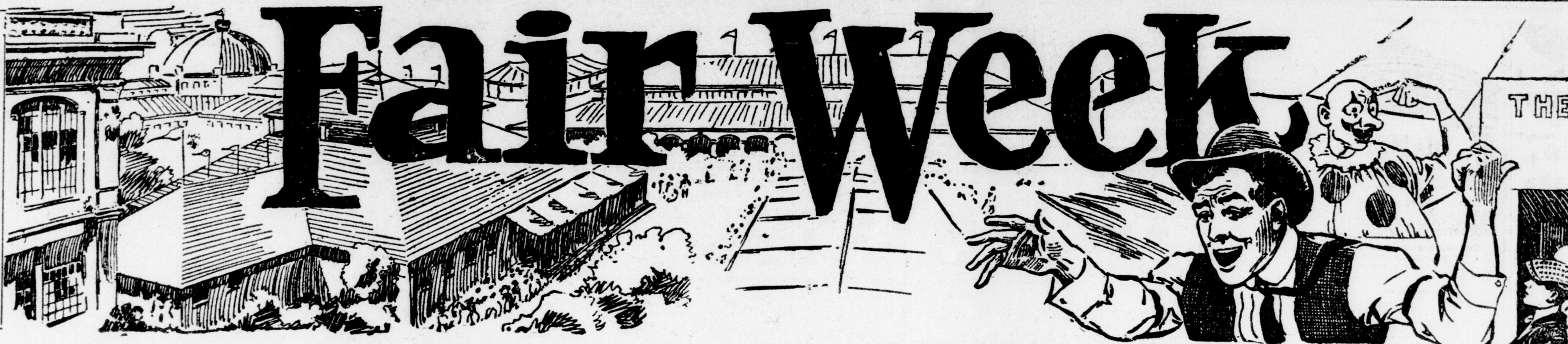


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JUBILEE YEAR of WESTERN FAIR

"COMPARED with the first Western Fair, which was held on the old military grounds on Richmond street, this looks like a world's fair," declared an "oldtimer," as he stood near the general offices and surveyed with evident satisfaction the "preparation day" activities yesterday at Queen's Park. "And to think it is fifty years ago!" he continued. "Why, I remember as well as if it was yesterday, though I was just a green lad, new come to the country."

"They had their East Middlesex Society fall shows before that, but I can tell you, the first Western Fair was a grand event. You said it lasted just two days? Why, I could swear it was three, counting preparation day like we have today. And don't you call this something to see?"

He paused impressively as, with a wave of his hand, he drew attention to the processions of vehicles of every description crowding in through the gates, the bustle and industry attendant upon getting exhibits in shape, the people hurrying in and out of the spick-and-span buildings, the tents which had sprung up like mushrooms all over the grounds.

"It was a good deal smaller 50 years ago," he commented, "but I can tell you, preparation day, even then, was worth seeing. Just the same, I never dreamed the Western Fair would grow to be what it is today, with exhibitors sending in their entries from the farthest parts of Canada, and people writing from even the Antipodes to find out how we run our fair and manage to keep it getting bigger and better every year and never going into debt."



"That is some record for 50 years, coming through with head above water, whatever the adverse circumstances. There isn't a better-run fair to my knowledge than the Western, and I've been judge at a good many, big ones at that. It's something we old-timers take a good deal of pride in, the way the Western Fair has grown up from its small beginnings, always going ahead, never losing ground."

Old as Confederation itself, and, in fact, a twin sister, the Western Fair has progressed with the progress and development of the Dominion, adding each year new features and to its interest and importance.

Celebrating its own jubilee, as well as the fiftieth birthday of the Dominion of Canada, the Western Fair of 1917 eclipses all previous ones that have been held in number and quality of exhibits, in educational and amusement features. The weather will determine in a measure whether or not all previous attendance records will be broken. Few citizens of London and Western Ontario who have attended the Western Fair in the past will be satisfied to miss, rain or shine, the jubilee exhibition, and, without a doubt, before the end of the week thousands of staunch new friends will be enrolled. Apart from the fact that the first Western Fair of the year 1867 was like the little acorn from which a mighty oak has grown in 1917, the present is closely bound to the past by the military link.

THE MILITARY LINK.

