

Fruit Growers' Association of Ontario.

It is being frequently asked whether this Association is making any return proportionate to the \$1,800 which it receives annually from the Provincial treasury, and there seems to be some just ground for the inquiry, for the management have fallen into evident forgetfulness of the purpose for which the Association was created. "Its objects" (we quote from its constitution) "shall be the advancement of the science and art of fruit culture . . . by collecting, arranging and disseminating useful information."

In pursuance of this a report is presented annually to the Minister of Agriculture, and printed at the expense of the province, which contains the discussions at the one only meeting now held during the year, and the papers presented thereat. Whatever may be the value of that report, its distribution is confined largely to the two thousand members, more or less, who annually pay a fee of one dollar into the treasury of the society. Our farmers and agriculturists number about 200,000, of whom only the small number referred to receive a copy of the proceedings, excepting, perhaps, a few favored ones who may be supplied by their local member with a copy of the Minister's report, which usually contains this also.

Of the report itself we would call the attention of the directors to the evident amount of irrelevant matter which it contains, imparting no information whatever on "the science or art of fruit culture." No pains are taken to eliminate such matter from notes of discussions, or from the papers presented, thereby condensing valuable information and enabling the reader to find what he is seeking without wading through useless verbiage.

Of late years, for some reason, the Association has dropped the New Fruit Committee, whose annual report used to be one of the most valuable documents presented, and the want of which is complained of now very generally. This should be resumed and placed in the hands of authorities that the country can fully depend upon, and not placed in the hands of irresponsible men who have neither the knowledge nor interest in compiling such a report as the subject demands.

It is also asked what benefit is the country deriving from the annual distribution of plants to the members of the Association. We do not see any reports of success or failure, hence we presume those who get them look upon them as a bonus for becoming or remaining members, quite overlooking the fact that the intention in instituting this distribution was to make each recipient an experimental station for testing the adaptation of the plant or tree to his locality.

Further complaint is made that while the statute requires that the directors shall reside in the agricultural district which they represent, by the system of nomination and election adopted the letter of the law may be complied with, but its spirit is manifestly violated. How can a director residing permanently in South Victoria, sitting year after year at the Board, be said to represent North Victoria, Haliburton, Durham, Northumberland; or residing in the South of Huron represent Bruce and Grey properly; or residing almost within a gun shot of each other represent Wellington, Waterloo, Wentworth, Halton, Dufferin, City of Hamilton, Lincoln, Welland, Haldimand and Monck; or residing in Toronto represent York, Ontario, Peel or Cardwell?

The evident intent of the law requiring such residence is thereby to diffuse more widely an interest in fruit growing. This has been lost sight of by the nominating committee, who are generally chosen from the Board, and thus form an annual mutual admiration committee, who proceed to nominate and elect themselves year after year. It is time that more attention be paid to the purpose of the residential requirement, and changes gradually effected in the directorate so as to bring all parts of the Province eventually into touch with the Association's work.

We know also that the Association has lost much in public estimation by adopting the rule of changing its President every year or two. It had better go back to the course formerly pursued of choosing its President from among its most capable and influential members and retaining him in office as long as he is willing to serve, thereby securing the benefit of his attention and influence to advance throughout the Province the objects of the Association. By continuing to follow the course adopted the past few years of advancing the Vice-President to the President's chair, we will find, if possible, even more poorer representatives in that position in future than many of them in the past few years. A president, besides possessing all the requirements to constitute him a good chairman, must be generally well versed in "the science or art of fruit culture," and not a mere novice or even a specialist in some one branch.

We have thus called attention to the present position of the Association, as we have found it in public opinion, in no spirit of fault-finding criticism, but in the hope that those interested in its usefulness will take steps to restore it to its proper position in public esteem, by giving more attention to the purposes of its creation, and scrutinizing more carefully the methods used, so that it shall accomplish all that the public have a right to expect in return for the support given it from the public purse.

The Dominion Grange.

