

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

BONAVENTURE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY
1846

Though the reign of King George III of England is associated, most often, with the American Revolution and the arrival of the Loyalists in Gaspesia, it is not as well known for the agricultural revolution that transformed farming in Britain and Europe. Indeed, King George III delighted in being called "Farmer George" and took great personal interest in the model farm that he established at Windsor.

The British Governors of Québec in the early 19th century sought to promote agriculture and from the 1820's onward the Québec Legislature passed a series of Agriculture Acts and encouraged the work of County Agricultural Societies.

It is against this background that GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY recalls the REPORT OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF THE COUNTY OF BONAVENTURE for the year 1846.

KEN ANNETT

REPORT OF THE BONAVENTURE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

New Carlisle,
24 March, 1846.

In compliance with the fifth section of the Provincial Statute, the eighth of Victoria, chapter fifty-three, the undersigned as President of the Agricultural Society of the County of Bonaventure in the District of Gaspé, respectfully submits this, his first Report to the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of Canada*

* [Note - The Act of Union of 1841 had united Upper and Lower Canada.]

The Legislature having by that Act munificently granted the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds currency to each of the Counties of Canada East, whose subscriptions would, for that purpose, amount to fifty pounds currency, and three times the amount so subscribed, if under that sum, induced the better informed portion of this County to take advantage of a measure so well calculated to forward the improvement of this portion of the Province, by calling a meeting of the Landholders to assemble on the 24th day of June last, due notice having previously been given as required by law.

That meeting was held at the Court Hall at New Carlisle, when the senior magistrate present took the Chair; a subscription list was submitted and the subscribers elected the following gentlemen Officers of the Corporation, viz:-

The Honorable J.G.Thompson,	President.
William Cuthbert, Esq.,	Vice-President
Henry Kavanagh, Esq.,	Treasurer
Robert Wiley Fitton, Esq.,	Secretary
and Messieurs,	
John M'Kenzie	David Le Boutillier
William Millar	Barnabas M'Gie
Daniel Ross	Matthew Caldwell
John Henderson	Victor Tenier

Etienne Martel, Esq., William M'Donald, Esq.
 John R. Hamilton, Esq., Q.C. William Carter, Esq.
 Members of the Corporation

A second meeting of the Society was convened, after due notice, on the fifth of July following.

Present :- The Honorable J.G.Thompson, President, and Messrs
 M'Donald, Hamilton, Martel, Kavanagh, Caldwell,
 M'Kenzie and Henderson.

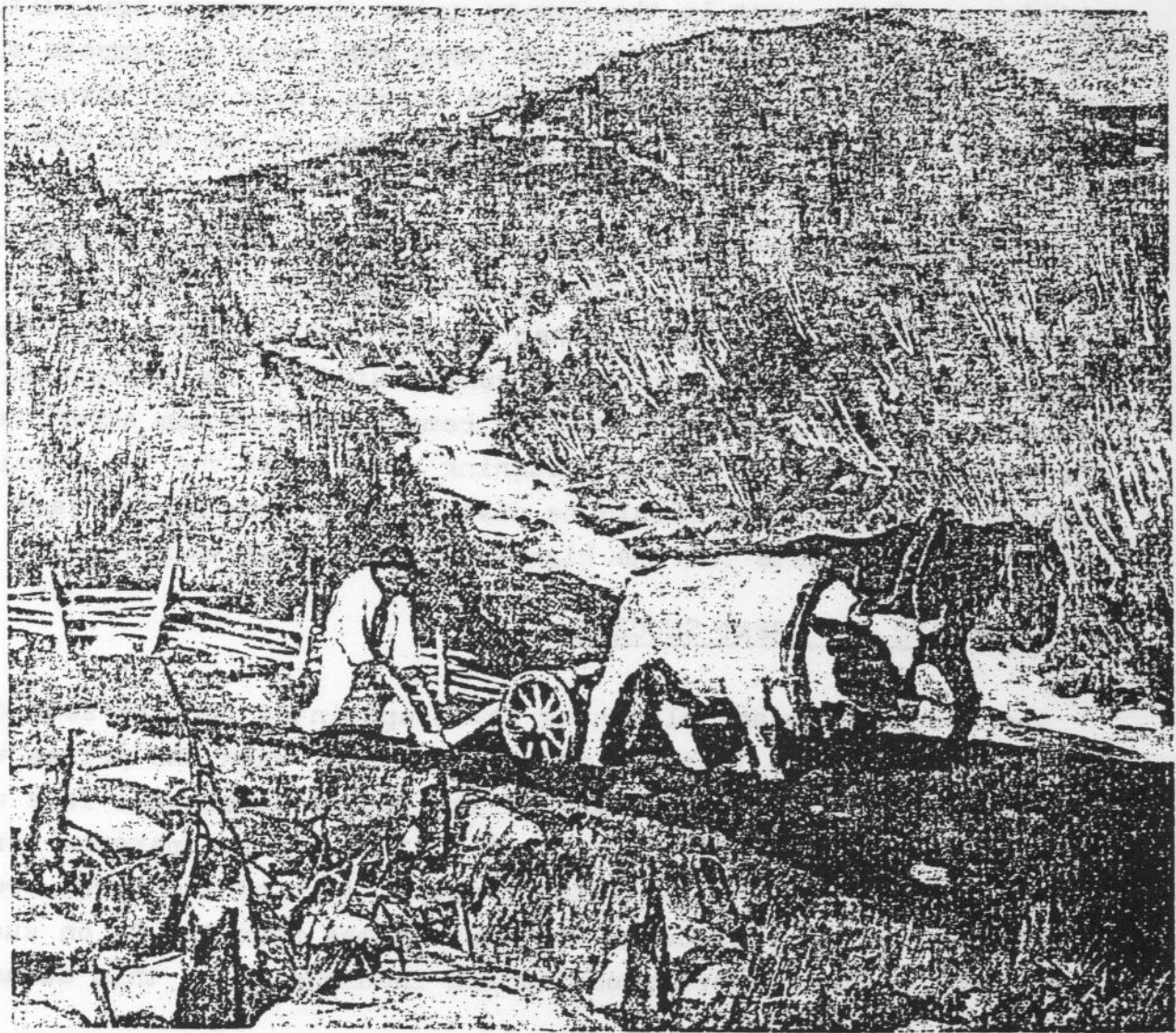
When it was ordered that a Cattle Show, Fair and Ploughing Match be held at New Carlisle on the thirtieth day of September then next, and at New Richmond on the second day of October following; and that two hundred copies of the notice enumerating the prizes and objects upon which they should be granted should be printed and circulated through the County, and that a Grain Show should also be held at New Carlisle on the second Tuesday of February, 1846 and at New Richmond on the same day of the year following.

