

Farmers' Associations

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The rapid strides which improved agriculture is now making in this "Canada of Ours," is in my opinion largely due to the numerous agricultural associations established in our country. As iron sharpeneth iron, so do men's minds, when brought in contact with each other, quicken and expand. Experiences are given, ideas exchanged, practices carefully criticised. Men are drawn out of the old ruts by the actual experience and convincing arguments of their brother farmers. In short, these farmers' associations, if properly conducted, are vast schools of agriculture, where each by turn may impart to the many something new, something valuable to all.

We in New Brunswick watch with interest for the reports of proceedings of your Agricultural and Arts Association, Dairymen's Association, Fruit Growers' Association, Stock Breeders' Association, and your Agricultural Commission of Ontario, as they are published in a condensed form in the *ADVOCATE*. How much impetus has been given to the development of your improved agriculture by these institutions is something of which the farmers of Ontario are the better judges; but sure it is that much valuable service has been rendered by them, and the farmers, as well as the country, been largely benefited. In addition to these organizations, the agricultural societies of your townships, and the numerous fairs which have been successfully held under their jurisdiction, have afforded a wide field for information and comparison. In this Province we have for quite a number of years enjoyed the advantage of local agricultural societies in the several counties, and very much has been accomplished through their instrumentality. Greater interest is being awakened in the different breeds of stock and improved systems of husbandry. Farming is beginning to be looked upon as an occupation and science that every man is not qualified to follow or grapple with successfully without much preparation and experience.

Not possessing any of the Provincial associations of which Ontario can boast, yet believing strongly in the good they accomplish, quite a large number of the farmers in the various sections of the Province sought for and obtained the formation of a Provincial Farmers' Association for New Brunswick, the sixth annual meeting of which will be held at Hopewell, County of Albert, on the first Wednesday in February, 1882. The meetings of this body of farmers have always been largely attended and very interesting. I think it can be safely said that it has a strong hold in the country. Various subjects bearing directly on our agricultural pursuits are discussed at its annual meetings and much good has already been accomplished.

The question might fairly be discussed as to whether it would not be to the advantage of the agriculture of the Dominion to have a yearly gathering of the leading farmers of the several Provinces at some central point, where discussions might be held on agricultural topics as viewed from a Dominion standpoint. Such a course is now being adopted in the United States by Commissioner Loring, who, I notice, has issued a call to the officers of all agricultural organizations, as well as leading farmers, in the United States, to assemble at Washington in the month of January next. The convention will be composed of Professors of Agriculture from the various Agricultural Colleges, stock breeders, dairymen, market gardeners, fruit growers, members of the different State Boards of Agriculture, &c.

England has for years been drawing large supplies of food from North America, and will continue to do so. The question as to what proportion of the necessary supply will the Dominion of Canada be in a position to furnish is an important one, and fraught with the deepest interest to every Canadian. The "British Isles" will for many years, no doubt, offer to us the most profitable market in which to dispose of our surplus agricultural produce. To know just what those markets demand, in order to secure the highest price, is a matter of much importance to every farmer and stock-raiser; and possibly in no way can such knowledge be imparted so readily and satisfactorily as through the agency of a convention of the leading farmers of the Dominion.

The suggestion is made with a view of eliciting the opinions of others through the columns of the *ADVOCATE*.

[It is our opinion that a Farmers' Alliance would be of great benefit to the agriculturists of this Dominion, particularly so if the association could be conducted in an independent, open and free

manner, and provision made against centralizing the power or influence too much in one locality, and too long on any individual. This suggestion comes from New Brunswick, and as Mr. Johnstone, the late Principal of the Ontario School of Agriculture, suggested the same course, perhaps some persons in our other sister Provinces will add their opinions in regard to it. We would feel obliged to Mr. Johnstone, the late Principal, if he could furnish us with the rules, regulations or by-laws; or perhaps Mr. Peters could forward us the rules that govern their Alliance. We shall be pleased to furnish further information in regard to the above question.—ED.

Sheep at the Chicago Fat Stock Show.

Though very good, the display of sheep at this show scarcely equalled its predecessor of 1880. While in some of the rings were to be seen animals the peer of the best, both in flesh and breeding, there was evidently a falling back in the standard of other rings—notably the ear-load lots. These latter, while in fair mutton condition, seemed out of place in an exhibition of which the word *fat* is the designative title. In the absence of competition, the prizes were divided between the only two ear lots in the show—the first going to a fair lot of graded Southdowns, the second to a lot of low grade Shropshires—leaving the third prize to revert to the treasury through absence of competition.

As heretofore, for the convenience of exhibitors, the sheep were first shown in competition with their own breeds—Long Wools, Middle Wools, Fine Wools—before being grouped in general competition for the sweepstakes prizes.

