacture, with the intention that the rewards shall be given for the most economical or profitable mode of competition.

"It should be a part of the duty of the Board of Agriculture to see that judicious rules and regulations should be established by the County Societies in the distribution of premiums. And in order to secure public confidence in such Societies, without which their proceedings will be viewed with jealousy and distrust, and produce