

Annual Meeting Fairs Association.

Delegates from all parts of the Province of Ontario assembled in the City Hall, Toronto, on the 17th and 18th inst., to take part in the annual convention of the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions.

The President, J. T. Murphy, of Simcoe, in his annual address, stated that the improvement in many of our fairs, and their greater uniformity, was largely due to the efforts of this organization. The school children's day, and the system of expert judges of stock and fruit, tend to popularize the country fair, and are indications of the kind of fair the people want. This is proved by the increased success of those exhibitions which devote considerable attention to educative features. Mr. Murphy expressed the regret of the Association at the loss to them of their secretary, Mr. Creelman, but also congratulated the retiring secretary upon his appointment of president of the Ontario Agricultural College, and predicted for Mr. Cowan, the newly-appointed secretary of the Association, a successful incumbency of the position.

Superintendent Creelman, in his annual address, pointed out that the intention of the Act under which fairs existed was to make them purely educational and to foster the work of improvement in all classes of agricultural products. The natural channel through which this effort was directed was the agricultural fair. In connection with the improvement of these fairs, he suggested furnishing better show-rings, with stands from which the judges of stock or other exhibits could explain the reasons of their placings; the elimination of the class for general-purpose horses; the providing of a tent or building for ladies' exhibits; the development of the children's day idea; the expansion of the sphere of the experimental plots; the circulation of programmes of the events; and the building of several small buildings in the place of one large one.

IN DISCUSSION.

Mr. McNeill, fruit inspector, urged that features that had been held year after year for no particular reason be eliminated; labels for exhibits and programmes should be provided.

Mr. Kydd, Simcoe, claimed that judging is not begun soon enough. Sometimes the first-prize animal is put into a wagon before the second prize is awarded. Superintendents of each class should see that the entry number is posted. Road and carriage classes of horses should be separated. An effort should be made to divide the prize money between several exhibitors. Some shows prohibit one owner exhibiting more than one entry in each class. Between the heavy carriage horse and heavy draft there should be one class called the agricultural class. Rules should not specify what weight draft horses shall be or what height carriage horses shall be, when only one section of the class is on exhibition. There should be no rule calling for horses to be sound.

Mr. Brethour would be careful how he gave reasons for awards, but claims the day is past when a judge can give his decision and look wise. Boys' judging competitions should be encouraged. A board of lady directors should be in control of their exhibit. Exhibitors should not be allowed to take more than one prize in a section.

A Lennox County delegate advised shorter time in which to hold the fair, and fewer prizes. Picton has a baby show in the evening of her big day.

EVENING SESSION.

Hon. John Dryden said it was a matter of regret that the public did not heartily support the agricultural societies in the different municipalities, but congratulated the fair board on an increasing interest in the affairs of these institutions. The nature of the settlement in many parts of the Province interferes with the best work of this Association. An improvement to be noticed is the centralization of these societies, and the amalgamation of effort. The object of the fair boards should be to interest all classes of citizens. In order to do this, the board should try to maintain as clean an exhibition as it is possible to obtain. The faker element came in for severe criticism. Mr. Dryden is endeavoring to secure legislation that will prohibit these features on the grounds, whether or not the management wants it. We must endeavor to develop a little more moral fiber in our young people, hence the necessity of presenting the cleanest and best entertainment. It is a costly practice to risk the moral sense of our young people for the paltry sum obtained from these indecent entertainers. Mr. Dryden's statements were very heartily endorsed by all the delegates.

STOCK-JUDGING CONTESTS AS EDUCATIONAL FEATURES

On the subject of Prof. Day's address. These contests were not advocated as the only educational features, but as one of them they are invaluable. The expert improvers of stock endeavored to produce a type of animals that would be valuable for tenant farmers to keep, and most valuable for the butchers; but better types could be universally produced if the fair boards would appreciate the values of these types. The quality of the types must be emphasized,