In the Long Wool rings the effect of the Cotswold boom was apparent—with the exception of two or three Leicester grades, no other variety contesting the honors. The demand for rams, which has for several years past been so highly satisfactory, has had its effect on the show of wethers in the Long Wool rings. Those shown were good, but their number was limited. The restriction of exhibits to animals other than those used for breeding purposes, as was to have been expected, limited competition in the ewe rings to barren animals and those too young for breeding.

As usual, the pens of the "Downs" proved a centre of attraction. In these the Shropshires contested the laurels—often successfully—with the hitherto peerless Southdowns, dividing the honors in a majority of the rings, and triumphing in the grand sweepstakes for "best ewe or wether in the show." This high honor has now been successively won by the Cotswolds in 1879, the Southdowns in 1880, and the Shropshires in 1881. Notwithstanding the twinge of chagrin which momentarily affected the champions of the less fortunate animals, there was apparent a very general admission that the victors were fairly entitled to their high honors.

The Sheep Department has no more interesting feature than the two pens of fine wool wethers, shown by the Merino Breeders' Associations of Western New York. Heretofore there has been no show of fine wool sheep worthy of consideration. A few imperfectly matured animals have been shipped in to carry off prizes by default—serving to encourage the too-prevalent error that the Merino is not to be considered as an element in the mutton product of the country. Ten fine wool wethers were shown, averaging in weight over 136 pounds, after remaining on the cars five days. Beside them was displayed their fleeces, sheared in 1881, average weight 18½ pounds of unwashed wool. A prominent Chicago butcher offered the outside price for the lot—only to find that he had been forestalled by an enterprising competitor from Detroit. Let the Merino be saluted as it comes into line as a mutton producer which competitors for future honors may not safely ignore.

The failure of exhibitors was conspicuous in the slaughtering tests. But one ring—that for two year-olds—was filled; and one of the competitors in this withdrew before the hour for leading the block arrived—and for the first time since the tests have been opened to them, the sheep men have omitted the opportunity for vindicating their claims by the crucial test offered by the knife and block. The reasons for such omission will not be discussed in this connection. Whatever they are, it is to be hoped that in future shows this highly interesting feature—pregnant with information to the feeder, the consumer and the butcher—will not be so conspicuous a failure.—[Breeder's Gazette.

Care of Machines.

After the season for using them is over it will not pay to leave the harvesting machines in the fields or by the side of the highway. They can do no good in either of these places, but they will be seriously damaged if left exposed to the destructive influences of the weather.

The manufacturers say that when left constantly out of doors the machines last only about half as long as they would if they were protected from the weather when not in use.

Although not as expensive, and therefore not involving as heavy loss when neglected, plows, harrows, horse-rakes, and all other farm implements, are seriously damaged by exposure to the elements.

Not only do the implements which are left out of doors wear faster and break oftener, thus involving the necessity of frequent repairs, with the expense and loss of time inseparable therefrom, but they are also much harder to use than those which are properly housed. A reaper which has stood in the field all winter will draw much harder than one which was put under cover at the end of the harvest. Continued exposure of any machine involves the necessity of increased power, with increased liability of breakage, in its use.

It is a noticeable fact that in sections of the country where the farmers are rich and prosperous, it is seldom we find machines lying about the fields or stock running the roads or weathering the cold autumn rains and sleet; but, in sections where the farmers are poor, though the land may be fertile, we invariably find farm implements left in the field, in the summer their cattle running the roads, and in the late fall, when they should be in the stable, we find them shivering in the fence corner or seeking shelter in barns or other buildings the doors of which have been blown off. In such times their only food is frozen grass, or other unwholesome substances. Care and economy must be exercised in all matters relative to agriculture, or on the most fertile land nothing but a bare existence can be had, and that only by the hardest drudgery. The same men on the same land by careful management and a study of their business could be comfortable and respected, neither of which careless farmers are.

What the Farmer Should Study.

The farmer should study the laws of concentration. He should learn how to concentrate his crops into the best paying articles. Does he consider that butter, cheese, beef, pork and mutton represent only a certain amount of grass, hay and grain that his farm produces? That, instead of selling the raw commodities, he can, by putting them into these articles, get much better returns for his products? His study should be how to transform the raw products of his farm into something that is concentrated and that will bring him the most money. What he raises has to go to some market. By condensing it, little freight will have to be paid, and thus much will be saved. A farm should be a factory for changing the raw products into articles of general consumption that have a commercial value the world over—that are of the best quality, that keep well and sell well, and bring prices that will pay well for the skill, labor and capital employed in producing them.

The January number, besides other illustrations, will contain a fine original cut of Shropshire Down sheep, the prize winners at Provincial Exhibition. We hope, shortly, to give the commencement of a series of letters on stock, dairy and agriculture in the north of Scotland.

The attention of our readers is called to an able letter from Mr. John Carnegie, of Peterboro, Ont., member of the Board of Agriculture and Arts, on the Provincial Exhibition "jumble."

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