REPORT

Of the Committee of the Royal Agricultural Society,

FOR YEAR ENDING 1ST MARCH, 1854.

In presenting this Report, your Committee regret to state, that in one branch of its operations, viz., the importation of Stock, the Society has this year experienced much disappointment and sustained very heavy loss. Immediately on the vote of £1000 for the importation of Horses being passed by the Legislature, your Committee dispatched Mr. John Thorn to Great Britain, to procure them; and as it was most important that they should arrive in time for service in the ensuing season, Mr. Thorn's time for executing his task was limited; but, by energy and diligence, he succeeded in procuring six most valuable animals of heavy breed, and a Blood Horse; but in consequence of the scarcity of vessels, great difficulty was experienced in procuring transport for them. The *Nugget*, with four of these horses, arrived in safety; but owing to an unusually long passage, the season was nearly over before they arrived. But three very fine Clydesdale Horses, shipped in the *Atwood*, died at sea; and being only insured against *wreck*, about £600 of the money so voted was thereby sunk. Nor did your Society's ill luck stop here. Your Committee ordered nine Rams, of the improved Leicester breed; they were shipped in the *Sir Alexander*, with the exception of two (which are since dead) they all died at sea.

Another disappointment, though not immediately affecting the Society's funds, has been experienced in the loss of the Durham Cow (owned by Judge Peters), imported by the Society for the purpose of breeding pure Stock, without the great expence attending their frequent importation, which died in calving. Your Committee are informed, that two large calves having been extracted from her, after death a third calf, equally large, was found remaining. Your Committee allude to this, as an extraordinary circumstance; also to show the necessity, where valuable animals experience difficulty in parturition, of the most careful examination to ascertain that complete delivery has taken place.

It is, at the same time, satisfactory to be able to mention, that the Cow had previously given birth to, and reared, two fine animals,—one, a Heifer, now rising three years old, owned by Mr. John Beer; the other a Bull, rising two, in the possession of the Hon. E. C. Haythorne.

Your Committee now gladly turn from this catalogue of disasters, to other matters which are not clouded with disappointments, and which do not require to be introduced with regrets.

Although the Wheat Crop in the vicinity of Charlottetown was much injured by *rust* and *midge*, the general crop in other parts of the Island has been good.

The Turnip Crop, although something under the average of last year, is good. Your Committee learn, that many remained unpulled at the setting in of the unusually early frost in November. The experience of 1851, and of last year, should convince our farmers of the necessity of having this crop secured by the 1st November. It should, however, be generally known, that Turnips, completely frozen, if placed in a root-house where the light is excluded, but all air allowed to escape, will thaw without injury, and keep as well as if they had escaped the frost. The Report of the Judges of the Crop will be found in the Appendix.

Your Committee rejoice to see the steady manner in which the cultivation of this crop is extending itself; its importance this year is more apparent than ever. Many hundreds will now winter their Stock well, who must have sacrificed them, had they, as formerly, depended solely on hay and straw for their subsistence. Had the Society succeeded in nothing else than the general introduction of Turnip Husbandry, the benefit it has conferred on the country would have repaid all the exertions your Society has made for the improvement of our Agricultural system.

Owing to the great drowth in the early part of last summer, the Straw of the Oat Crop was extremely short, and the yield of grain considerably under that of former seasons. This staple crop has hitherto been exempt from rust; but your Committee regret to observe, that many fields of this grain were, last season, attacked, and some quite destroyed by it. The Tartarian Oat has for some years been found to give the largest yield; while, from the strength of its straw, it is not apt to be laid by storms; in common, however, with other varieties, it last year suffered from *rust*. Any general failure in the Oat Crop would be a serious calamity to this Island; but, while your Committee look with considerable anxiety to the next season's crop, they feel that it would be absurd to attempt to point out any means of avoiding a disease, whose causes are so obscure, and which science and experience have hitherto been unable to prevent. The only suggestion they would make is, that each farmer should sow as many different sorts of Oats as he can procure,—the probability being, that (should the disease continue) some kinds may, for a time, be less affected by it than others. The ease and certainty with which a fair crop of this grain has heretofore been obtained, has, your Committee believe, rendered us remiss in attending to its cultivation. It seems to be a well ascertained fact, that grain grown and resown in the same locality, deteriorates; and there can be little doubt, that the same causes which affect the yield, must also render the plant more liable to disease; whereas change of seed, or the importation of seed from other countries, not only keeps up the standard, but frequently improves it,—the samples for a few years raised from imported seed being generally superior to that first imported. Your Committee would therefore recommend, that, for the future, no year should be allowed to pass without a small importation of three or four varieties of Oats from Great Britain, and also from some of the neighbouring Colonies; which last, your Committee have no doubt, can be done at small expense, by exchanging with some of their Agricultural Societies. With this view, your Committee have ordered Twenty Bushels of Seed Oats from Great Britain; which they trust will arrive in time for sowing in the ensuing spring.

