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Annual report of the executive committee of the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, for the year 1857. 1857

Wisconsin State Agricultural Society

Madison, Wisconsin: Atwood and Rublee, Printers, 1857

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ANNUAL REPORT

DUPLICATE

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE

**WISCONSIN STATE AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY,**

FOR THE YEAR 1857.

**MADISON
ATWOOD & RUBLEE, PRINTERS.
1858.**

ANNUAL REPORT

RECEIVED
LIBRARY OF THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MADISON WISCONSIN

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE

WISCONSIN STATE AGRICULTURAL

SOCIETY.

FOR THE YEAR 1887.

MADISON
ATWOOD & RUDLER PRINTERS
1887.

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FOR THE YEAR 1857.

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1857.

ground, and will spring up and bear an hundred fold of highly improved and useful products, the Society thereby has abundant resources. The leading article of distribution—the Chinese Sugar Cane—was distributed from our rooms to the extent of nearly ten thousand packages, into every part of the State. We learn that it has been very generally planted, and in the great majority of cases, it has given the fruit of the entire crop, except in the matter of ripening its seed, in which it has generally failed, although originally and wholly owing to the extraordinary backwardness of the season. Some few experimenters have demonstrated, however, that the seed might have

REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 1857.

To His EXCELLENCY ALEXANDER W. RANDALL, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF WISCONSIN:

SIR:—In compliance with the requirements of law, the Executive Committee of the State Agricultural Society would respectfully REPORT,—That during the past year of 1857, the State Agricultural Society has, through its proper channels of action, been pursuing its accustomed course, and discharging to the best of its ability and means, its various duties and responsibilities.

As hitherto, the field of useful labor that has seemed to present itself for the consideration and action of the Society, has been in no degree diminished; but, from year to year, seems to widen and deepen in its demands. In view of these facts, the Society has aimed to do more than merely to provide for and hold an Annual Fair. Ample pains have been taken, through agricultural Journals and otherwise, to arouse and elevate the ambition and spirit of all classes, to adopt more system and care in what they do, to cultivate better, to be more careful in the selection of seed; and for the purpose of aiding in this highly important work on the part of the Society, seeds and cuttings, particularly the former, have been purchased and distributed to a large extent, and generally of very choice descriptions; all in all, probably not less than twenty thousand packages, during the past year. That some of them have fallen upon good

ground, and will spring up and bear an hundred fold of highly improved and useful products, the Society already has abundant assurance. The leading article of distribution—the Chinese Sugar Cane—was distributed from our rooms to the extent of nearly ten thousand packages, into every part of the State. We learn that it has been very generally planted, and in the great majority of cases, grown to the entire satisfaction of the cultivators, except in the matter of ripening its seed, in which it has generally failed, although obviously and wholly owing to the extraordinary backwardness of the season. Some few experimentalists have demonstrated, however, that the seed might have been ripened generally, even the past season, by simply planting that portion intended for seed more open to the sun, and suckering it out to but few stalks in a hill. Several who pursued this course inform us that they fully ripened their seed. But the rich saccharine properties of the cane have been fully demonstrated to every one who has grown a hill of it the past season. The fact of its having been so widely distributed and advertised in this manner, to every neighborhood, will undoubtedly lead to its being extensively and profitably cultivated the present season. In fact, we doubt not but that the extra impetus given to this subject alone, through the aid of this Society, will eventuate in more advantage to the State than the Society has ever yet been expense to it, since its organization.

Not wishing to confine its labors wholly to the more masculine and substantial interests, to the neglect of the more refining and tasteful, the Society has, among other things, distributed some thousands of packages of flower seeds, mainly of new and choice varieties; that they have proved a profitable and cheap embellishment to many a wayside cottage and happy home, can hardly be doubted.

In the way of cuttings, considerable quantities of the German Osier Willow have been distributed, not so much from the Society's having any extraordinary faith in its probable profitable cultivation in our State, as in obedience to a strong desire on the part of many to experiment in its cultivation. Its cultivation, both for home use and exportation to eastern cities, may prove important as our State gets older.