At the nineteenth annual session of the Dominion Grange, in Toronto, Worthy Master Peter Hepinstall, in his annual address, laid it down that the Grange was in no sense a political or party organization, nor could it be used for that purpose. Its objects were to develop a higher and better manhood and womanhood, to enhance the attractions of farm homes, to strengthen attachment to the farming industry, to foster mutual understanding and co-operation, to systematise work, to discountenance the credit system, to oppose the spirit and management of any corporation or enterprise that tends to oppress the people and rob them of their just profits, to remove the antagonism between labor and capital, to oppose excessive salaries, high rates of interest and exorbitant percentages in trade, to carefully ponder all subjects of interest to farmers, to heed the drift of current movements, and throw influence always on the side of right. He noted with pleasure the recent vote in favor of prohibition. There was not only room for the Grange in this country, but a demand for it.

Bros. H. Glendenning and Jabel Robinson were appointed by the Master to strike standing committees. They reported the following:—

Committee on Officers' Reports—Bros. D. McTavish, Edwin Peart, Sylvanus Austin.

Legislation—Bros. Wm. Wallace, James Fallis, Alex. McKay, H. Glendenning and D. Kennedy.

Education—Bros. A. W. Peart, A. Brownridge, D. G. McKenzie and Geo. Brown.

Agriculture—Bros. D. McTavish, John Cuming, Michael Connell, Andrew Shore, Robt. Milliken, Chas. Cross.

Constitution and By-Laws—Bros. Jabel Robinson, C. J. Nesbitt, Lyman Henry and F. D. Quance. Good of the Order—Peter Hepinstall, W. M. Baker, J. O. Smith, J. M. Kaiser, Mrs. Cuming and Matthias Schilz.

Finance—Edwin Peart, Sylvanus Austin, J. M. Syme and G. F. House.

The Executive Committee reported that during the year amendments had been passed (in the direction asked) to the Provincial Game Laws for the destruction of brown rabbits and the preservation of quail, for the exemption of horticulturists and agriculturists from the penalties of the Workman's Compensation for Injuries Act, and for the teaching of the rudiments of agriculture in schools and other school law changes. The committee recommended that organizers be put in the field to organize new granges, and that they be paid from the charter fee, which should be raised to \$13 at least. Referred to the Committee on Officers' Reports.

The report of the Overseer, Mr. D. Kennedy, very ably presented the necessity for individual independence on the part of farmers, and for the breaking of the party bondage that has so long held sway. He was glad to report that signs of independence were spreading. Politicians, too, were beginning to realize this.

The Committee on Agriculture reported that the indebtedness of farmers is now computed at an enormous sum, the interest of which entails heavy burdens upon them. Through the operation of fiscal laws the few are enriched at the expense of the many, and colossal fortunes are amassed from the sweat and toil of the working classes. The committee recommended economy and entrenchment, living within means, the wise and honest use of the ballot, the abandoning of unprofitable lines of industry, and the turning of attention to others.

The Committee on Education recommended, first, that no change be made in the public school act in regard to the length of summer holidays; the short term has been tried and found undesirable. Second, that we see no sufficient reason to recommend a change from the payment of teachers' salaries quarterly to half yearly. Third, that the public school course of instruction be extended to afford a better and more thorough education, and that it be made more practical and include more studies relating to the pursuit of agriculture. Fourth, we do not think there is any adequate reason shown why any person wishing a higher education should pay for it by fee. Fifth, with regard to rescinding county grants to public and high schools, we have not sufficient information to warrant us in recommending any amendment to the school law. Sixth, in regard to changing the basis of distributing the public money to schools, we consider that the present plan is preferable to that advocated on the basis of average attendance alone. Seventh, we are not prepared at present to advocate any change in regard to the superannuation fund of teachers in public and high schools. Adopted.

Committee on Constitution and By-laws:—With regard to the taking up political questions, as done by the Patrons of Industry, we recommend our members to support farmer candidates who are in favor of retrenchment and economy, but believe we have no right to control their individual votes. Adopted.

The Secretary, Mr. R. Wilkie, reported that subordinate granges that report directly to him are much more prompt than the division granges, many of which had not sent in their returns this year. Reports, too, were often incomplete. He was, therefore, unable to make an accurate statement of the standing of the Grange in Ontario.

RECEIPTS.