Barley, from the increased demand and more remunerating price obtained for it, has become an important crop. The *two-rowed*, or *Chevalier*, requires richer soil than the *four-rowed* variety. The farmer should, however, remember, that it is by far the most valuable to the brewer. It is doubtful, however, whether he now obtains the difference in price for this variety which its superior malting properties entitle him to receive. Mr. Stephens remarks, that lands intended to be sown with Barley, should receive two ploughings; and that the last ploughing should be given immediately before the seed is intended sown,—it being, as he observes, "essential to the success of the crop, that the seed be sown upon the soil fresh turned up, or on a hot furrow." Your Committee are of opinion, that general attention to this advice would be found to be beneficial.

With respect to the Potato, the great loss which has been suffered by many who cultivated this root to a large extent in many parts of the Island last year, from the ravages of the disease, induces your Committee to recommend their brother farmers to bestow more attention upon the cultivation of the Turnip and other valuable roots, merely planting a sufficient breadth of land with the potato to supply their own immediate wants.

The Show of Fat Cattle in Charlottetown on the 23d of March last, was highly gratifying:—The number and condition of the animals exhibited, shewed the great improvement in the feeding which the Turnip culture has enabled the Farmers to adopt, and the early maturity of some marked the vast improvement which has taken place in the breed of our Stock.

The Cattle Shows in Prince and King's Counties, took place, respectively on the 22d and 29th September.

In Prince County, notwithstanding the day set in with heavy rain, which continued throughout, the number of animals exhibited was greater than ever witnessed on a similar occasion in that County. The character of the different varieties of Stock brought for competition, was such as to evince that increased attention has of late years been bestowed by our brother farmers in that section of the Island upon the improvement of Horses, Cattle, and Sheep.

A Ploughing Match was held on the same day, and despite the weather, was contested with spirit; and, in the opinion of the Judges, displayed a marked improvement in this important branch of Agriculture, very much to the credit of the competitors, who were all young men.

In King's County, the weather was also very unpropitious; but nevertheless, the attendance was good, and the quality of the Stock exhibited of a superior description to any shown in former years; a circumstance to be attributed to the recent introduction into the Country of pure bred animals, by several spirited individuals.

The Ploughing Match in this County, came off on the 30th September; the work was well performed, and superior to what has been witnessed on former occasions.

The Queen's County Cattle Show was held on the 14th September. Although some fine animals were exhibited, the number was smaller than that of the preceding year. The Lambs were decidedly inferior; but two causes may be assigned for their being so; first, from the great drought of last summer, the lambs in general, were smaller in September than usual; and secondly, the flocks of the best breeders, had, as on the previous year, been culled by purchasers from the neighbouring Colonies. In pursuance of the suggestions in the Report of 1852, your Committee were desirous of purchasing up a number of fine Ram Lambs for distribution among their Branches and Depots; but were disappointed. Six only were procured, and those not such as could have been desired, in consequence of the best having been, as already stated, secured by foreign purchasers. To prevent its recurrence, your Committee would recommend, that competent persons should be appointed to visit the best flocks about the end of August, and make selections for the Society. Your Committee fear the object of the Society in distributing young animals through the country is frequently defeated by the treatement they receive from their purchasers. A Lamb should never be allowed to serve Ewes before he is Twelve months old; and the young animal requires better food and more care during the first winter than at any subsequent period; but both these principles are frequently violated; the lamb is made to serve in the autumn when he is only Six months old, and receives but ordinary food and little care during the winter, and consequently turns out a stunted inferior animal.

Your Committee, would therefore suggest, that instead of the present plan, the breeders should be induced to keep the Tup lambs, so to be selected for the Society, over the first winter, by giving them £3 to £5 a-head for them at the ensuing September Show. The animals, having then attained maturity, would go into the country fit for use and able to stand the careless treatment many of them are destined to receive.

