

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, OCTOBER 5, 1891.

THE EXHIBITION.

Generally speaking, the exhibition held in Winnipeg last week was a success, notwithstanding bad weather on some days. It was conducted throughout on a scale of magnitude never before attempted in western Canada. The prize list was by far the most complete ever presented in the west and the cash value of the prizes was greatly in excess of any previous exhibition. There were many features of interest and attractions connected with this exhibition, which were lacking in previous exhibitions held here. As it was the first exhibition held under the auspices of the association, and as the grounds, buildings, and everything else were new, there were, of course some defects observable. It was impossible, in the limited time at the disposal of the association, to have everything in apple-pie order. The experience gained in connection with this, the first exhibition held by the Winnipeg Industrial Association, will enable the officers and directors to provide even greater conveniences and attractions another year, while there will be ample time, before the holding of another exhibition, to provide increased accommodation, and remedy any defects which were known to exist this year. The attendance has been good and the display of exhibits, both in quantity and quality, very encouraging.

In one particular it is evident that the exhibition has not been a success, and the failure is in a very important direction. This is in the attendance of farmers. The display of farm products has been good, but the attendance of farmers has not been by any means large. The residents of the different towns all over the country, from the lakes to the Rocky mountains, have turned out almost in a body. Every town and village in Manitoba and the territories has been well represented, especially by the business community. The large attendance at the exhibition has therefore been made up largely of the urban population, and not principally of farmers. This is a feature which is to be regretted. The displays of agricultural products and live stock are the principal features of an exhibition in Canada, and the farmers are the people who should be mainly interested in an exhibition, and who should receive the most benefit therefrom.

THE COMMERCIAL said a week or two ago that the attendance of farmers would not be large. Indeed, this was a foregone conclusion for some time prior to the exhibition week. On account of the harvest being so late this year, and harvest hands very scarce, it was certain that the farmers would not, and could not afford to leave their harvest fields, to attend the exhibition. On account of the very late harvest, the great magnitude of the crops, and the scarcity of farm help, the exhibition has been at an unusual disadvantage this year. Few of the farmers were through with the stacking of their grain, and the few who were through with this work, have their threshing and fall plowing to

look after, and the plowing is almost as important as harvesting.

While the farmers had less time than usual this year to gather in their crops and do their fall work, on account of the late harvest, it is evident that fall exhibitions in this country will always be at a disadvantage, so far as the attendance of farmers is concerned. The fall season is short in this country, and the time between the completion of harvest and the beginning of winter, gives the farmers very little spare time in a region where fall plowing is a necessity. Even when the harvest is not later than an average, the farmers have no time to lose at this season of the year. In case of a very early harvest, and the calamity of a light crop, which would not take long to gather, a fall exhibition might be made a success, in point of attendance of farmers, but from observations in past years, as well as from the present season, we are forced to the conclusion that one year with another, the farmers cannot be induced to take time to attend a fall exhibition.

The great success of the exhibition this year has depended upon the urban population, both in point of attendance and in securing exhibits. Many of the exhibits which are shown in the names of farmers, have been collected by the residents of towns. The people of the towns were anxious to see their respective districts represented, and in a number of instances committees or individuals were appointed to go out among the farmers and secure exhibits, and make entries for them. Those who were engaged in this work, report that it was very difficult to gather up exhibits, as the farmers were not sufficiently advanced with their work to prepare them. For instance, from one district alone, we know that a number of entries were made for farmers, through a committee, but the farmers did not have the grain threshed or were unable for other reasons to prepare the exhibits in time. Had it not been, therefore, that the people of the different towns had taken steps to have their districts represented, and in every way possible assisted and encouraged the farmers to make exhibits, the success achieved would not have been possible.

This brings us to the consideration of the advisability of holding the exhibition in the fall. The natural conditions prevailing in this country, seem to point to the summer as the best time for holding an exhibition which is to extend over a number of days. Just before the commencement of the harvest is a time at which the farmers could ungrudgingly devote a few days to a matter of this kind. It is also a quiet season of the year for the commercial community, and is thus admirably suited as a holiday time for all classes. Moreover, it is the time of year when the largest number of visitors from abroad are in the country. Just previous to harvest, Manitoba always secures a large number of visitors from abroad. Many of the leading business men of eastern Canada make it a point to visit this province every summer to inspect for themselves our crop prospects.

So far as attendance is concerned, it is evident that the summer is just the time to suit all parties. An equally important matter, however, is that of exhibits, and the next thing is to consider how the summer season would answer

in this respect. To discuss this point, we will take the prize list of the Winnipeg Industrial Association for this year, and consider the different lines of exhibits as therein classified. The first classification is horses, and there would be no difficulty about an exhibit of horses in the summer. In fact at this time of year, farm horses cannot be spared from the rush of work for exhibition purposes. After horses come cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, pot stock in the order named, all of which could be exhibited just as well in the summer. Next come dairy products, which could also be shown to good advantage in the summer. The next class is field grains, flour, meals, etc. At a summer exhibition, of course it would be necessary to show the grains of the previous year, but would not this be better, than to hold an exhibition before one farmer in twenty to fifty had threshed, thus preventing the great majority from competing at a fall exhibition, where grains of the same season only could be shown? At a summer fair, a display of grains of the same season, in sheaf, could also be made. The next class—horticultural products—would not be so successful at a summer fair, though there are a number of early vegetables and plants which could be shown in the summer, which are out of season by fall. Plants and flowers come next, and the summer would just be the season for this class. Manufactures of Manitoba and the territories, domestic manufactures, leather and leather work, are the next three classes, which could all be shown to advantage. Fruits come next in order. This is not an important class here, but the earlier fruits could be shown in the summer, and there are probably about as many if not more of these than of late fall fruits. Preserves, pickles, preserved meats could be shown just as well in the summer. The next classes in order are ladies' work, fine arts, natural history, schools, dogs, all of which would do just as well in summer as in the fall.

Out of all the classes named, which comprise the prize list for the exhibition this year, objection could only be taken to a summer fair on account of roots and grains. The number of early vegetables which cannot be shown to advantage in the fall, would make up to some extent for the loss of most roots, while as for grain it would appear better to show the products of the previous year, than to hold a fall exhibition, in a late season like this, before most of the farmers are able to show products of the present year. Against the arguments which may be urged in favor of a fall exhibition, there is the important matter of attendance of farmers, which is probably the most important consideration of all. The question of summer versus fall as the time for holding our annual exhibition, is therefore one which may be fairly taken into consideration, as shaping the future policy of the Industrial Exhibition Association.

A big summer show would be something of a novelty in Canada, though across the Atlantic some of the best exhibitions are held in the summer. A summer show at Winnipeg would not clash with any of the large eastern exhibitions. A good deal of energy which might be directed to making a summer exhibition here a