

Farmers' Clubs.

Our \$100 Offer—Organization of a Farmers' Club.

It will be remembered that we recently offered a prize for the best essay on *How can the FARMER'S ADVOCATE best expend \$100 annually in the Farmer's Interest?* The essays we received were numerous and the competition was keen. Many of the essayists were in favor of spending the money in prize essays to be published in the *ADVOCATE*. We did not feel disposed to change this department of our journal; for all our writers are the best and most practical that we can procure in their respective departments, while we have no means of ascertaining the practical efficiency of our essayists—except so far as indicated by their writings. Other essayists advised us to spend the money in increasing the circulation of the *ADVOCATE*. We feared that this might advance our own interests as much as those of the farmers. None of the recommendations mentioned would be a means of reaching any farmers beyond the circle of our readers, while our main object was that those who did not receive the advantages of an agricultural education should derive as much benefit as possible.

We considered that the hundred dollars which we have been annually expending for prizes at the Provincial Exhibition did not benefit our agricultural interests as much as it should. We were willing to continue the expenditure of this sum providing a plan could be devised for devoting it to the true interests of the farmers.

We thought of attempting the organization of a farmers' club, composed of a number of independent and influential farmers, who should have power to administer this fund in such a manner as they should from time to time deem expedient. We were encouraged in this view by several influential farmers who had taken an active interest in agricultural affairs; but we regarded it as no easy task to secure the cooperation of men who enjoyed the confidence and respect of the farming community.

Resolved, however, to yield to no discouragements, we asked the Middlesex County Council to appoint a committee composed of three of the most active, independent, and respected members of their body, with whom we might consult in certain matters pertaining to the farmers' welfare. They kindly did so, and Messrs. Leitch, Boston and Gilmour were the men who composed that committee. For a similar purpose we attended a meeting of the officers of the East Middlesex Agricultural Society, who also kindly appointed a committee composed of Messrs. Anderson, Johnston and Kennedy. At a meeting of these committees, Mr. D. Leitch was appointed chairman of the former, and Mr. Henry Anderson of the latter. We requested these two gentlemen to nominate a third party, some farmer in their municipality who possessed the confidence and respect of his fellow farmers, and who was noted for the interest he took in agricultural and municipal matters. The gentleman so appointed was Mr. J. Kennedy.

Shortly afterwards we called a meeting of these three gentlemen in our office, and consulted them as to the advisability of organizing

a farmers' club. They unanimously assented to our proposals, but requested that the *FARMER'S ADVOCATE* should co-operate with them in the carrying out of their objects. This we agreed to do, but desired that the controlling influence should reside in the hands of the farmers.

At a subsequent meeting held recently in our office, after the committeemen had given the question mature consideration, officers were elected, the club was named, several members were elected, and some other preliminary business was transacted. Mr. Leitch was elected President, Mr. Weld, Vice-President; Mr. Anderson, Secretary, and Mr. Kennedy, Treasurer. After considerable discussion the club was named The Middlesex Agricultural Council. Mr. W. A. Macdonald was instructed to draft constitution and by-laws for discussion at the next meeting. It was agreed that the meetings should be held monthly, on the third Saturday of each month. Mr. Weld handed a cheque of \$100 to the Treasurer. The manner in which the money will be expended will be found from time to time by reading the discussions of the club, which will be reported in the *ADVOCATE*.

We have great confidence in these gentlemen who have organized this club, knowing them personally to be men of honor and integrity. They have held the most honorable and responsible positions in the agricultural and municipal gift of this county for a number of years. They have always placed agricultural interests above jobbery and partyism, and it is their intention to conduct the club on a strictly independent basis.

The *ADVOCATE* does not bind itself to support them in all their actions; it will be as independent of them as it is of all other organizations, although it will uphold them with its funds and its influence so long as it is convinced that they are acting solely for our agricultural interests. It may not always be in accord with their policy, but it will offer no factious obstruction, and will give them every reasonable opportunity of defending their actions in its columns.

We have already taken objection to the name of the club, as we do not wish to create the impression that it is a mere local affair, confined to the county of Middlesex; but the majority held that a more expansive name would be too presumptuous.

Farmers of Canada, if we can show that we deserve your sympathy, we expect to receive it. We want your co-operation for your own good; we want to be criticised—severely, if we deserve it. Each one of you is heir to an equal share of all the benefits to be derived from this Council.

A great deal has been said and written within the past few years about large yields of milk from the various breeds of improved cattle, says the *Journal of Agriculture*. This week we saw a little scrub cow, yellow red, crumpled horns and as ugly as a *mud fence*, that is giving eight gallons of very rich milk per day, on grass supplemented by a few ears of corn per day. She is the property of the well known Merino sheep breeders, R. T. McCulley & Bro., Lee's Summit, Mo.

PRIZE ESSAY.

Small Fruit Culture as an Occupation for Women.

BY MISS JESSIE ROBERTSON, STRABANE, ONT.

If it can be demonstrated satisfactorily that the culture of small fruits is a fairly remunerative, moderately laborious, health-conducive occupation, there can then remain no further question as to its being a good occupation for women.

The sphere of industry allotted to women in general has been very circumscribed until a comparatively recent date, and in the majority of such occupations as were open to them the remuneration was so meagre that it was barely sufficient to provide the necessities of life. Young women desirous of making their own livelihood could only do so by going out to service (in many instances servitude would be a more truthful name), sewing or factory work. Of late years other avenues have been opened up, and to-day we find women copyists, telegraph operators, agents, clerks in shops of all kinds, etc. They have monopolized to a great extent the educational profession, and there are unmistakable indications in our own Dominion that medical and legal doors must soon admit them.

Notwithstanding these facts, however, there is still room for other employments. So many are the applicants for work in the various branches of feminine industry, that the remuneration allowed by employers is cut down to the lowest figures; with many it is but "working life out to keep life." In cities particularly is this the case. A woman who does her work equally as well as, sometimes better than, a man, receives usually about two-thirds, or less, of the remuneration. Tailresses, dressmakers, machine and telegraph operators, copyists, clerks, etc., have long hours, and receive at first between two and three dollars per week. If industrious and competent they may reach four, five, six or seven—but rarely beyond the latter figure. These are not surmises, but facts obtained by inquiry from parties in such occupations.

Now the question suggests itself, Would not the culture of small fruits be more remunerative? In all cases where people work for their living the question of remuneration must be an important one. I think it can be answered without hesitation in the affirmative; observation proves that such is the case. If women can raise fine berries, luscious and juicy, fine flavored currants—and there is no good reason why they can not—they will, without doubt, command the highest market price. Some might raise two objections against this question of remuneration: First, a danger of the market being over-stocked, thus not finding ready sale; and, secondly, that fruit culture affords employment only for a few months of the year. To the first I would reply that in reasonable articles of consumption there is little danger of the supply exceeding the demand, while the palate-pleasing, health-producing, labor-saving properties of fruit render it a specially desirable article of diet. The confined limits of city lots prevent its cultivation; hence, we find good fruit (and honest vendors) ever in demand. If at any time fruit can not be disposed of when fresh, no loss need be sustained. I

C. RICE.