This course would cost more money, but the great object of the Society being to conduct its operations so as to produce the most benefical results to the country at large, the expense (when within its means), should ever form a secondary consideration.

The draft Horses exhibited at this Show, were also inferior; indeed, for the last two years a decided falling off in the young horses has been discernible; attributable, no doubt, to the length of time, that previous to last season, had elapsed since any importation of heavy seed horses had been made. Our soil and climate are peculiarly adapted for the breeding of Horses, and your Committee are of opinion, it will be found a most profitable branch of agricultural economy. Mr. Youatt says,

"The farmer should prefer a mare to a gelding, both for riding and driving; he will get a great deal more work out of her. There can be no doubt, that taken bulk for bulk, a mare is stronger and more lasting than a gelding; in addition to this, he has her to breed from. She need not be idle while she is breeding, she may be worked at all ordinary farm-work, almost to the period of her foaling, with benefit rather than otherwise; nor is there occasion, that much of her time should be lost even while she is suckling."

Every farmer should recollect this, and not be tempted by a high price to part with a good brood mare.

While on this topic, your Committee would allude to the great want of Stud Horses at present experienced in most parts of the Island; several of the best of our Island-bred Stallions were last summer exported; and with the exception of the three recently imported, there is now scarcely a good stallion of heavy breed on the Island. Impressed with these considerations, your Committee have petitioned the Legislature for a grant to enable the Society to import six Clydesdale or other draft Seed Horses. Should the application (as your Committee feel confident it will), meet with the attention, which their representations on behalf of the agriculturists have ever received from the Legislature, your Committee hope to have them out in time for the ensuing season.

Your Committee think they erred in directing that some of the Horses imported last year, should be procured in England and some in Scotland; inasmuch as the extent of country travelled over to select them and the transport of the animals from the different places to the port of shipment, materially increased the expense. Should a compliance with their memorial enable them to repeat the importation this spring, profiting by experience, they purpose to purchase them all about the district of the Clyde, from which large vessels usually sail for the Gulf Ports, whereby time and expence of travelling will be saved, and small cost incurred in conveying them to the place of embarkation.

As many different opinions are expressed as to the description of horse best adapted for us, your Committee trust the following quotation from Mr. Youatt, one of the best authors on "The Horse," may not be deemed out of place;

"The Clydesdale is a good kind of draft horse; is larger than the Suffolk, and has a better head, a longer neck, a lighter carcase, and deeper legs; he is strong, hardy, pulling true and rarely restive."

Professor Low, says,

"The Clydesdale horse is usually sixteen hands high. They are longer in the body than the English Black Horse, and less weight, compact and muscular; but *they step out more freely and have a more useful action for ordinary labour*. They draw steadily, and are usually free from vice. The *long stride*, characteristic of the breed, is partly the result of confirmation and partly of habit and training; but however produced, it adds greatly to the usefulness of the Horse, both on the road and in the fields. No such loads are known to be drawn at the same pace by any horses in the kingdom, as in the single horse-carts of Carriers and others in the West of Scotland."

Your Committee have purchased and distributed Eleven Bull Calves of Durham, Ayrshire and Gallway breeds, during the past year, supplying them, as usual, at one half their cost. They would here repeat the advice given in the Report of 1852, that Farmers, in selecting Bull Calves, should procure those of pure Durham, Aryshire, Gallway, or Angus breed, as the first cross from a pure bred animal generally makes a superior beast, while a second cross is apt to prove inferior.

Before quitting the subject of Stock, your Committee wish to call attention to one of the provisions of the Act incorporating the Society, which they think requires amendment. The expense attending the importation of Stock from Great Britain is such, that should the Society persevere in importing considerable numbers for distribution through the country, its finances will be so seriously affected, as to cripple its operations in other branches of equal importance. As an example of this, they would refer to the case of the nine Rams ordered last summer, previously alluded to, the loss on which was £146. Had they all arrived in safety, the three sold in Queen's County would probably have realized about £20, whilst the six sold in the other two Counties would have brought about £15, the Society thus incurring a loss of upwards of £100 on these nine animals. By importing one very superior Ram and six Ewes of Leicester breed, and a like number of the Southdown and Cotswold breeds, and continuing the importation of a Ram of each breed every two years, not for sale, but to remain the property of the Society, and placing each distinct breed in the hands of careful persons near Charlottetown, under the supervision of your Committee, and allowing the keepers of them £3 a head for the Ram lambs after they had become shearling Tups, not only would an immense saving in the present outlay be effected, but the Society would, in a short time, be enabled to distribute a much larger number of Tups, equal in all respects to those now imported, through the country, with the advantage of being acclimated, and, therefore, better able to stand the climate. Under the 9th section of the Act which directs that all animals imported shall be equally divided between the three Counties, it is doubtful whether the Societiy has power to do this. Your Committee by no means desire any alteration of this provision, which would enable it to deprive the several Counties of their equal share of the Stock; on the contrary, their desire is to supply them with a larger number than they are now able to do. By providing that the male produce of the Stock imported should be equally distributed among the respective Countries, this would be secured. Your Committee, therefore, recommend that an application be made to the Legislature to amend the Act, so as to permit the Society to retain imported Stock in its own possession for the purposes above mentioned, compelling it, as at present, to divide equally all the male progeny of such Stocks among the three counties.

