

prominent experts and judges together to discuss the best methods for promoting the success of this great industry. In conclusion, I believe the holding of exhibitions such as these is the means of stimulating our farmers and breeders to give their attention, time and ability to aid in elevating the poultry industry to the high position to which it is justly entitled.

BY THE JUDGES.

NOTE—A very good paper and contains many excellent points. Gives, perhaps, a little too much good advice and not enough detailed experience.

### EGG PRODUCTION.

BY R. H. ESSEX, TORONTO.

WRITTEN FOR POULTRY ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO, BUT NOT FOR COMPETITION.

THE greatest egg producer is the bird that has been bred for the sole purpose of producing eggs. This bird will not necessarily be a Leghorn or a Minorca, although these breeds deservedly have the reputation of being the greatest egg producers living. That is as a class. Without doubt there is a greater proportion of eggs laid by these two breeds than by any other two breeds that can be named, yet there may be individual birds of other breeds that may equal, or even surpass them. If such should be the case, it will be found that these individual birds have been bred with one object in view, namely egg production. Just as the fancier raises birds for exhibition, so may the farmer breed birds for laying purposes. Undoubtedly the proper course to pursue would be to choose your prospective layers from a class already noted for their laying proclivities, but do not imagine you have the best layers on earth simply because the breed selected has that reputation. Every descendant of Hambletonian does not trot within 2.30, but nobody denies that many a trotter with no breeding, has come well within that mark, and has in addition been the foundation of a line of fast ones. Similarly with regard to hens. Many Minorcas and many Leghorns have proved unsatisfactory layers,

while many a Brahma and many a Plymouth Rock have abundantly helped to fill the egg basket.

As I have said, if you are commencing, select your birds from the classes bearing reputations as layers, but don't be discouraged because it is not convenient to do this. Commence right now, with the stock in hand, and note the best layers among your birds. Commence line breeding, with as great regard to mating as you would if breeding for show purposes. Mark the pullet that is the first to lay. Mark the most persistent layer. Mark the hen that moults quickly and gets down to business before the hard winter sets in, and when you have done marking, the spring will be here and you may commence mating. Better to breed from two or three well known layers than to take chances, and mate up a pen containing a dozen or so indifferent ones. As the cock doesn't lay, you can't judge whether he is likely to produce good layers, but you can choose the largest and most vigorous bird of the flock to mate with your selected females. After that it is easy. Never allow anybody to induce you to change the blood of your flock by the introduction of a male bird of another strain, unless you are satisfied he comes from a strain which equals your own as layers. Remember, the sire controls one half the blood of the produce and if you introduce new blood or new stamina into your flock, do so by means of the best laying female you can procure. Even then I would not use her sons as sires, but would dispose of them and mate her daughters back to the old male bird; the produce from this mating would have in their veins three quarters of the blood of your own strain, with sufficient new blood to maintain the vigor of the flock. Do not overlook the necessity for observation each year, so as to intelligently mate your birds the next season, continually choosing the best layers, and limiting your breeding pen to these. The result will be that no matter what breed you start with you will eventually own layers far ahead of any that have been indiscriminately bred. The same advice applies to production of large eggs. I have had Minorcas which have laid large eggs, and Minorcas which have laid small eggs. Brahmas, layers of large eggs, and Brahmas, layers of small. It rests altogether with the particular strain of birds, and not with the breed, as to which will give the best return, either in size or number of eggs.