

SCHOOL FAIRS IN NEW BRUNSWICK

September was a busy month in School Fair work. In almost every locality where a Fair was held, the interest both among children and people amounted to enthusiasm. Many who had not been in touch with school work since early youth, attracted by features related to their own occupation, found it pleasant and profitable to spend a few hours in thus giving encouragement to the children. The crowds of citizens who have attended have caused the pupils of the schools to recognize that what they are doing is appreciated, and this union of thought and action practically expressed, between young and mature, cannot fail to give a deeper purpose to the preparation the schools afford for higher and more resourceful citizenship.

While the Nature Study and Agriculture part of the School Course, through the School Garden with the Home Plot and Poultry Project work growing out of the instruction given at the schools, provided the major quantity of the exhibits and formed the basis on which interest was developed, results of other study contributed to broaden the influence exerted. Writing, Drawing, Composition (Essays), Pressed Plants, Collections of Seeds and of Insects, Maps, Plans of Home Properties, Domestic Science and Manual work in wood, all had their place at most of the Fairs. Only by consolidating and interweaving practical outdoor application with school room study, can the great power the school possesses for community building be exerted. The School Fair calls the attention of the ratepayers to their school, to its local value and to the importance of the teacher's office. It is a sort of clearing house, an annual summing up of results in a form that can be seen and handled. It trains pupils to put themselves into touch with the things that occupy the time of the people and thus helps to make the work of education to be the early steps of men's and women's employments.

The casual observer at School Fairs cannot but be impressed with the educational value of the work that leads up to them. The interested attention of the pupils, their close and critical comparison of exhibits, the questions asked as to the judging, their expressions of determination to put forth greater effort next year, bear record that character moulding is going on and that the school is accomplishing a purpose in their young lives.

To a much larger extent than last year, union among districts for School Fair work has been effected. In one case, at Sussex, nine districts co-operated, giving the Fair the rural and town features in healthy combination. At Chatham, Sackville, Hartland, Hampton and other places, the same principle was followed. Even in purely rural localities the same plan worked admirably. At Cambridge five, Young's Cove Road three, and at Jacksonville two districts united with excellent results. Train-

ing among the young of this kind cannot but be beneficial. Knowledge of each other, obtained by actually uniting in educational activity, will conduce to break down local jealousies and sectional feeling and to create union and co-operation.

This year preparation for Fair work has extended over a longer period of time. Through the winter and spring the Fair idea has been kept to the front and used as an impelling power to increase interest in regular school work. This has also helped to connect with production, knowledge and instruction. It generally occurs that the best students have the best exhibits, not only of school room work, but of garden products. The scientific side of production is thus emphasized. The complex nature of productive industry is shown to need not only art, the practical, but also science, observation, study and experimentation.

Our plan has been to, so far as possible, obtain judges from the localities where Fairs are held. We find that by so doing there is a closer connection with resident people. The official in charge with the teachers, acts as interpreter of the prize list and is always present to aid with his judgment as becomes necessary. Exhibitors are given a number which is placed on each exhibit. No names appear on exhibits. Judges have a record sheet on which they mark the number opposite the prize awarded. From these sheets and the registration paper the amount of prizes awarded each exhibitor is made out.

Prizes are purposely kept small. The feature kept prominent is education, not the amount of money to be obtained. To the three making the best showing at each Fair, certificates of award are granted. It is suggested that those who receive such certificates have them framed and that they allow them to be hung in the school room for the remainder of the school year, thus serving as an incentive for further continued effort.

A noteworthy fact in connection with this year's School exhibitions has been that in several places—Jacksonville, Andover, Kingston and Chatham—the Boys' and Girl's Community Clubs (Poultry and Live Stock), under the direct charge of Agricultural Department officials, have also made creditable showings. Such work indicates the trend of thought of the people. There is a period between the time of leaving school and mature age when many young people are lost to the country, through lack of much to interest them. This form of continuation work is much needed, and every encouragement should be given our youthful citizens in the productive industries, to keep them in touch with the schools and carry on their activities in the communities under the most approved and scientific methods. While the efforts of those of school age can best be carried on through the school as a centre, care and attention should