The customery Annual Exhibition of the Industrial Manufactures and Agriculture Productions of the Island, was held in the Temperance Hall Charlottetown, on Wednesday, the 2d day of November last, and your Committee were pleased to observe, from the number and quality of the various descriptions of domestic manufactures, as well as the vegetables and fruits exhibited, that the object which the Socety had in view, in establishing these Shows, is being satisfactorily carried out, and a spirit of emulation excited, the results of which are a marked improvement in the style and quality of the manufactures brought for competition They must, however, at the same time, express their regret that the Mills in this Island are again found unable to complete with some in the neighbouring Province, in the finishing of the Cloth, a defeat, which they trust, ere long, to see removed.

The Branch Societies established at Georgetown and St. Peter's, having found it difficult to sustain themselves, have been converted into Depots. Those at Cascumpeque, St. Eleanor's and Tryon are still in operation. The two former are working well, and display a zeal and spirit in the cause which must prove highly beneficial to their districts, and is well worthy the imitation of others. The Tryon Branch, your Committee regret to state, has not succeeded so well, they fear that party feeling has been allowed to introduce its baneful influence amongst its members. From the number of intelligent and good farmers in that section of the country, there is no district where a Society ought to flourish better. It is to be hoped that the good sense of the people will enable this Branch yet to triumph over those causes, which, in spite of all the pains bestowed by your Committee have hitherto retarded its success.

The Treasurer's Accounts are annexed to the Report, and will be submitted to the meeting.

	£	s.	d.
It will appear that the Subscriptions paid up during the past year amount to - -	£174	10	0
Amount received of Legislature Grant,	300	0	0
The Expenditure has been—			
Portion of Government Allowance to each of the Branches £20, - -	£60	0	0
Loss on Rams imported, -	146	10	7½
Paid proportion cost of Bull, Calves, Ram Lambs, &c., distributed through the country,	26	17	3
Secretary's Salary, Store Rent, and other incidental expences, -	152	10	7
Cost of Articles sent to New York Exhibition,	53	10	5
Premiums at Cattle Shows, &c., &c.,	209	17	7½

Your Committee were gratified to learn, from the Lieutenant Governor's speech at the opening of the Legislature, that a new School Visitor is prepare to carry out the views of the Society, by lecturing on Agricultural Chemistry throughout the different sections of the country, and hope soon to receive notice from Mr. Stark that he is ready to enter on this most important part of his duties. The employment of this gentleman in this capacity will entail a new charge of £100 per annum on the Society, a heavy expenditure out of its limited means, but nothing in comparison with the permanent and future benefits which an active, diligent and skilful discharge of his duties will confer on our agricultural population. The enlightened spirit of the present age has discovered the absurdity of supposing education to consist in a mere knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic, the dead languages, and mathematics, without endeavoring to store the mind of the youth with knowledge adapted to the avocations of after life. Hence, in Germany, France, the United States, Canada, and all agricultural countries, agricultural colleges and state agricultural schools are springing up, and a general movement towards making agricultural instruction a part of the ordinary school education, is taking place. All who take a pride in the country of their birth or adoption must feel pleased that (owing to the suggestion and exertions of your Society) Prince Edward Island is, in this respect, not behind the spirit of the age. We would earnestly recommend all to profit by Mr. Stark's labours, not only by attending his lectures, but by forming Farmer's Clubs in every school district, the members of which, meeting once a fortnight, or oftener, to discuss agricultural topics and the subject of the last lecture thereby impressing it more strongly on their minds, and preparing themselves to put such questions to the lecturer on his next appearance, as would draw from him explanations of anything in the previous lecture they had not clearly understood. Let it be remembered that no man is too old to learn, and that by evincing an interest in the matter they will not only improve themselves, but instil a desire for improvement into their children.

