

NUGGETS

FROM THE REPORT OF THE EASTERN ONTARIO
POULTRY ASSOCIATION'S SECRETARY.

THE experience of this Association at Kingston, and also at Cornwall, seems to show that Christmas week is a bad time for a poultry exhibition. It certainly is too soon for the birds raised in Eastern Ontario under ordinary conditions to be in the best state for showing. Several of the old exhibitors, who otherwise would have exhibited, complained that their birds were not in full show plumage, this being particularly the case in old cock birds and early hatched pullets. It is proposed, therefore, at the next exhibition to select a date towards the end of January. The question of the visitors to the poultry exhibitions, and the securing of the proper class of visitors, is a very serious question, and one that requires the very best consideration. The class above all others that it is desirable to reach is the farming class, and the farmers are the most difficult of all to get at. To make admission to the exhibition free is only to cram the hall to the doors with the people of the city or town where the show is held. My idea would be to open it free only to the farmers—say all members of the farmers' institutes in the surrounding country. But then these farmers are generally the most intelligent and progressive belonging to the profession, and we want to reach the backward farmers to show them the difference between their poor methods and stock and the good methods and stock of the exhibitors. At any rate, I would suggest as a desirable step that members of farmers' institutes should be admitted free, and that the exhibition should be well advertised to the members of these institutes. A step in the right direction was, I think, taken by making two classes at the last exhibition open only to farmers—one for pens of heavy general purpose fowls and one for light egg-raising fowls. The prize in the first class was won by Mr. Thompson, the well known raiser of turkeys, ducks and geese, with a pen of barred Plymouth Rocks, an admirable kind of bird for farmers: and the other, by Mr. McRae, with a splendid pen of black Minorcas. The judge considered that the best Minorcas in the exhibition were in that pen. It is to be

hoped that these classes will be put in the next prize list and that there may be increased competition in them.

The Hon. Mr. Fisher, Dominion Minister of Agriculture, at the request of the Association, added very much to the interest and instructiveness of the exhibition by having an exhibit of dressed poultry, including turkeys, geese and fowls, sent from the Central Experimental Farm under the charge of Mr. Gilbert, the poultry superintendent. This display was a practical lesson to all interested in the matter of how poultry should be prepared for the English market. Mr. Fisher has taken a most kind interest in the welfare of the Association, and has, in more ways than one, shown that he will do everything in his power to promote the poultry industries of the country. I think that in the course of the next two or three years enormous strides will be taken in the improvement of all branches of this most important industry. This will result in better poultry in a better condition being placed on the market; and of course the profits will then be better. Taking the size and extent of the production into account this will aggregate a very large sum of money, which will be distributed not among the rich, but among the farmers and others who keep poultry.

The most satisfactory feature in connection with the Association's exhibitions is the steady increase in the entries in the practical business fowl classes, the classes in the fancy varieties not having increased in the same ratio by any means, while pigeons have practically been dropped altogether. The exhibits of turkeys, ducks and geese, too, are always admirable, and an object lesson of the most striking character to all those who visit the exhibition and have previously been accustomed to the common class of birds.

I think that it would be a very good plan for this Association to imitate the action taken by the Ontario Poultry Association in offering prizes for the best essays on practical poultry-raising and marketing. In this way a great many valuable suggestions are obtained and reach the farmers through the free distribution of the reports of the poultry associations printed by the Ontario Government.