

## Farmers' Clubs.

## Dominion Farmers' Council.

[The Dominion Farmers' Council meets in the city of London, Ont., on the third Thursday of every month, at 1 o'clock p. m. All communications should be addressed to the corresponding secretary, F. W. HODSON, LONDON, ONT. This Council has now on hand pamphlets containing its Constitution and By-laws, with an account of its origin, objects, etc.; Constitution and By-laws suitable for Farmers' Clubs, and notes on how to organize a club. These will, on application to the Secretary, be sent free to all parties having in contemplation the organization of clubs.]

On the 22nd ult., the Dominion Farmers' Council assembled, President Anderson in the chair.

The following paper, written by Mr. Richard Gibson, of Delaware, Ont., was first read:

## "THE SELECTION OF JUDGES FOR AGRICULTURAL FAIRS."

I will not occupy space in discussing the question as to the number of judges, as that was not contemplated in this paper, from the wording of the subject, as I received it. I will, however, say here that I am in favor of one judge—an expert, if you please—a professional who makes it his business, and who is paid commensurate with his services. One who, when approached by an exhibitor, "Why did you overlook that brown horse with blaze and white pastern?" would not be able to reply, "I could do nothing; two against one always count."

Again, outside of the question, I want to say a word to societies. Get the best man, or men, available, and remember "the laborer is worthy of his hire." After selecting your man, or men, don't ask him to travel from Windsor to Kingston, or Ottawa, to spend three or possibly four days in your service, and then require him to pay his railway fare, hotel bill, lunch tickets, besides, as I've known, pay to get into the grounds—the miserable three tickets given having been exhausted perhaps the first day. See to it that a judge, after spending two or three days and several dollars in money in your service, goes away without loss. As a rule, the business men "run" the larger shows. Let them apply the same business principles to the payment of judges as they would do in their own particular line. They do not hesitate to pay large salaries to men to go to Europe to buy for their houses; in other words, competent judges. Would they accept any man as fit for the position because a friend said, "Here, Smith is going to England; he's a good fellow; buy his dinner and give him a sovereign (\$5, the usual fee) and he will pay his own way!" No. If you want the confidence of the exhibiting public you must have men in whom they have confidence, and you must expect to pay them in this as in any other business. Here, I will say, that the London Kennel Club, at their late show at the Western Fair, paid their two judges \$75 each. The exhibitors were satisfied, and will come to London again.

Exhibitors of stock nowadays, when horses and cattle are sold up in the thousands, cannot afford to risk the reputations of their herds and studs to the opinion—the "ipse dixit"—of someone who has been appointed because "he is a good fellow, and won't cost the society anything." "But how can we tell who is competent and who is not?" A pertinent question; hence my suggestions.

The various breeds of horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, &c., that are worth perpetuating are now represented and formed into breeder's associations, clubs or societies, such as "Shorthorn Breeder's Association," "Jersey Cattle Club," &c. My idea would be, that at the annual meetings of these various organizations, they should recommend, or elect, certain parties, under whose judgment they would be willing to have their cattle or horses pass, and whose judgment and opinion would be final and satisfactory to those most interested. By adopting this course the Agricultural Societies would be relieved of the odium of having appointed an unpopular judge. They could reply to the "disappointed exhibitor" (they are on every agricultural asso-

ciation's list), "You selected him." The responsibility would be thrust upon the breeders themselves, and the parties most interested in having their exhibit properly judged, would be the ones to select the judges; the onus, therefore, would lie upon the associations, at their annual meetings, to select competent men, and should one disappoint the pen could be struck through his name at next meeting. Such, gentlemen, is my idea of selecting judges for stock; and if in stock, why not in the other departments—horticulture, dairying, &c.?

Mr. W. Weld then addressed the meeting. He said Mr. Gibson was one of the best Canadian authorities—in fact, one of the best authorities in America on matters pertaining to live stock, and that his views deserved every attention from all who controlled such matters. The time has now come when the entire fair system needs reforming, even from the largest to the smallest shows. All thinking men should give this subject their attention. This is an agricultural country, and unless our farmers are prosperous, all classes suffer. The fairs are for the benefit of agriculture and live stock. The benefit to be derived from them is largely educational, and if they are not properly conducted with this object in view, their influence for good is largely lost.