Two other topics remain to be noticed: the state of our Market House, and the establishment of a Model Farm.

A stranger on entering the Square, and comparing our costly Colonial Building with the Market House, must feel surprised that the representatives of a purely agricultural people should provide such splendid accomdation for themselves, and leave the sledges of their constituents to be preyed upon by hungry cows, and themselves, their wives and daughters, to market their produce without accommodation or shelter, exposed to drenching rains and inclement blasts. In short, our Market House is a disgrace both to the Island and its capital, and seems likely to continue so, unless some move is made in the matter; and as the attention of your Committee is frequently called to the subject, they deem apology unnecessary in venturing to suggest the outline of a plan for a new one:

The present Post Office might be made the north wing of a building to extend towards Stamper's corner, where another building of similar architecture, forming the south wing, would make an excellent agricultural Warehouse for the Society. The space between would afford ample market accommodation. The rear of the building should, like Market Houses in other places, have a colonade, under which carts could be backed against a platform; thus not only would the market people be comfortably sheltered, but the contents of their carts also be protected from the weather. A space further back of sufficient size should be enclosed within which carts or sleds might be drawn up. A large cellar, extending under the whole of the building would form an excellent Bonded Warehouse for the Excise department, while the whole space above the market could be converted into a Town Hall, offording ample room for Public Meetings, Agricultural Shows, and Industrial Exhibitions, &c., which is much required. Such is a short but imperfect outline of what your Committee consider the market accommodations for the farming population of this Island should be. The whole country is equally interested in it; for though persons at a distance resort to it less frequently than those in the vicinity of the town, they would be equally sensible of its comforts, and facilitated in the disposal of their produce, by having their sleds secured against pilfering cattle, in a place of such resort as would ensure purchasers, without their hawking the town in search of them. Your Committee trust the Government and Legislature will take this matter in hand, and not allow the present Session to pass without providing means for erecting a Market House, useful to the farmers and creditable to the country; but should they decline to do so, your Committee are of opinion that a Joint Stock Company could be formed, who, if the ground were conceded, would carry some such plan as that above stated into execution.

In alluding to the establishment of a Model Farm, your Committee do not desire immediate action respecting it, deeming it more advisable to foreshadow a proposition involving a considerable outlay of public money, so that its importance being generally understood, it may, when brought forward, meet the acceptance which its too hasty proposol might prevent. Their suggestion is this: that a farm of two hundred acres of land in the vicinity of Charlottetown should be purchased by Government, as a Model Farm; that a suitable building be erected thereon for accomodating the manager and his family, and servants, and, at least, twelve pupils, as boarders, with laboratory and lecture room; a barn with cattle byres, sheep houses, pig styes, &c., provided with tanks for liquid manure, and all appliances, and implements necessary for conducting farm operations on the most scientific system—the Agricultural Society furnishing imported cattle, sheep and pigs as a foundation for the breeding stock. The establishment thus provided and equipped should be conducted with a view to the following results:—

First, As a model open to the examination of all agriculturists, when, by observing the advantages of an improved system of farming, they might be induced to adopt and facilitate in practising it themselves.

Secondly, As an institution where young men could enter as pupils, and by taking part in the ordinary operations of the farm, as well as by attending the daily lectures, would be instructed both in practical and scientific agriculture, and where schoolmasters also might qualify themselves as to instruction in the rudiments of agricultural chemistry.

Thirdly, For ascertaining the crops, rotations and systems of husbandry best adapted to our soil and climate, by carefully conducted experiments, and publishing the results for general information.

Fourthly, For the breeding of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs, to be supplied to the Agricultural Society, fair prices for distribution through the country, thereby saving the great expense of constantly making numerous fresh importations.

The successful working of the institution would much depend on the person appointed to control it. He should be an energetic, active man, thorougly acquainted with Geology and Agricultural Chemistry—fond of investigating causes, and perfectly conversant with the practical operations of husbandry in all its branches. He should be apt in communicating instruction, and able to speak with ease and clearness in explanation. In addition to all, he should love his profession, and be enthusiastic in his mission. A salary of £400 per annum, with perhaps some allowances from the farm, would be the lowest for which the services of such a man could be obtained.