The first Western Fair was held on the military grounds on Richmond street, surrounding the present site of the C. P. R. station. Uniforms, more picturesque than they are today, were much in evidence at that first Western Fair, even as they will be at the jubilee anniversary.

The military was occupying the "Crystal Palace," consequently the old drill hall, where the collegiate institute now stands, furnished accommodation for such exhibits as required to be placed inside a building.

In the year of grace 1917 the military evacuated Queen's Park in ample time to afford the fair board full opportunity to get the grounds and buildings in good shape and the militia department made good for any repairs necessitated. The exhibits, in consequence, will be found in their own special buildings, as far as space permits. Where there is an overflow, the late entries have been quartered wherever accommodation could be found for them.

Through the kind permission of Col. L. W. Shannon, D.O.C. No. 1 Military District, the military is figuring prominently in the jubilee program. Monday evening, for the first time, there will be a "musical ride," which will be repeated each succeeding afternoon and evening of the week in front of the grandstand, along with exhibitions of bayonet fighting, physical drill, manual exercises, boxing and military manoeuvres. The military feature will occupy an hour or so of the program each afternoon and evening.

SO THEY LAID THE FOUNDATION.

Away back in last century, a "Provincial Exhibition" under the direction of the Provincial Government, was held annually, and passed around to various centres in Ontario. In 1865, it came to London. This aroused the ambition of a number of far-sighted men of both the city and surrounding district to hold an annual exhibition larger than had hitherto been done. The subsequent fair expansion movement resulted in the establishment of "The Western Fair," though the association did not become an incorporated institution until 1887.

From the very first, Western Ontario rallied to the support of the Western Fair. There was a most creditable array of entries in the livestock section, and an especially fine display of poultry. There was an imposing array of the latest improvements in farm implements, such as reapers and self-rake attachments, a combined pea harvester and hayrake, hand grass seeders, seed drills and plows, not to mention ditching machines, straw cutters, wagons and carriages.

The old-timer recalled these manufacturing triumphs of 1867 and the small amount of space required to exhibit them as he wandered yesterday through the big transportation building, with the stage all set for "horseless carriages," the long machinery halls with their multiplicity of "farming-made-easy" devices, run by motive power; "machinery row," for the exhibits impossible to house, the "self-loaders," threshers and traction engines, which will demonstrate throughout the exhibition.

Not a word did he say in disparagement of the past, and not a sigh did he give for "the good old days." Instead, he remarked in gratified tones, "Glad I am that such a good foundation was laid 50 years ago."

BUTTER FROM "SUNNY ALBERTA."

Fifty years ago, the woman's work was exhibited in the drill hall, the bread, butter, cakes and the wonderful quilts and fancywork, along with other articles that demanded shelter from the elements. In 1904, the Government dairy building was erected, and all the way from "Sunny Alberta" have come butter exhibits to find a place there this year. In 1867, Alberta belonged to the great wilds of Canada, the practically unknown far west of the Northwest territories. Butter would have been ruined many times over in transit in 1867 from the sites that were to be Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary.

And the women's own special work. Once upon a time, it occupied a corner upstairs in the main building. Then it extended and extended till at last a whole building was dedicated to the purpose of displaying "woman's work."

Once upon a time, the upstairs of the main building was regarded as suitable for the "art gallery." Next, it was transferred to the new "annex" and a few years ago, a permanent fireproof building dedicated to art was erected, declared by an eminent judge, who was here a few years ago, to be "ideal for the purpose, so far as architecture and lighting are concerned." In any case, it has been a great acquisition to the grounds and undoubtedly added "tone" to the exhibition. This year, in addition to the competitive work in amateur and professional classes, the exhibit will include the finest art loan collection that up to the present time has been shown at a Western Fair. These pictures have been obtained from the Detroit Museum of Art, and from collections in Hamilton. Well-known

Canadian painters are represented, as well as famous old world masters. Special interest attaches to one small canvas from the fact that it was painted by the great Gerome, who was for a time the teacher in Paris of Paul Peet.

FROM A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST.

In such abundance has the earth yielded her fruits this year that probably never before have there been exhibits to equal the grains and vegetables displayed in the agricultural building. In a number of sections the fruit is of especially fine quality. In the midst of all the "greater production" and "war-time service" hurry and rush, time has been found for the flowers and the glory and luxuriance of these bear testimony to the manner in which gardening efforts have been crowned with success this year.