Prompted by a desire to improve still further, if possible, in the cultivation of our great staple, wheat, by the introduction of the best possible kinds of seed, the Society despatched an experienced and sagacious practical farmer, (Hon. David Williams, of Walworth county), to Canada, during their wheat harvest, with instructions to examine their different kinds and qualities of wheat, grown upon their various soils and under various circumstances; and to report his views upon the advisability of its introduction, as seed, among our farmers. The gentleman performed his mission in a highly satisfactory manner, and duly reported its results, which have been spread before the people, and will undoubtedly lead to the obtainment of new and valuable seed.

Early and ample pains were taken, on the part of the Society, for the holding of its Annual Fair; and in view of the extensive hotel accommodations, convenient fair grounds, railroad approaches, and promising public spirit of the citizens of Janesville, that place was settled upon for the purpose. In anticipation of a large turn out, not only among our own people, but also from the neighboring State of Illinois, (unto whom we wished to make a creditable show), very ample, and somewhat expensive, preparations were made for the occasion; providing not only for the show of the more substantial features of agricultural production, but also for the more attractive novelties sometimes employed to embellish such occasions.

As was anticipated, the occasion and the outlay met with a fair and full response on the part of the people, both exhibitors and spectators. The entries were considerably larger than at any previous fair, and embraced many animals, articles, and products that are not surpassed in quality in the United States. Every department of the fair, Animal, Agricultural, Horticultural, Floral, Mechanical and Miscellaneous, was well filled, and, altogether, displayed a striking evidence of the progress of our young State. How much of this progress and improvement is attributable to the teachings and effects of the State and county fairs, we will leave for the observing and philosophic to determine.

Owing to the occurrence of a severe autumnal storm during the last two, and principal days of the fair, the attendance of the people, as well as the receipts, were very materially diminished; and but for the State appropriation to fall back upon, the Society, notwithstanding all the careful foresight in its power, would have been, in consequence of the aforesaid misadventure, far behind, pecuniarily, and obliged to have left scores of *little bills* unpaid, until time and good luck afforded them the means. All in all, the fair was a decided success over any of its predecessors, notwithstanding the uncongenial weather; and notwithstanding a very illiberal and unaccommodating spirit manifested by one of the principal railroads of the State, to wit: the La Crosse and Milwaukee. Their utter refusal to carry stock and articles for exhibition, short of *full fare price, and general disposition to be unobliging*, so disgusted the great northeastern and central counties, that they were scarcely represented at the fair. It is the sincere hope of your humble servants, that this pampered and spoiled child of misplaced State liberality, will, when its corruption fund emissaries come around the capital the present winter, asking for new favors, be met with the same spirit with which they met the poor farmers who have mortgaged their farms to build, not only their their road, but fine palaces, also, for the gentlemen who have (mis) managed it. Of all companies in the State, they were the last who should thus have given the cold shoulder to the farmers of the State.

But notwithstanding the foregoing drawbacks, the society has been able to close up its pecuniary affairs for the past year in a creditable and satisfactory manner to all concerned, and with a small balance in the treasury, as will be seen by reference to the financial report of the Secretary, at the close of this communication. With a full belief, on their part, that the Society is now placed upon a firm foundation, and more fully grounded in the hearts and approving good will of the masses of the people, than ever before. The undersigned would commend its various interest to your kind care and consideration; and they do so with a full faith that the cause of agriculture, nor agricultural associations, will not be likely to retrograde during your administration.

But, with us, we feel assured that you will duly appreciate the fact that the great principle and purpose underlying all these associations, public displays, and premium lists, is to prove to labor that of its own production, there is abundant material to please the fancy and satisfy ambition; and by bringing them together, combined and arranged, to afford a noble opportunity for study to the student, and a splendid and profitable holiday to the idle. For this reason the Society seeks to please all, for it is profitable for all to come. No person can leave an agricultural exhibition as ignorant as he came. Its annual shows give to all an opportunity to study the lesson of labor, which, perhaps, but one has properly illustrated.

