

ALTERATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACT.

A Bill has been introduced and carried through the Upper House, to amend in some respects and to mar in others the present Agricultural Act. We have only had time to give the measure a hasty perusal before going to press, and have not space in the present number to undertake a full analysis. The main feature of the new Bill is the abolition of Counties as a territorial boundary for County Societies, and the substitution of "Electoral Divisions." The sum which a "Division" Society may draw from the public chest is reduced to £200. Assuming that a County Society, as they are still to be called, will be organized in each Electoral Division, the whole sum that may be demanded from Government will be somewhat greater than under the present arrangement. To this alteration, which we understand is a suggestion of the Board of Agriculture, we have no objection. It will make some confusion for a year or two, and will then probably work well enough. In the County of York the new system will operate more justly than the old, inasmuch as the large tax-paying population of the three Ridings, including the City of Toronto, could only obtain £250 from the public grant, while several counties, with a smaller population than either of the Ridings, could draw an equal sum. Of course the absurd restriction that was foisted into the former Act, which practically compelled County Societies to hold their exhibitions at the County Town, is to be done away with. The Directors may hold them where they think best. So far we think the amendments are likely to prove beneficial. But there are some new elements introduced into our Agricultural Societies, at the suggestion, we are told, of the learned Minister of Agriculture, that in our opinion will lead to difficulty and confusion, and interfere very seriously with the harmonious working of these associations. Mr. Vankoughnet seems to think that it will be an improvement to make a sort of hotch-potch by mixing up Horticultural Societies, Boards of Trade, Mechanics Institutes, "Boards of Art," &c. &c., with Agricultural Societies. One of his "amendments" alters the constitution of the Provincial Association. The members of these new bodies are made *ex officio* members of the association. It therefore ceases to be an *Agricultural* Association—its original aim—and becomes an affair of Trades, Mechanics, Manufactures, Arts, &c. &c. The association had already extended its arms so as to embrace a large portion of these mechanical productions, to the very serious injury of the agricultural objects for which it was established. What it will become under Mr. Vankoughnet's remodelling remains to be seen. An exhibition of Mechanics, Manufactures, and Works of Art, is a very different affair from a Cattle Show. The two things have no necessary connexion, require different arrangements, and should be held separately. The latter, including the products of the farm, may be exhibited for two or three days; the former should extend to as many weeks. In the United States the two things are kept distinct. Works of art and all kinds of mechanism may be seen at the Fair of the American Institute; the products of agriculture and the implements of the farm are exhibited at the annual show of the State Agricultural Society. If Mr. Vankoughnet had established a Mechanics Fair, and *provided the funds for sustaining* it, we think he would have shown himself a better Minister of Agriculture than by attempting to make the Agricultural Association carry all these things upon its back in addition to its own proper burdens. The same mixing process is attempted in the case of County Societies. The "Presidents of all the Mechanics Institutes, and Boards of Trade *within the County* are made Directors of the Agricultural Society! What are these gentlemen likely to know about Agriculture? Is it likely that their views will harmonize with those of practical farmers? We have no faith in this new *omnium gatherum* system. We must postpone further observations until our next issue. It is proposed that the new Bill shall take effect from 1st of January next.

PRIZE LIST.—With this number we send another sheet of "Transactions"—making the 4th—and the Prize List for the next Provincial Fair to be held at Brantford on September 29th and 30th and October 1st and 2nd, 1857.

These sheets have caused a few days delay in the mailing of the *Agriculturist*, but we hope our subscribers will not complain when they know the cause.