

agricultural industry, the leading source of our national prosperity.

My object is to traverse the field of action that lies before the agricultural societies and farmer's clubs, and to ascertain the means by which they may arrive most directly at the diffusion of agricultural knowledge, at the improvement of farming in general, and, above all, at the advancement towards perfection of the industry your society exists but to promote.

These societies are in a position to cause to be put in practice the valuable theories heralded in your meetings.

Every year, more than \$50,000.00 are handed over to these societies by the government; a pretty large amount; and this sum, judiciously spent, ought to contribute greatly to the increase of our farms.

That they are useful, productive of good to all around us, is admitted by every one.

They have already done much to second the efforts of the Dairymen's Association. The establishment of many creameries and cheeseries is due to their initiative. They have, too, greatly promoted the success of this industry by their competitions of green- and root-crops, milch-cows, standing grain-crops, and by all the competitions that incline farmers to maintain and increase the fertility of their land. The increased production of milk is partly due to the improvement brought about by the competitions and the enactments of these different associations. Their efforts to improve our farming have not neglected the increasing of agricultural exports. The grain-dealers declare, that during the last few years, their sales of grass-seeds have tripled and more, which clearly shows that milch-cows are better fed and the yield of milk greater.

But, if many of these societies have worked earnestly and successfully for the development of our agriculture, there are, unfortunately, others whose action has been sluggish, and whose operations have not been sufficiently varied; they prefer following a dull routine, and do not serve their agricultural brethren as earnestly as would be wished.

The law points out the methods that should be pursued by the farm-societies to develop, not an isolate branch, but every branch of farming. Competitions of standing grain-crops, of the best cultivated farms, the purchase of breeding stock.

experiments, agricultural publications, these are the means suggested by the law.

Some societies there are that do not trouble themselves about exhibitions; others devote a trivial share of their funds to the holding of competitions of farms and crops, while others encourage exhibitions and competitions. The Clubs do not hold exhibitions. Which are the societies that render the greatest services to the farmers? In reply to this question, I will lay before you the opinion of several agronomes.

In a report presented, in 1878, in the name of the agricultural societies of Belgium, to the International Agricultural Congress at Paris, we find the following: "Nothing is more decisively settled to-day than the superiority of competitions held on the spot over exhibitions."

Speaking of the competitions of the best cultivated farms, the editor of the pamphlet observes: "The intelligent and well reasoned application of the laws of agricultural production is by no means an easy thing, still, by no other means can we at present realise perfection in that art."

In his Dictionary of Agriculture, A. Richard makes the following reflection: Prizes given to animals are only prizes given to an *effect*, without any consideration of the *cause* that produces that effect. The cattle, indeed, are only the *consequence* of the production, of the increase of fodder-crops. Were prizes given to encourage that increase, it would, to my mind, be more logical than the giving of prizes to animals that are only the results of that increased production.

At page 100 of the same work, we find: "Permanent improvements, as we observed, are the source whence flow the other improvements on a farm. One sees at once that a soil well drained, well-manured, well-worked, must yield heavier crops. But does not this increased production naturally bring in its train the improvement of the cattle that consume it? Consider the case of cattle reared in a fertile district; they are in good condition, well developed, healthy and numerous. In poor districts, on the contrary, where the land, out of order, barren and badly farmed, only yields trifling crops of bad quality, you only meet with sorry crops of bad quality, there you find a scarcity of cattle, and such as there are lean and stunted in growth."

As regards prizes for the best cultivated farms, Mathieu de Dombasle makes the following observation: "It seems to me that if this system were