Cash from Last Audit	\$225 29
Cash from Fees and Dues	244 96

\$470 25

DISBURSEMENTS.

Paid Treasurer	\$225 29
Stationery	3 35
Printers' Account	38 95
Executive Committee's Expenses	48 05
Postage and Express	11 15
Cash on Hand	143 46

\$470 25

The Committee on Legislation reported, first, against cumulative voting, fearing that it would lead to corruption by political schemers who would be likely to control the votes of the various organizations, sects or societies. Second, that the initiative and referendum possesses many good features, but at the present time the people are not educated enough along that line for the Government to warrant its enactment as legislation; also, it may be found a slow and expensive way of securing legislation. Third, that the Ontario Government be asked for an act reducing the number of county councillors, to enact a law abolishing grand jurors, and to amend the game law by prohibiting the destruction of quail at any time. Fourth, that the Dominion Government be memorialized to reduce the tariff to a revenue basis, and also, subject to safe restrictions and conditions, to increase the currency of the country by the issue of treasury notes. Fifth, that pensioning civil servants be abolished, life assurance being now popular and safe, and can be recommended. Adopted.

A special committee reported that they had visited the Grange Wholesale Supply Company's store on King street, in which they found a large and varied stock. They also examined their mode of doing business, and heartily recommended them to the confidence of the people of Ontario. Adopted.

The Committee on the Good of the Order recommended that some general action be taken to increase the membership, and endorsed the proposition to put active deputies in the field for organizing purposes. Social gatherings of the local granges, with speeches, entertainment and the reading of the Grange declaration of principles, were recommended. Every member should make a personal effort to secure as large an attendance, especially of the young, as possible. They recommended that the seventh edition of the manual be used, and that all meetings be conducted in "form." Do business in a business-like way, and have accounts well kept and regularly audited. Take the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, and make it the Grange official paper. Meet regularly and promptly. Hold afternoon meetings. Write articles to the ADVOCATE. If circumstances permit, start a library. Have subjects for discussion well prepared beforehand, and have as many take part as possible. Adopted.

Officers were elected as follows:

Master—Dawson Kennedy, Peterboro. Overseer—D. G. McKenzie, Lucknow. Secretary—R. Wilkie, Blenheim. Treasurer—Peter Hepinstall, Fordwich. Lecturer—George Brown, Gresham. Chaplain—Thos. Porter, Banda. Steward—Sylvanus Austin, Whitby. Assistant Steward—W. M. Baker, Littlewood. Gate-keeper—Lyman Henry, Sombra.

Lady Officers:—Ceres—Mrs. Cuming, Londresborough. Pomona—Mrs. Robinson, Middlemarch. Flora—Mrs. Austin, Whitby. Lady Steward—Mrs. Lethbridge, Glencoe.

Executive Committee:—Hy. Glendenning, Manilla, and Jabel Robinson, Middlemarch.

Auditors:—James Fallis, Newbridge, and J. M. Kaiser, Raper.

The Finance Committee's report was amended to the effect that in future auditors serve without compensation.

It was decided that the next meeting be held in Toronto at the call of the Executive Committee.

Arrangements have been made by which, at least once every month, a practical article furnished by the Grange will appear in the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

Test Your Seeds.

It is a good plan to order your seeds early and then test their germinating power. A little time and trouble exercised at this time of the year will often save months of vexatious delay later on in the season, and perhaps make all the difference between a good crop and one that will not pay for cultivation. The following experience will illustrate this point:—Last spring one of our most progressive and painstaking farmers, after buying his seed corn, thought that it did not look altogether right, so he obtained a box of mould, set it in the kitchen window and planted twenty-five grains, when his suspicions were confirmed by finding that only about one-half the seed would grow. He therefore condemned the whole lot and bought fresh, which proved all right. His neighbors, who did not take the precaution to test their seed, sowed the first lot, with the result that their cornfields were patchy, only about one-half growing. In this way double the amount of labor in cultivating and keeping the land clean was required for only half the crop. Professor Saunders, in his report, states that the samples sent to him to be tested varied all the way from 100 per cent. of good seed to samples in which only 4 per cent. of the seeds would germinate. It will certainly pay to test the germinating power of all seeds before sowing.