

PRINTING OF THE AGRICULTURAL PATENT OFFICE RE-  
PORT IN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE.

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MEMORIAL

OF

GERMAN-AMERICAN AGRICULTURISTS AND CITIZENS

FOR THE

*Printing of the Agricultural Patent Office Report in the German language.*

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FEBRUARY 14, 1862.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

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MEMORIAL of German-American agriculturists and citizens, for the printing and distribution of an adequate number of copies of the annual agricultural report of the Commissioner of Patents, in the German language.

*To the honorable the members of the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled:*

In pursuance of the act of Congress "For the collection of agricultural statistics, investigations for promoting agriculture and rural economy and the procurement of cuttings and seeds," a certain number of the agricultural report of the Commissioner of Patents is ordered to be annually printed and distributed to the agriculturists of the country. This valuable and instructive publication, being printed exclusively in the English language, remains, on the whole, a dead letter to that large class of adopted citizens speaking the German language, who, from the combination of a great many causes, rendering the acquisition of the English language either impossible, or, at least, too difficult of attainment to them, are, therefore, deprived of the opportunity of making themselves familiar with the contents of the report, with its teachings and new modes of appliances and cultivation—certainly as necessary to them as to their native-born fellow citizens. The disadvantage accruing to them, from not being able to understand the report, may, therefore, be considered, at least, as great as the advantage derived by those naturally familiar with the English language.

Among the various causes referred to as combining to render the acquisition of the English language by the German farmer either impossible or too difficult, we beg leave to point out the following as the most prominent:

1. The *largest* portion of the immigrant farming population arrived in this country at an average age of thirty years, when, from the nature of the training received in their native country, the human mind is not so constituted as to make the study of a new language an object paramount to that of making their livelihood.

2. Their whole attention, time, and labor is naturally and necessarily directed to the improvement of their material condition.

3. The obstacles presenting themselves to the study of the English language, as regards reading and writing it, embarrassing even to the educated immigrant, are altogether insurmountable to THAT CLASS of the German farming population, contenting itself, generally, with a knowledge of the language sufficient to carry on the necessary conversational intercourse.

4. In many instances the immigrants live on isolated farms, in sparse settlements, without any further intercourse than is absolutely required in their rural pursuits.

5. There is an annual influx of new immigration, associating with former settlers under the same mental aspects and conditions, thus retarding any progress that might otherwise have been made in the acquisition of the English language.

Though the wisdom of the act above referred to, passed by Congress for the first time in 1839, in accordance with the true principles of national economy for the promotion of the interests of the ENTIRE agricultural community, has shown itself generally in the increase and variety of production through the distribution of seeds and in a wide diffusion of agricultural information through the report of the Patent Office, the German farming population has had but little power to share in the government patronage, exceeding \$400,000 since 1839, inasmuch as there were hardly any seeds or reports distributed to it prior to 1857, and inasmuch as its people could hardly derive any benefit from the distribution of a report printed exclusively in the English language.

Your memorialists furthermore respectfully submit that the German agricultural immigration, a large portion of which selects this country from a mere predilection for its free institutions, annually adds millions of dollars to the wealth of the country, in capital, labor, and consumption. Its people clear the forests, found colonies, till the soil, drain the swamps, lay out flourishing gardens, cultivate the fruit tree, and raise the grape vine, thus enhancing the value of the land and beautifying the country. Among the many instances of this character we respectfully refer to the border settlements, especially those of Texas and Missouri, to the garden of the west, and to the market gardens and vineyards adorning the vicinities of the cities. And all this is accomplished through their own perseverance, industry, and energy, unaided by any government patronage available to the German immigration, and under the struggles and hardships attending the foundation of new homes in a new and strange country, unknown to them in climate, in manners, in customs, and, above all, new in language.

How much they would, therefore, be assisted in their agricultural efforts by a German edition of the report may easily be inferred.

While the agricultural immigration from England, Scotland, and Ireland, already speaking the English language, are enabled to profit by the agricultural report as soon as they reach the shores of this country, the German agricultural immigration, owing to the want of a knowledge of the English language, will hardly ever, during a lifetime, be able to derive any advantage from a work intended for the diffusion of agricultural information, and for the promotion of the interests of the ENTIRE agricultural community.