To inaugurate annually a great industrial gathering, where the knowledge of one may be spread over the minds of many—a gathering where each may not only prove to himself his own, "but mark his neighbors faults and follies,"—where the incrustation of old habits may be broken up and allowed for new ideas, proving to each that the end of knowledge is not yet reached, nor the opportunity of learning lost—an annual gathering where the industry and skill of the State may meet and recite to all the years before, and the success or failure of its efforts to solve that portion of the great industrial problem embraced within the field of its labor. In theory each and all these several steps of progress might be considered as so many evidences of our progress in the primal art of arts. But practically, it is not true, for the reason that most of these evidences of success are the results of an accidental combination of circumstances—that is, most of the evidences are not the result of the practical application of known and well established principles of agricultural science, but too often the accidental result of a thoughtless combination of forces, thrown together without design, thus in effect, teaching nothing conclusively; consequently a repetition almost invariably proves a failure. Improvements in agriculture are no doubt being made; but the laws of nature, upon which all successes are based, are most of them too dimly seen to conduct to a successful repetition. Consequently we are, as agriculturists, constantly falling back from each seeming advance—

WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE.

ment, not, perhaps, completely, but partially, at every step, for the reason that we have but slight foot-hold upon those laws of nature upon which success depends. Yet all these successes and failures, as shown in the annual exhibitions of the Society, tend to teach them; but in such a qualified, questionable, and fragmentary manner, that by far the greater part is useless. Had the Society a Farm School, where the philosophy of practice and the science of schools might mingle and perfect each other—where all that is proved in practical labor, and all that is true in scholastic science, could be blended in one concrete mass, affording a substantial foundation for the more elevated up-building of the industrial labor of the State—a farm school within whose ample fields and halls the State Society might hold its annual Fairs, thus giving to each laborer an opportunity to prove or disprove the correctness of his theory or practice—where the practical labor of the State could compare the results of its toil with the more pretentious ones of the school—a point where each isolated fact could be concentrated, combined with others and made practical—where the progress of labor could be noted, the principles upon which it depends developed, and thus substantial advancement secured, and thus the school be as the Mistress of Labor and the Master of Science. The need of labor is too great to be profitably mocked with here a bone and there a crust—its wants too great to be satisfied with such fostering care as may be found in a *lean-to* of some overshadowing edifice. The winds and tides no longer command commerce, because commerce concentrates *capital*, and a half million experiment is readily made, and commerce is finally eminently successful. But agriculture diffuses wealth, while affording to all other pursuits the means of concentration; thus labor not unfrequently appears as a petitioner for a moiety of that which its own munificence has bestowed.

The greatest wealth of the State consists, first, in the moral and political purity, and the intellectual culture of its inhabitants. Secondly, in the productive character of its industrial pursuits, and the fertility of its soil. Comparatively productive as our agricultural labor no doubt is, yet, in most cases, it is so

at the expense of the means of subsistence of the next or succeeding generations. Thus by our general want of thorough and sufficient agricultural knowledge, we are rapidly squandering the original munificent gift of the Great Benefactor. This knowledge has much of it to be created, and more to be concentrated and made effective.

The fostering care of State and National governments have made munificent provisions for general education; yet for the education which this State's great agricultural interest require, no provisions are made. For these reasons we respectfully ask your Excellency to recommend the Legislature to make suitable provisions for the founding of an Agricultural College, in connection with an ample Experimental Farm, and their endowment with sufficient means to secure their effective and practical operation, either by a grant of a portion of the swamp lands belonging to the State, or by memorial to Congress for a special grant of lands for that purpose.

The present time seems peculiarly appropriate for such a movement, especially for memorializing Congress, inasmuch as it will be in harmony with the action of many other of the Agricultural States, who are now urging similar claims upon their attention. An additional voice from the *Great Northwest* will deepen the tone and strengthen the effort, and undoubtedly eventuate in ultimate success.

And what is more reasonable or proper than that at least a little fraction of the wide and almost unlimited public domain of this and other States, should be assigned and devoted to a more thorough and systematic development of the great scientific principles and practical action on which every thing like eminent agricultural success must rest. The liberal donation to Railroad Companies, (which are but the servants and carriers of the tillers of the soil), would seem to indicate at least the equal propriety of making every needful provision for the fullest development of this great primary interest, on which not only Railroads, but Governments, and all subordinate interests essentially, constantly, and forever depend.

