

HOUSE.....No. 23.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Feb. 8, 1837.

The Committee on Agriculture, to whom was referred the order introduced into the House January 18th, inquiring "the expediency of providing for an agricultural survey of the several counties in the state," have had that subject under careful and deliberate consideration, and ask leave to

REPORT:

That, in the prosecution of any kind of business, success essentially depends upon an acquaintance with well established facts: this is emphatically true of agriculture, the most practical of all the arts, the source of human subsistence, the foundation of all industry, and the basis of national wealth and independence.

The Committee think that agriculture in this state is in comparatively an inferior condition: that it has not kept pace with improvements in the other arts, and that the cultivation of the soil is far from being as well direct-

ed and profitable as it may be rendered ; that great improvements in agricultural implements and machinery might be advantageously adopted, and that many products, now unknown in many sections of the state, might be successfully cultivated. There are many improvements in husbandry and rural economy, which, if generally known, would diminish the labor and cost of cultivation, and increase the amount and value of the crops. Farmers are confined by their business and their habits to their homes. Agricultural knowledge and improvements travel slowly, while improvements in the other arts are rapidly and extensively promulgated. Farmers are not fond of experiments : they distrust innovations ; they want well authenticated facts, stated in a plain and concise manner. Such facts it is supposed, an agricultural survey will furnish : if made by a practical and experienced farmer, under the auspices of the state, it will command the attention and deserve the confidence of the agricultural portion of the community. The nature and capacities of the soil will be developed, the stock of knowledge will be augmented, improvements, made in different sections of the state will be promulgated, and more extensively practised ; farmers will know what cannot, as well as what can be done, the resources of the Commonwealth will be better ascertained and appreciated, and the public will be furnished with many valuable facts in the statistics of the state now altogether inaccessible. In saying that there is now a profound ignorance of our agricultural condition, resources and capacities, we do not make too bold an assertion.

The Committee believe that, with proper management and suitable encouragement ; our own soil, much as it has been despised, is capable of affording in abundance, all the

articles of farm produce which are consumed within the limits of the state ; nay more, that a large surplus might be furnished for exportation. But it is a fact much to be regretted, that immense quantities of indian corn, rye, barley, oats, *hay*, and, (not to enumerate wheat) many other products which were formerly reckoned among the staples of the Commonwealth, are now imported from other states and even from Europe. And, now while bread, the very staff of life, is selling in Paris for two cents per pound, and in London for three cents, in good old Massachusetts, which used to boast of her agricultural prosperity, bread is worth seven cents per pound. The price of land capable of cultivation has not increased with the growing value of other articles ; enterprising young men are every year leaving, though reluctantly, their native vallies and hill sides, and seeking more fertile soils or more lucrative employment ; and men prefer for themselves and their children, almost any other business to that most natual, healthy, and best of employments, the cultivation of the earth. Such facts appear to the Committee to demand of the Legislature careful consideration and vigorous action.

Farmers generally mingle little with the world ; there are few periodicals devoted to their use ; their reading is not extensive, and there are but few objects beyond their homes and firesides which deeply interest them. They want something to excite their energies, to awaken inquiry, and to give a direction to their industry. All this, it is believed, an agricultural survey will accomplish. A public agent, skilful, shrewd, experienced as he should be, cannot go among the farmers of the State without producing good effects ; he would excite interest, and communicate, while collecting knowledge ; his intercourse

would be free and unrestrained ; his visits would be welcome, and followed by the happiest consequences.

Agricultural surveys have been made in England, Scotland, France and Flanders ; they have been attended with great success ; distinguished improvements have invariably followed them. Indeed, it has been supposed that in those countries, agricultural surveys have contributed more than any thing else to the perfection of the art. The State of New York, with a noble liberality, has appropriated \$10,000 in a single year, to the dissemination of agricultural knowledge among her people. Shall Massachusetts, which has been wont to take the lead in patriotic and liberal enterprizes, be distanced in the course ? Will she now refuse to give encouragement to the yeomanry, whose strong claims on her liberality she has always admitted ?

The geological survey has been very acceptable to the people ; it is alike creditable to the industry and science of the agent who accomplished, and to the liberality of the State which authorized it. But an agricultural survey, if successfully executed, will be productive of vastly greater, more extensive and valuable results. The expense of the survey will not be immoderate, but the benefits which may be hoped from it are incalculable.

The Committee, although fully satisfied and unanimous in opinion that a survey should be made, do not rely solely on their own judgment. Many practical and experienced farmers have appeared before them and expressed a strong conviction that the measure will promote not only the agricultural interest, but the general welfare.

The Committee are of opinion, that the survey should be made by some competent agent, appointed by the Governor and Council, who should be a practical and ex-

perienced farmer ; that the agent should visit the principal farms in every town, and that he should make his investigations as exact and as much in detail as possible.

His inquiries should embrace :

The nature and capacities of the soil ;

The situation and climate ;

The crops and methods of cultivation ;

The average product per acre ;

The cost of cultivation ;

The price of labor and board ;

The kind of ploughs and other implements of husbandry ;

The varieties of live stock, and methods of feeding ;

The manures used and attainable, and mode of application and general effects ;

The comparative profits of different branches of husbandry ;

The general improvements of which they are susceptible ;

It should embrace, also,

The obtaining models of valuable agricultural machines and implements ;

The collection of valuable seeds of new and approved varieties of fruits and plants ;

Sample of silk, with particular accounts of mulberry plantations ;

Samples of wool, quantity grown, and accounts of improved flocks of sheep ;

These models, seeds and samples should be deposited in some place generally accessible ;

The survey should extend to the subject of forest trees, timber trees and wood land ;

Valuable botanical productions, and the condition of horticulture ;

To the size, approved construction and materials of farm buildings ;

Irrigation and the flooding of land ;

The survey should also embrace, as intimately connected with its agricultural prosperity ;

The number and kind of manufactories ;

The number of persons employed ;

The articles and amount manufactured ;

The quantity of agricultural products imported and exported.

And every subject connected with the agricultural condition of the State, the knowledge of which may have a tendency to promote its welfare, to develop its resources, and to stimulate its improvement.

The Committee, deeply impressed with the necessity and practicability of the survey, and fully satisfied of the important and permanent advantages which will result from it, respectfully submit the following Resolve.

For the Committee.

DANIEL P. KING.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred
and Thirty-Seven.

RESOLVE

Providing for an Agricultural Survey of the State.

Resolved, That His Excellency the Governor, by and with the advice of the Council, be, and he hereby is, authorized and requested to appoint some suitable and competent person, whose duty it shall be, under the direction of His Excellency the Governor, to make an agricultural survey of the Commonwealth, collect accurate information of the state and condition of its agriculture, and every subject connected with it; point out the means of improvement, and make a detailed report thereof, with as much exactness as circumstances will admit.

Resolved, That a summary of such survey and examination shall be furnished to His Excellency the Governor every six months, until the whole shall be completed; and at at such other time, and times, as shall be required; to be published in such way and manner as he, with the

advice of the Council, shall deem to be expedient and useful; and he is authorized to draw his warrants, from time to time, upon the treasury, for such sums as may be necessary to defray the expenses of said survey, and to enable the person, so appointed, to proceed in the execution of the duties that shall be required of him; and to pay the same to him, not exceeding the sum of two thousand five hundred dollars per annum.