

# Boys' and Girls' Clubs

The Year's Work in Manitoba.

By S. T. NEWTON

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It is not generally known that the Boys' and Girls' Clubs is the largest agricultural organization in the province. Commencing with eight small clubs with 460 members, organized by E. Ward Jones in 1913, they have increased to 150 clubs in 1917, with over 15,000 members.

The real secret of their success is the fact that everyone is interested in their welfare and is ready to give assistance, whether it is organizing a club, helping with the fair, or raising money for supplies or prizes. There is close co-operation between the departments of agriculture and of education, consequently there is no duplication of effort, and the resources of both departments are available at all times.

The Boys' and Girls' Club method of teaching agriculture in the elementary schools has been adopted very generally by the teachers, and while the agricultural extension service is in charge of the general direction of the work, the whole program for the year is discussed and mapped out by the public school inspectors in conjunction with the extension service. The inspector is the natural leader in his division, and renders excellent assistance in organizing the clubs, although each club is free to carry on the work along whatever lines seem best to suit its own particular conditions.

### Much Assistance Given

The agricultural extension service sent out last year the following free material to the various clubs: 2,110 eggs, 5,250 pounds of peas, 4,750 pounds of beans, 40,320 pounds of potatoes, 3,360 pounds of barley, 660 pounds of corn, 13,200 pounds of wheat, 2,176 pounds of oats. For the fair it provided one-third of the amount of money actually paid out in cash prizes on the agricultural and home economics exhibits. From two to three judges were supplied for each of the 140 fairs, the agricultural college staff spending almost three weeks in placing awards at Boys' and Girls' Club fairs and suggesting how still better work might be done next year.

The plan has been followed of including in the contests only a few typical agricultural and home economics pursuits, in order that both teachers and pupils may become thoroughly familiar with the line of work in which they are most interested. In all, 12 contests were included, but it was strongly urged that members should not take part in more than four contests and that these should be well done. The contests and the number taking part in each was approximately

as follows: Woodworking, 1,200; pig, calf and colt raising, 1,800; chicken raising, 3,850; grain growing, 600; gardening, 12,560; sewing, 6,700; canning, 2,130; cooking, 3,200; weed eradication, 1,230 and essays, 2,100. The attendance at the various fairs ranged from a couple of hundred at some of the smaller fairs to 2,500 at fairs like Dauphin, Virden, or Portage la Prairie, and the number of entries at each corresponded very closely with the attendance.

### Encouragement For Food Production

A special effort was made during the past year to increase food production, and when it was produced, to see that all perishable foods were canned. To this end special organizers were sent out early in the spring to help get the clubs started, and during July and August three and sometimes five canning demonstrators were kept constantly on the move, and the number of exhibits of vegetables and canned foods in evidence at the fairs showed that the children had readily responded to the appeal for greater food production.

In all 150 school fairs were held, and although they were necessarily held at a very busy season, the attendance of both children and grown-ups was very gratifying, and showed that great interest was taken, not only in the exhibits, but in the judging competitions and addresses, which were generally given immediately after the judging was concluded. In December, 26 of the club members securing the highest score in their respective communities were the guests of the agricultural college, and spent a very pleasant week, visiting all departments of the college and finding out the advantages of a college course. Judging by the interest taken it is a safe guess that several of the visitors on this occasion will later enroll as students at the agricultural college.

Next year's bulletin is being prepared and will be issued early in the New Year. Food production will again be the watchword, and an effort will be made through team work to arouse a spirit of enthusiasm and pride in each local district.

The following schedule illustrates the steady growth of the Boys' and Girls' Club movement in Manitoba from the beginning:

	1912	1914	1915	1916	1917
Home Fairs	320	815	4,500	9,350	12,500
Winter Fairs	8	28	53	105	148
Central Clubs	8	28	53	110	150
Branch Clubs	64	224	484	790	990
Members	400	1,547	5,500	12,250	15,120



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