

should control and harmonize the efforts of the original local agricultural associations of the country.

At an early date in our history agricultural societies in imitation of similar institutions in older



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countries were successfully established in the province of Upper Canada. In 1830 an Act was passed to encourage the formation of district societies, and an annual grant of £100 was offered each society organized, provided its members raised £50. As time went on the conditions under which the grant could be obtained were made more liberal. Subsequently when the municipal districts were broken up into county municipalities, the district associations were gradually converted to county (or electoral district) societies, and township societies began to be formed.

After these county and township societies had been in successful operation for some time, their supporters conceived the idea of a central association that should bear the same relation to the whole province that these smaller societies did to their respective fields of action. After considerable discussion the "Provincial Agricultural Association" was organized in July, 1846, so that when the Agriculture and Arts Association of Ontario (which was practically the same organization) was disestablished at the end of 1895, it had almost completed a perfect half-century of useful existence. In 1847 the association was incorporated by Act of Parliament under the name of "The Agricultural Association of Upper Canada."

In the year following Confederation (1868) an act was passed by the legislature of Ontario, by which the association was made responsible to the Commissioner of Agriculture, its constitution revised, its governing body or council being made to consist of a representative from each of twelve (afterwards thirteen) districts, into which the province was divided, and its name changed to the Agriculture and Arts Association of Ontario. Under this constitution the association remained until its end.

THE PROVINCIAL EXHIBITIONS.

The work of the association for a great portion of its existence was largely concerned with the holding of a provincial fair. The first Provincial Exhibition was held in Toronto on October 21st and 22nd, 1846. The next year an exhibition was held at Hamilton, and thereafter an exhibition was held annually in different places, the various cities in the province being chosen in turn (some of them several times), until finally the last exhibition under the auspices of the association was held at London in 1889. Not only were these exhibitions in themselves a vast encouragement to the pursuit of excellence in the production of agricultural products, but the fact that they were held in succession in various parts



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of the province had a wonderful influence in stimulating agricultural activity in quarters where otherwise it might never have been aroused.

PROVINCIAL PLOWING MATCHES.

Another feature of the association's activity was the holding of provincial plowing matches.