

Farmers' Clubs.

Middlesex Agricultural Council.

The usual monthly meeting of this Council was held on the 17th ult. in the office of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE. The time was chiefly occupied in discussing the report of the Committee appointed to visit the Model Farm. Mr. Henry Anderson, chairman of the Committee, read the report as follows:—

On the 7th of October your committee arrived at the Farm and spent the afternoon in examining the different departments of the Farm, the garden and the creamery, as far as the time permitted. They found that the soil of the farm varied very much; it is not all first-class land by any means, but they consider this no objection to a public experimental farm. A large proportion of the land in the province is no better than the Model Farm, and it is important that students should have an opportunity of learning how to improve land that is not naturally first-class. There is a great deal of draining required; there are plenty of Canada thistles to extirpate, and if students can be shown the best methods of doing these things by practical experiments, there is no knowledge in the whole system of cultivation more necessary and useful.

They paid particular attention to the creamery. It has long been regretted that Canadians should lose such a large amount of money on account of the poor quality and low price of their butter, and the only remedy has been supposed to be the establishment of butter factories, as farmers in general have not facilities for making first-class butter at home. To attain this object it was necessary to show farmers by actual experiment that it paid better to send their cream to a well-conducted factory than to manufacture it themselves.

From an inspection of the accounts your committee is satisfied that this has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the numerous farmers who have patronized the Guelph factory this season. Prof. Barré is a perfect enthusiast in his profession, and is only too ready to instruct all visitors.

Your committee was rather unfortunate in the time chosen for their visit, as the greater part of the live stock was away at exhibitions, and as the harvest was past they had no chance of observing the growing crops, and the principal outbuildings had been lately burnt. The afternoon passed before they had time to examine but a small portion of what was being done on the Farm, so that they can only make a general report of their impressions from what they saw. Prof. Brown kindly accompanied them and was anxious to give all the information required.

Your committee spent the night in Guelph and returned to the Farm in the morning. As it was raining they devoted the few hours they had to spare to the College. They were heartily welcomed and shown through the interior of the building; and as it is impossible in a report of this kind to go into details, we will only express our conviction that there is no better school for a young farmer to finish his education. Prof. Pantou appeared to us to be particularly well posted and familiar with the several branches under his charge, and he was certainly most obliging in giving us explanations. Your committee were kindly entertained by the Principal, Prof. Mills.

With regard to the frequent complaints that the College and Farm are too costly, your committee have no special means of judging more than yourselves and other farmers as to whether it costs more than is really necessary to secure the results attained. If it does not cost more, it is an exception to all other Government institutions.

COMMENTS UPON THE ABOVE REPORT BY THE EDITOR OF THE ADVOCATE.

We were unavoidably absent from the meeting when the resolution was passed appointing the committee to visit the Model Farm, but we understand the object was to obtain an independent expression of opinion with regard to the merits of the institution, seeing that so many conflicting ideas existed in the minds of farmers. We leave our readers to judge if the committee has served the best interests of agriculture, and if the report is worth the money which our farmers have to pay for it. All we want is to ascertain the truth, and we would have raised no objection to the appointment of the committee had a more opportune season been selected. The ADVOCATE is the only independent agricultural journal published in the Province; we have visited the Farm at all seasons of the year and at all hours of the day, and there are still many important facts which we have not yet been able to bring to light. What then can be expected from any body of men, whether practical farmers or agricultural professors, in a flying visit to the institution?

The committee undoubtedly felt the weight of their responsibility to the farmers of the Province, and therefore put forth every effort to obtain facts which would be of service to our agricultural interests, and yet the diligent students of the ADVOCATE cannot fail to be struck with the meagreness of the information obtained. That the government creamery is a paying business for the farmers in the vicinity of Guelph, we do not deny, but the report fails to state what percentage of their profits is made at the public expense. It failed to state whether or not their methods of draining and thistle extirpation were in any way superior to those of the ordinary farmer. If the farm managers, with all their knowledge of scientific farming, have to follow the old practical rut, then where are the advantages of the institution?

Many agricultural professors have visited the Farm from time to time, and nothing has lowered such gentlemen in our estimation so much as the fact that they have with one voice spoken of the management in terms of the highest praise. But these professors are not altogether to blame; it would be unprofessional and undignified for them to return criticism instead of thanks for the toadyism of the managers.

It is true that in our private capacity we hold an office in the Middlesex Agricultural Council, and shall do all we can to forward any useful schemes it may have in contemplation, but in our public capacity as editor of the ADVOCATE, we are as independent of the Council as we are of any other corporation; and the Council exercises the same freedom with regard to us. It is therefore to be hoped that these candid and friendly remarks will stimulate the Council to be more cautious in future before voting on further agricultural expenditures.

SIR,—Enclosed find \$2 and two new names; will try and send you more. Have taken the ADVOCATE for years. I also take the Globe and Mail, but hail the ADVOCATE for its independent articles. Long may it prosper.

JOHN G. HENDERSON, Hoodstown.

Prospects of the Middlesex Agricultural Council.

BY MARSHFIELD.

I have read about the organization and incipient development of this Council with keen interest, and it is with great pleasure that I resume my pen and give a word of caution and encouragement. I have never known a farmers' club to have been organized under brighter auspices, and yet owing to this very circumstance greater caution should be exercised. If the originators are men of such character as has been represented in the columns of the ADVOCATE, they will not willingly say "die;" but they are also represented as men of long experience, by which the reader is to infer that they are of considerable seniority, and therefore very conservative in their views. This is out of sympathy with the youths of the nation who are beginning to make their influence felt—in an age when such old fogies as our Senators and the Council of the Agriculture and Arts Association are respectfully enjoined to take an official rest during the surplus span of their lives.

The Middlesex Agricultural Council will have much jealous rivalry to contend with. The Government is squandering public money in organizing Farmers' Institutes throughout the Province, inaugurated at the beginning of this year with loud triumphal flourishes. So long as any good is expected to be accomplished in this manner, the free and self-reliant spirit of the farming community will be chilled, and another period will elapse before farmers become thoroughly aroused to the fact that their only hope lies within themselves. However, the Council is a grand experiment; it is a practical test of the vitality existing in the farming community. It is questionable if the Government forces are appreciably stronger than those of the Council, for the public funds in the hands of the former are largely neutralized by the powerful organ at the disposal of the latter. But the Government has its agricultural organs too. The special fund of the Council—that is, the \$100 granted annually by the editor of the ADVOCATE—forms a very good nucleus, and will be supplemented as soon as the farmer opens his eyes to the fact that it is more effectual and economical to make voluntary contributions than to pass his hard earnings through the hands of the Government officials and other politicians who are eternally clamoring for his affections.

I observe by the last prize essay published in the ADVOCATE that the Council is meditating the founding of an experiment station. In this it will also clash with the Government and its agricultural organs and other confederates in the winning of popular applause. I have little faith either in the skill or in the stability of the average farmer for such an enterprise; it requires a specialist—an enthusiast, in fact. Such an undertaking could be efficiently and profitably conducted by an agricultural journal, but if the experiments were inspected by a committee of the Council, they would win greater confidence amongst many farmers. There are many practical experiments that could be conducted at little or no expense: those conducted by the Government do not meet our present wants; they are too expensive, and are not usually presented to the