The list of prizes was accordingly printed and distributed in conformity with that order, occasioning an increase of subscribers - all contributors of five shillings, with the exception of five members whose contributions were of greater amount.

The Agricultural Society previously formed in 1844 subscribed the balance of its funds in hand to this Society, being £ 12, 2s. 2d. No person was solicited to subscribe more than 5s., the inhabitants being ignorant of the beneficial results arising from such institutions in other countries, looked on with indifference, if not with suspicion, and it was deemed not necessary or advisable to distribute a larger amount among a few individuals.

THE NEW CARLISLE CATTLE SHOW AND PLOUGHING MATCH

On the 30th September last, the Cattle Show and Ploughing Match took place at New Carlisle as previously ordered. The premiums offered and awarded by the judges were paid upon the President's order by the Treasurer.



PIONEER PLOUGHMAN

It is necessary to observe that this having been the first exhibition of the sort in the County under the present Agricultural Act, many of the native farmers who were well able to compete with the more experienced competitors from Europe, held back through diffidence, which will not likely be the case at the next annual show.

The premiums awarded on this occasion to the owners of the best stallion and mare were not charged upon the funds of the Society - no class having been made for them in the notice issued; but they were remunerated by a sweepstakes contributed by the members of the Society. It is necessary further to remark that it was agreed among the four competitors for the ploughing match that the two premiums offered by the Society should be divided into four parts, each ploughman to compete for the highest or intermediate prize.

NEW RICHMOND - A GREAT SUCCESS

The second show and ploughing match appointed for the second October last, took place on that day at New Richmond, when the prizes were settled and paid upon the award of the judges appointed. This meeting was numerously attended; from three to four hundred persons were present; the cattle and articles produced were of the first order and creditable to the producers. The usual games resorted to on such occasions in Europe were promoted and indulged in on this occasion

THE "POTATOE DISEASE"

About this time the Potatoe disease, which was partially apparent for several previous years in this County, exhibited itself in a more marked character; in many cases they (the Potatoes) were affected in the ground, and such as were considered sound, when dug up and secured for the winter, were shortly afterwards attacked with it. The rapid fermentation which furthered their decay, obliged many farmers to remove them to a distance, apprehensive of further consequences to themselves and their cattle; others were fortunate enough to save out of the general decay of their crop sufficient to meet their consumption for the winter.

It is worthy of remark that Potatoes planted in new, burnt land

where the ashes were allowed to remain, were not subject to the disease; and such as were sound when dug up, put up dry and kept in a cool place, remained comparatively sound. The general opinion is that the late and unusually wet season, obliging the farmer to dig the roots up in a green state and enclosing them immediately in warm cellars, without the means of drying them, brought on the fermentation alluded to.

FINANCIAL SITUATION

The Government allowance of £ 95, 14s 6d was received on the 6th November last thereby increasing the funds of the Corporation to £ 127 12s 8d.

THE GRAIN SHOW

The Grain Show appointed for the eleventh day of February last did not take place, owing to an unusual snow storm which impeded all travelling, consequently no entries of Grain could be made on that day, as required by the established rules. The meeting was continued to the 24th of that month, on which day the exhibition took place and the prizes were awarded in the usual manner by the Judges appointed on that occasion.

At the same meeting it was resolved that twenty numbers of the BRITISH AMERICAN CULTIVATOR should be subscribed for and £ 2 10s currency were allowed for that purpose, and that the sum of £ 22 10s should be appropriated for agricultural implements and a further sum of £ 22 10s for the purchase of seeds - the selection of which was referred to a Committee, who made their report on the same day.

The accounts of the Secretary and Treasurer were audited and found correct, leaving a balance in hand of £ 2 12s 8pence and half-penny

(Signed) John G. Thompson
President