

Educational Attractions at Fairs

In the Gazette Department this week Mr. G. C. Creelman, Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes, gives a report of a visit made by him to the Norfolk Union Fair held at Simcoe on Oct. 15th to 17th. As many of our readers know this is a purely agricultural show run exclusively on educational lines. That it has been run with success and with growing interest year after year is conclusive evidence that the amusement or special attraction features are not required to make a fair pay its way or to attract sight-seers. For several years back the gate receipts at Simcoe have averaged \$1,300, which is a good figure for a local district show. With commendable enterprise the management of this fair have developed the educational side of the show in a very creditable way. At this year's fair no less than ten expert judges were brought in from outside points to make the awards. The men selected were among the best known judges in their particular lines in the province. All this has been done at no little expense to the management. And yet it has paid many times over in the increased attendance, the increased entries and the increased interest in all departments of the fair. All attractions and side shows are prohibited from the grounds and there is not even a horse race or a race track. It is an agricultural fair pure and simple.

The management of the Norfolk Union have set a wise example in this line which we are glad to see is being followed to some extent in other parts of the province. Through the efforts of Superintendent Creelman a number of township and district fairs have this fall been supplied with educational features, which have put these shows on a higher plane and brought them into line for doing very effective work in improving the live stock and the quality of the agricultural products in their respective districts. The first, and it is perhaps the most important of these educational features, is that of expert judging. Last spring representatives of the local fairs in the Ottawa Valley district met and through the Institute Department secured the services of several expert judges for their fairs, forming a three weeks' circuit. In addition, expert judges were sent and their expenses paid by the department to several fairs in the Simcoe and Muskoka districts. And thus a good beginning has been made in this important work, which, we believe, will have a far-reaching and wholesome effect in raising the status of the average local and county fair.

To carry out this work successfully there must be co-operation on the part of the local fair boards. For each local board to select and pay for its expert judges as the Norfolk Union has done is too cost-

ly. But by co-operation and a number of fairs in a district uniting, expert judges and other educational features which we will speak of can be had at very little cost to each fair. This can best be done through the Farmers' Institute Department and we are pleased to note that the Superintendent has taken the initiative in this matter. No line of public work carried on in this country, considering the results obtained, is managed at so little cost as the Farmers' Institutes. Last year the average cost per meeting held was \$12, while the cost for New York State, where there are no new districts, with a scattered population to be visited, cost \$35 per meeting.

It is only necessary to mention the names of those who have done duty as expert judges, and in other lines in connection with this new movement to show the value of this work to the country. Among them are D. G. Hammer, J. E. Brethour, Alex. McNeill, A. G. Gilbert, Alex. Gray, R. S. Stevenson, D. Drummond, J. W. Hart, G. R. Cottrell, and W. R. Graham. The presence of any one of these gentlemen at a local fair in the capacity of a judge insures honesty, skill and freedom from local jealousies in awarding the prizes. So interested are these parties in this work that several of them have intimated their intention of taking the short course at the Ontario Agricultural College in January on live stock judging.

Another educational feature of great value has been that of practical demonstration in the killing, dressing and packing of poultry for market. Messrs. Gilbert of the Ottawa Experimental Farm, Graham of the Agricultural College, and Cottrell of Milton were the experts sent out on this work, and it is needless to say that it was most successfully done. Several fairs were visited, and in addition to the practical demonstrations, addresses on poultry raising were given by these gentlemen. A correspondent writes us in regard to the demonstration at Whitby as follows:

"It drew a large number of farmers, their wives and daughters, who received just such information as they desired in regard to the proper breeds which make market fowls, their treatment so as to secure early and quick growth, and then the best method of killing, plucking and shaping them. It marks a new and important diversion from old ruts, and we hope that the new idea will be generally adopted."

Then a third feature of perhaps equal value with either of the other two was that of practical demonstrations in the grading, marking and packing of apples for export. This work was conducted by A. McNeill of Walkerville, fruit inspector in Western Ontario for the Dominion Government. Several

fairs in Simcoe county, including Collingwood, Stayner, Meaford and Clarksburg, were visited, where assistance was rendered by the Georgian Bay Fruit Growers' Association. By introducing this one feature these fairs had the prestige and influence of this organization in increasing the attendance, which they would not have had under ordinary conditions.

In addition to these three features there are no doubt other lines that might profitably be taken up and which will come as this new work grows. A splendid beginning has, however, been made and an entirely new movement set on foot that cannot but be of very great value to our fairs if taken advantage of by them. There is no longer any good ground for contending that amusements or special attractions are essential to the success of a fall fair, and especially of the small local shows. These educational features, if properly advertised and conducted, will make better drawing cards than the side shows and so-called special attractions to be found at the majority of our fairs. It is to be hoped that the good work will proceed and that next year, instead of a dozen or two fairs taking up this special work, we shall see every fair in the country falling into line. Fair boards should consider the matter at an early date and form circuits so as to facilitate the work of expert judging at next year's shows.

Dairy Work in the West

Mr J. A. Ruddick, Chief Dairy Expert, Agricultural Department, Ottawa, returned from British Columbia last week. While west he organized a travelling dairy school under the direction of J. E. Hopkins and C. W. MacDougall. Classes have already been held at several points and this work will close the first week of November. Mr. Ruddick reports that British Columbia is making considerable progress in dairying.

There are six creameries in operation in the Province, all doing a successful business. Their total output would probably be about half a million pounds. The product was sold to merchants for thirty cents a pound, and by the latter retailed at thirty-five cents.

All Government creameries in the Northwest Territories are doing well. Their total output last year was over 600,000 lbs., but this season the total quantity of butter produced will be much larger. Most of the butter was disposed of at good prices in British Columbia. The greater number of the Northwest creameries are now free from debt, having repaid the loan which they received from the Government. Some have paid off as much as \$3,000 since they began operations four years ago. Settlement is taking place very rapidly in the Territories, many of the newcomers having crossed the line from the United States. There are also a great number of foreigners, many of whom are doing well.