

FAIRS.

THERE are very few organizations on the American continent for the purpose of holding annual fairs similar to that which closes this week by the Toronto Industrial Exhibition Association. In fact, it is claimed that there is but one such concern—at St. Louis, Mo.—which embraces the scope and variety of the Toronto fair. The St. Louis fair is older than ours, but it does not present the variety of attractions to be seen in Toronto, and its exhibition season is only for a week, instead of two weeks as with us. Up to about eight years ago the St. Louis fair included displays of iron and wood-working machinery, and machines and machinery in which the processes of manufacture were shown; but those interested in these classes of exhibits found that it was not to their advantage to display them there, and this led to the establishment of the St. Louis Exposition, embodying a very large exhibition building in the very heart of the city, covering two large blocks of land. In the interior of this building is a music hall capable of seating about four thousand persons, and this is used for large public meetings, operas, concerts, etc.; and there is a Fine Arts gallery for the displays of paintings, statuary, etc. The ground floor of this building is appropriated to the display of heavy machinery in operation, and the engines for producing the power for driving it, for electric dynamos, etc. There is usually fine displays of lighter moving machinery, some of it showing the processes of manufacture of various articles, and other appropriate displays on the main floor; and the galleries contain refreshment booths and still other displays and exhibits. This exposition is open every day and evening (except Sundays) for a season of forty days; and free concerts two or three times a day in the large Music Hall by such performers as Gilmore's band, always afford great amusement. When this exposition was opened the management of the Fair abandoned the features that had accommodated themselves to other quarters, giving all the more attention to those interests which continued with it; and there does not seem to be any clash or rivalry between these two great moral instructors. The most salient features of the Fair are the speeding track, where many of the finest horses in the country may be seen racing at their best; the live stock displays, where prize animals show what farmers are doing in that direction; the agricultural exhibits, where big pumpkins may be seen, and the displays of agricultural implements and farm machinery, which may truthfully be described as the most extensive and comprehensive on the American continent. None of these exhibits, in their individuality, are any better in any respect than those shown every year at the Toronto Fair; and the most noticeable difference between the two is that the grounds upon which the St. Louis fair is held is two or three times as large as those in Toronto. Another desirable feature in connection with the St. Louis fair is that a half-dozen or more street railways reach the grounds, rendering travel to and fro quick and easy, while in Toronto but one line of street cars, and that only for the first time this year, reach the fair grounds. On our Queen street route the cars are all labelled "To the Exhibition," but this is a mean deception, particularly to strangers and tired people, for the nearest point they reach to the grounds is nearly a half-mile from them. It used to be that the ferry steamers landed pas-

sengers immediately on the Fair Grounds wharf, passing from which they found themselves just where they wanted to be, but now the landing is in another place, involving quite a long walk to reach an entrance gate. No doubt these annoyances will be rectified in the course of time.

Toronto's Industrial Exhibition, although yet in its childhood, has a history worth recalling here. The main building was erected to accommodate the Provincial Exhibition of 1878, and, as a tablet upon the wall beside the entrance still shows, was built in the short space of ninety days. The men who, in the face of a great deal of opposition, had induced the citizens of Toronto to build such a magnificent palace of industry, desired to see it utilized, and accordingly the Provincial Exhibition authorities were asked to fix on Toronto as a permanent place for holding their fair. The appeal was in vain, and when the vote was taken at the Agricultural and Arts Association meeting, and Toronto's claim ignored, Mr. J. J. Withrow, the now president, intimated that Toronto would henceforth run her own show—and she did.

In November, 1878, a conference was held between the Exhibition Committee of the City Council and the Toronto Electoral Society, when the following resolution was adopted:

That this meeting, composed of members of the Exhibition Association, of the City Council and of the Board of Directors of the Toronto Electoral District Society, fully concur in the proposition to establish and maintain a permanent exhibition in the City of Toronto, under joint management, for the encouragement of agriculture, horticulture, arts and manufactures, and that the first of such exhibitions be held during the first three weeks of September, 1879.

The project became an accomplished fact. The Ontario Legislature granted a charter, and in September following the first Toronto Exhibition was held on the Garrison Common in the building erected by the city for the Provincial Exhibition of the previous year.

A sketch of the history of fairs at this time may be interesting. According to Dr. Henry, the British historian, fairs were supposed to have been borrowed by the Anglo-Saxons from the Romans, who had established such marts in all their Provinces. The very Latin word the name "fair" is derived from—*feria*—literally translated, means a day of rest, or holiday, which proves that they were originally particular times set aside to commemorate some religious rite or ceremony. This, in all probability, was the Festival of the Dedication of the Church, religiously observed by the old Romans. They were rites originally held in the church-yards or even in the churches themselves, and soon became places of barter and sale. No doubt, when Christ drove the crowds out of the Temple they were there for that purpose, as is indubitably shown by his words on that occasion. In the year 1230 history tells us a Royal mandate forbade the keeping of Northampton fair in the church or churchyard of All Saints in that town; and the Bishop of Lincoln, pursuant to the king's example, extended a similar prohibition throughout his diocese. Spelman has pointed to two passages which show the great antiquity of these meetings. The first is from the historian, Zosimus, who states that even in the time of Constantine, Jews, Gentiles and Christians annually flocked together in great numbers to perform their separate religious rites. The other is from St. Basil, who, toward the end of the sixth century, complained much of a like custom, as it affected his