Without this Agricultural College and Experimental Farm,

five years will not elapse before some of our sons, who would be first in their great calling, will be crossing over to Michigan to her already promising institution, to avail themselves of that knowledge, which, for want of a proper foresight and enterprize, has not been secured and provided for them at home. Let us not, from our supineness now at the proper time, be thus dependent then.

The law of the last session of the Legislature, passed in conformity with a request in our last annual report, for the collection, on the part of the several town Assessors, of Agricultural and Mineral statistics, seems to have been but partially complied with, and consequently the report of the Secretary of State on that subject is necessarily incomplete and somewhat imperfect. Still, what there is of it is highly valuable, and shows conclusively how valuable a perfect work of the kind would be; showing at once, and annually, the exact agricultural, mineral, and business condition and production of each county in the State. It is almost as valuable information to the observant and intelligent citizen, as are the merchant's account books to him, in the way of explaining and telling him how his matters stand.

The law is of indispensable value, and with some slight amendments, which will be duly and seasonably presented by its friends, will undoubtedly remain a fixed feature upon our statute books.

As in our last year's report, we again call attention to the policy and necessity of some law for the protection and encouragement of sheep husbandry and wool growing, which would necessarily involve a law for the restricting and thinning out of dogs, which, (as is natural in new countries), have become a great nuisance and drawback upon our annual incomes and aggregate receipts from this important and natural source of prosperity. It is confidently believed that some judicious law might be enacted that would, in due time, abate the evil without much *growling*, and eventuate in substituting numerous flocks of fine woolled sheep, with their yearly golden fleeces and fat, savory mutton, in place of our present *barking cur-dog* population. Such an exchange is, in the opinion of the undersigned, devoutly to be wished and earnestly prayed for.

Hoping that your Excellency will have the kindness to submit such of our suggestions to the Legislature as may, in your judgment, be deemed proper,

We remain, very truly,

Your obedient servants,

In behalf of the Executive Committee, { D. J. POWERS,
DAVID WILLIAMS.

STATEMENT

OF THE FISCAL AFFAIRS OF THE WISCONSIN STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DEC. 31, 1857.

INCOME.

To balance on hand, December 31, 1857,	\$ 968 62
" of seed and outstanding premium	
fund not used, - - - -	379 80
To Standing Appropriation, - - - -	3000 00
From Annual and Life Members, - - - -	1903 00
To nett Receipts of State Fair besides mem-	
ber's tickets, - - - -	2853 21
	<hr/>
	\$8804 63

EXPENDITURES.

By Premiums and cost of Diplomas awarded	
for 1857, - - - -	\$2701 11
By purchase of Seeds, Cuttings, &c., - - - -	485 20
Salary of Secretary, - - - -	1000 00
By Office rent and Incidental Expenses, - - - -	262 18
By Express charges, \$38,71, Postage, \$55,71, - - - -	94 42
By Bill paid at State Fair, - - - -	2383 09
By Miscellaneous bills for the year, - - - -	1676 10
By Cash to balance, - - - -	502 53
	<hr/>
	\$8804 63

Bills and vouchers for all the above items, are on file in this office, and open to examination.

GEORGE O. TIFFANY, *Secretary.*

STATE AGRICULTURAL ROOMS,
Madison, December 31, 1857.

D. J. POWERS
DAVID WILLIAMS

STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DEC. 31, 1857.

INCOME.

To balance on hand, December 31, 1857.	\$ 988 63
of seed and outstanding premiums	
fund not used.	379 80
To Standing Appropriation.	3000 00
From Annual and Life Members.	1908 00
To net Receipts of State Fair besides mem- ber's tickets.	2823 21
	<hr/> \$2804 63

EXPENDITURES.

By Premiums and cost of Diplomas awarded for 1857.	\$2701 11
By purchase of Seeds, Cuttings, &c.	485 20
Salary of Secretary.	1000 00
By Office rent and incidental Expenses.	202 18
By Express charges, \$38.71, Postage, \$25.71.	64 42
By Bill paid at State Fair.	2322 09
By Miscellaneous bills for the year.	1676 10
By Cash to balance.	502 53
	<hr/> \$2804 63