A German edition would be the means of encouraging its readers in eliciting information and of inducing to furnish useful contributions of their own experience for publication in the report; it would have a tendency to appropriate and adapt to the use of this country the substance of the rich treasures of the extensive agricultural literature already built up in Germany. It would also bring about a more intimate intercourse and a more beneficial exchange of opinion with their native born fellow-citizens, inasmuch as a German edition would prove a great inducement for acquiring a knowledge of the English language, by comparing both editions, serving mutually as grammar and dictionary. This method, it is thought, would contribute not a little to the so much desired and necessary acquisition of a more correct knowledge of the English language, infinitely more desirable and superior to the corrupt style of language, now spoken in several parts of the country, being neither English nor German.

The knowledge of more than one language in an educational, social, commercial, and literary point of view, has always been considered by all civilized nations as a valuable treasure and useful acquisition, both for the benefit of individuals and society itself, facilitating intercourse and business transactions generally, and promoting a more rapid and effectual diffusion of knowledge and science. This would seem to have special application to the mutual cultivation of the English and German languages, in view of the great proportion of the German population and their intercourse with the native-born fellow-citizens, in view of the annual influx of immigration, and in view of the relations existing between them and their native country.

We further beg leave to submit that there is no well founded fear of a German edition retarding the beneficial and national process of amalgamation among our people. We take pride in declaring before the world that we all have sworn allegiance to the government of the United States. We all consider ourselves Americans in heart, and mean to remain so. We all are anxious to unite and contribute our exertions to the welfare, power, dignity, liberty, and honor of the ONE American nation. Our ancestors and their sons were seen in rank and file side by side with their American fellow-citizens in the revolution of 1776, in the war of 1812, in the Indian wars, and in the Mexican war. In the suppression of the unholy rebellion of the present day we all stand firmly by the government, and true to the principles of liberty and equal rights for all, equipping regiments, furnishing about 100,000 men, and founding relief associations for the maintenance of the integrity of the Union—our pride, our safeguard, and our asylum. On the contrary, we venture to say that a just regard

to the object of our petition would fill our hearts with gratitude and confirm our attachment to a generous government.

If it should be asked, why not also publish a French, Spanish, Italian, or any other edition of the report, the answer might be implied in the comparative smallness of any, or all, other of these foreign nationalities combined engaged in agricultural pursuits, when compared with the number, importance, and achievements of the German farming population, forming, next to their American fellow-citizens, the greatest number engaged in rural pursuits.

A German edition might furthermore be considered an appropriate medium for the exchange of books with the agricultural societies and institutions of Germany, securing a more effectual diffusion of the knowledge of the agricultural operations in the United States, and effecting a better interchange of opinion.

The edition asked for is not without precedent under governments composed of different nationalities, as is seen in Russia, where one single agricultural work has been ordered to be published in six different languages for the benefit of those unacquainted with the language of the government. There are even some State governments in this country publishing some of their most important transactions in both languages.

On the supposition of 260,000 copies of the Agricultural Report being ordered by Congress to be printed—consisting of 230,000 English and 30,000 German copies, the expenses for preparing the articles, for binding and distributing the entire edition would be the same—the expenses of the German edition being altogether confined to the composition and translation, which latter part of the labor could be made part of the duties of the German translators now employed in the agricultural division of the Patent Office, without causing any additional expenses.

The small amount thus required for carrying out the object of your petitioners would hardly bear comparison with the mutual beneficial results to be realized in the diffusion of information on agriculture and its improvement, in the furtherance of its literature, in the friendly intercourse and co-operation of the German farming population with their native-born fellow-citizens in improving the agricultural division, and in the increased devotion and gratitude to a just and generous government. And your memorialists will ever pray.

JOSEPH KILIAN, *Maryland.*

CHAS. ROESER, *Wisconsin.*

FR. RIEDLING, *Ohio.*

JOHN SAUERWEIN, *Connecticut.*

JOHN L. PFAU, *Kentucky.*

JOHN G. BUXMAN, *Tennessee.*

J. FRED. MEYERS, *Michigan.*

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M. C. GRITZNER.