and the great problem is to develop a well established understanding of interest between producer and butcher. The apathy of the public to the importance of studying this problem through the instrumentality of the fairs is often most discouraging, consequently we must develop an interest in the boys. Matured men become conservative, but the young people can be interested sufficiently to induce them to establish higher ideals. To this end the stock-judging contest awakens interest, eventually resulting in an ambition to obtain better stock. Too often, an inspection of good stock is discouraging to young men, who may feel that the possession of it is beyond them, but the judging contest starts farther back, and develops conceit in the boys, so deep-seated that it inspires ambition, resulting in the ultimate breeding of good stock. When once young men obtain recognition as good judges, the next step is to purchase good stock. Small fairs, as a rule, are better places to hold these contests than the larger exhibitions, because they assume a greater relative importance. At a small fair, every one is sure to know of the contest, and in time it would develop as much interest as the regular horse-race, and possibly lead to as much betting. But even if this were the case, might the good accomplished not warrant this possible evil.

The contest should, first of all, be given a prominent place in the ground. A good man on the board should have control of it, and should undertake to make it a success. The rules of the fair should compel exhibitors to furnish stock for the contest, for the refusal of the request for stock has killed more contests than any other circumstance. The time of the contest should be fixed, and adhered to. It should not, under any circumstance, interfere with the interests of the exhibitors of live stock and if anything is to be sacrificed, let it be something else. Each fair board might decide whether it is best to have contests on all classes of stock or only on such classes as are prominent in the district. In most cases, it is best to have fewer classes and have them well handled. Where possible, have two classes of each breed being judged. The system of marking recommended is to furnish blanks for placing, and corresponding blanks for writing reasons. Just what proportion of marks should be given for placing and for reasons is hard to decide. In the Professor's opinion, seventy marks should be given for placing and thirty for reasons. In all cases, large classes should be given, five animals at least. The judge or committee of judges should, in placing the animals, also allot the number of marks to be given for several different placings, not merely place them correctly, and then fix an arbitrary valuation for placing and variation from the correct placing. In this way, some mistakes in placing may be cut ten marks, or, in other cases, misplacing may be of equal value to the judge's placing.

Hon. J. Dryden: If there is any one thing this judging contest will do it is to establish a uniform ideal of type, and this is invaluable. It will also emphasize the importance of utility of standard in pure-bred stock.

Several of the expert judges endorsed the system of marking advocated by Prof. Day. Mr. John Gardhouse pointed out that the contests were a very strong connecting link between the breeder and general farmer, for it leads to a desire among all farmers to produce better stock. Mr. J. E. Brethour emphasized the danger of undertaking too many classes. He also suggested that the Agricultural Department furnish the fairs with the marking blanks. Mr. Jeffs showed that many men were able to identify good animals, but lacked the power of expressing their reasons, hence the importance of Professor Day's system of marking.

Rev. Mr. C. B. Clarke, of Russell Co., championed the cause of the despised classes of roots and grains. Expert judges, he claimed, were the most useful innovation at recent fairs. In eastern counties, the competitions between the county fairs had been conducive of much improvement. Next year, the award for the best county fair will be a \$1,000 cement office for the fair.

W. E. Smallfield, of Renfrew, said four years ago their county fair was practically dead, but its obsequies were not yet held. Then it was suggested that a revival be held, and the assistance of Mr. Creelman was solicited, who completely revived it. Liberal advertising in the local papers was instituted. Large posters were printed, with the leading sentence, "Are you going to the fair of the 10,000 to visit Renfrew Fair this year?" A separate sheet of the fair circular was sent to each exhibitor in three counties, soliciting a limited amount of advertising. Fair stationery was also sold. An extensive painting by machinery was advertised as one of the features of the fair. Keep the fair before the public all the year. One educational feature each year, and utility is all that need be undertaken.

Mr. J. E. Brethour: The question of fair improvement is a subject of attention to detail. Attaching the owners' names to every entry ticket was strongly advocated by the speaker.

Mr. W. McElroy, of Carleton County, told of the revolution carried out at his county fair. Special features were a model kitchen, athletic sports, milking contests, sheep-shearing demonstrations, etc.

Mr. J. Farrel, Lambton Co., believed in giving a director some special work to do, and holding him responsible for it.

Mr. Kydd, Simcoe: Fair boards should waken up to the fact that the day of exhibiting any but pure-bred sires are past.