J. W. Bartlett, who is well posted on all matters relative to poultry said: Several years ago, a scale of points was adopted by the poultry breeders of America; also, the system of judging by a single expert. A scale of points was tried as an experiment, and was found to give such general satisfaction that the system was unanimously adopted. Since that time, the American Poultry Association have granted certificates to such persons as are qualified to act as judges. These are accepted as suitable persons to make awards at regular poultry shows. By this system, the educational advantages have been very great. By consulting the score card, which is always given at poultry shows, any one who desires to learn can easily acquaint himself in what points any bird is defective, and in what points it is perfect, thereby learning what constitutes a good bird, and what are the defects to be guarded against.

In discussing the subject from a fruit-grower's standpoint, Mr. Deadman declared in favor of a scale of points, and very emphatically stated one judge was to be preferred to three. He considered that the fruit growers should consider this matter, and adjust a scale of points for the use of their judges.

Mr. Holman was much pleased with the reasons advanced in favor of a scale of points, and the appointing of one expert as a judge at fairs. The system of judging, as at present practiced, had outlived its usefulness, and had become unsatisfactory. We, who are exhibitors, want something better.

The president thought the main point was to get good judges. He was not strongly in favor of only appointing one judge, he would be more afraid of favoritism and dishonorable dealing; besides, this plan involved more expense, and it is well known that the large fairs are not always a financial success. The managers of the Dog Show, which was held in London, during the time of holding the Western Exhibition, and was very widely advertised, employed single expert judges only; to whom they paid \$75 each. The awards gave general satisfaction, but the show was a financial failure, at which he was not surprised. Yet, if the work could be done by experts in all departments and the cost not be too

great, he was strongly in favor of that method. He said, as the Ontario Agricultural College is the seat of the Agricultural Educational System of Ontario, he thought it would be wise for them to hold examinations, and grant certificates to those who passed suitable examinations as judges of the various kinds of stock and other subjects relative to agriculture.

F. W. Hodson said our fairs are useful principally as a means of educating the people in all matters relative to agriculture. The time has come when this should be done in the best possible way, and I believe it will give better satisfaction to appoint a single judge, as suggested by Mr. Gibson. I believe this plan would meet with the hearty endorsement of the great majority of breeders. By the present system, really good judges cannot always be procured; for instance, the Western Fair Board this year endeavored to obtain a certain man who lives east of Toronto, as a judge on Down Sheep; for his services he was to receive \$5; his railway fare to London and return would be \$7.60; his other expenses would naturally be as much more—say in all \$15; his reply was he would like to accommodate the Board, and was willing to give his time, but would not come and incur a financial loss—therefore his services were lost. Such occurrences as this frequently happen in all departments, and frequently men totally unacquainted with the class they are set to judge, are appointed. The result is, the educational advantages in such classes are entirely lost, as prizes are misplaced. How are the young or ignorant to learn anything from such awards? The value of the fair to the exhibitors is largely as an advertising medium. Yet, how very discouraging it is to carefully prepare animals for a whole year and then, at the exhibition, to have them passed upon by incompetent men, or men of little experience. This alone has discouraged some of our best breeders from exhibiting. I do not think it would be much more expensive to appoint an expert and properly pay him for his services, than it is now, to appoint three men at \$5 each, as is now practiced. The \$15 which they receive would go a good way toward paying the expenses of a good man. In case the expenses were, by this means, somewhat increased, the benefits derived from the show would be much greater. In poultry breeding I have derived much benefit by watching the work of an expert judge, and comparing the score cards which he attached to the various coops which contained the birds, whose score of good and bad points were marked thereon. By this means we can readily learn in what points the winning birds excel, others not so successful. If the single judge system has proved such a benefit in the poultry department, and there are none who deny this fact, can anyone say why it shall not be equally beneficial in all other classes?

Before the close of the meeting, a unanimous resolution was passed to the effect that this Council is in favor of one expert judge passing on all agricultural exhibits.

The subject for discussion at the next meeting will be "The advisability, or otherwise, of continuing the Provincial Exhibition; also, the Township Shows." All the members of the Club are desired to give this question their earnest attention, and come prepared to discuss these questions at the next meeting, which will be held on Thursday, December 13th.

All clubs amalgamated with the Dominion Farmers' Council are respectfully requested to fully discuss these questions, and send to our corresponding secretary a report of their decisions on or before December the 12th.