In no place is the evolution which the years have brought about more strikingly revealed than in the process building. In 1867, the finished product in plows, wagons and carriages, etc., was shown. A later development was the demonstration of the capabilities of the finished product. Within the past few years it has become the fashion not only to exhibit and to demonstrate, but to show each step in process of manufacture. Hence the necessity which arose a few years ago for a "process" building. Even in 1916, the first year, space was at a premium, so popular has the "process" method of exhibiting become.

"I wonder what will be next?" said the old-timer. Whatever it is, he is going to extend to it a welcome.

THE GOVERNMENT EXHIBITS.

Next? Why nothing less than the multiplying of Government exhibits for the Western Fair. Last year it was a practical demonstration of poultry farming, testing and grading, and also marketing of eggs according to the most approved methods. Idea? To encourage interest in poultry-raising and to raise the standard of poultry and the poultry product called an egg.

Side by side with the "chicken farming" exhibit a year ago was the Dominion Government's demonstration of wool, from sheep to weaver. Object, to revive an interest in sheep farming and "wool gathering." This year the egg and the wool exhibits are back again to teach their practical lessons. And still there is another one, a flax process exhibit.

This is a part of the Government's educational campaign, the way the Government has of saying: "If it can be done in other countries it can be done here, and we are prepared to show you how. If greater production and right methods were ever needed, it is right here and now."

And so, in the 50 years in which the Western Fair has run its honorable course, growing stronger with age, it has become a great educational factor in Western Ontario and for many who visit it from much farther distant points.

"MOVIES," TOO.

The "movies" have even invaded the Western Fair. But the movies in this case happen to be of an exceedingly dignified and high-grade variety, the kind of movies shown at world's fairs and places like that. Didn't the old-timer say something about the Western Fair of 1917 being like a world's fair? Anyway, that is how he started out.

The Western Fair board has arranged a mammoth tent not far from the grandstand (that fine, fireproof, steel stand, used the first time a year ago.) In that tent, day by day and evening by evening during the Fair, the Government is showing moving pictures illustrating the development and progress of Canada since Confederation. Since the Western Fair has progressed through 50 years with the Dominion, never dropping a step all the way, it seems eminently fitting that this Government "process" series should have a place at the Jubilee Exhibition.

Away back at that first Western Fair of 50 years ago there was music, and fine music at that, to be sure, a band, and no less. It was to the music of the band that the best young man stepped along beside the best girl and treated her to peanuts, candy and lemonade. This year, "two hearts will beat as one" to the music of several bands, not to mention hurdy-gurdys, steam pianos, calliopes, midway solos and choruses, and the musical voices of the spieters and refreshment vendors.

A special attraction for those who are stirred by that kind of music will be the Juvenile Pipe Band, which has met with so many triumphs.

The 7th Band also has been secured for the whole of the exhibition, the Hussars for Tuesday and Friday, the Clinton Band for Wednesday and the Guelph Band for Thursday—five bands all told, and never a day without two.

And the "attractions."

The old-timer chuckled with glee as he ran through this year's program.

"CAGE OF MONKEYS" TO MAMMOTH SHOW

"The Rutherford Carnival Company will fill the midway with good, clean shows," he quoted. "They wouldn't have known what a midway was in 1867, at least, I wouldn't." Then he continued: "Oscar V. Babcock, in his most wonderful and daring act, 'Looping the Death Trap Loop and Flying the Plume,' the feature attraction of the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915. Didn't I say this was a world's fair? 'The Rose Troupe, greatest laugh-producers in America.' 'De Renzo and Ladue in their great comedy revolving pole act.' 'Appale's Zoological Circus.' Fireworks each evening. Races every day. Well, well, well. In the early days of the Western Fair, if we had a few monkeys and a Punch and Judy show, we thought we had a grand line of attractions."

"But didn't you have horse-racing in those days? Surely there was never a time when the Western Fair didn't have horse races?"

"Horse races," and the eyes of the old-timer twinkled. "We did so have them, and well it is I remember the race track; it would be up now, let me see, bordering on where there is now Piccadilly street. Yes, we had horse races, hit and miss and go as you please. But they were great fun just the same. But say, isn't it a caution the way this Western Fair has grown up? Fifty years, and always paid its way! Tell you I don't think there is another fair like it in the world."