Dr. Bell, of the Industrial Fair Board, read a paper on keeping fair books, in which he insisted upon entry fees being paid in advance, and also advocated better methods of identifying the owners of the different exhibits.

EXPERIMENTAL PLOTS.

The value of experimental plots at fairs was discussed by Professor Zavitz, Experimentalist of the Agricultural College. The importance of the farm crops of Ontario is well illustrated by the increase in value of these crops during the past two years from \$114,768,000 in 1902 to \$146,421,000 in 1904. These values show the importance of fostering this branch of the agricultural industry. The innovation of experimental plots upon fair grounds was calculated to answer, in a limited degree, this purpose. A crop that is being made familiar by these plots is soy bean, a most excellent plant for mixing with corn for ensilage. A plan of arranging a set of plots was illustrated by Prof. Zavitz, and several of the delegates endorsed the idea of maintaining these plots.

ENTERTAINMENT.

Professor C. C. James, in his address, raised the question, "Should the farming community be entertained or instructed at the fairs?" For years, fairs had been managed with the primary object of getting a crowd and giving questionable amusement. That there is a demand for recreation is very evident, but that the fair boards should furnish it, is a doubtful hypothesis. No doubt, the Ontario farmer as a class is the hardest worker in the world, and should obtain his recreation at different intervals during the year rather than crowd it all into fair day. In the management of fairs, special attention should be given to the encouragement of the particular class of farming followed in any particular locality, and a stereotyped system of awarding prizes or of managing fairs should be avoided. Wherever possible, the board should confine the fair exhibits to the municipality to which the Government grant has been made. Fair officials were cautioned not to attach undue importance to large membership or large crowds at the fair, but rather to the development of educative features. Mr. James' address aroused considerable discussion as to whether the professional prizetaker should be excluded. The ladies seemed to be the chief offenders in this respect.

POULTRY AT FAIRS.

This much-neglected feature of fairs was discussed by Prof. W. R. Graham, of the O. A. C. At many shows the first thing that should be done for the poultry industry is to furnish clean, light sheds for housing the exhibits. The industry is deserving of it, for in Ontario we have poultry to the value of between seven and eight million dollars. In looking over most of our prize lists, it is noticeable that they are nearly all exactly alike, and no improvement upon those of fifty years ago. What we want at our fairs is the encouragement of the utility features of poultry-raising. Prizes might be given for the best six chickens fattened, alive; also, for the best basket of eggs. Judging should be done early in the day, and the judge retained to give talks to the spectators in the afternoons. There has been of late a noticeable tendency among judges to tack up the tickets, and get the first train out of town. Plans of modern poultry-houses might be posted in the poultry exhibit building. Fattening crates and pressing boards also might be on exhibition, and the value of the latter explained.

FAIR INSURANCE AND AMALGAMATION.

Mr. H. B. Cowan, the newly-appointed secretary of the Association, gave the delegates some of the schemes he had in mind for the improvement of the fairs. Those which were not already up to the modern standard would be brought into line, and an effort would be made to unite all the fairs of the Province into circuits, so that the advertising and printing in connection with each fair could be done more cheaply by being done jointly. He also had in mind a scheme of insurance against unfavorable weather, a circumstance that often upsets the best-laid plans.

FRUIT AT FAIRS.

W. A. MacKinnon, Chief of the Fruit Division, Ottawa, laid before the convention methods by which the fairs could make their exhibits more instructive and valuable. The exhibiting of fruit, or any other product, had now become a purely business proposition, and at fairs producers expected to learn something that would be of value to them. To begin at the beginning, methods of growing, spraying and grading might be explained. The prize list should discriminate against inferior varieties. There is no reason in giving prizes to varieties condemned by our best horticultural authorities equal to those given our best varieties. The classification should discriminate between export and domestic varieties. Exhibits of the former should consist of packages as well as of plates. Classes might be made for the best decorated dining-room table of fruit, and demonstrations might be given on this subject, and also on decorating windows. For the benefit of a great number of fruit-growers, lectures might be given on the treatment of unproductive