

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN MANITOBA
AND N.-W. T.

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Territorial Grain Growers' Annual Meeting.

The letter from W. R. Motherwell, President Territorial Grain-growers' Association, to be found in another column, is both timely and suggestive. The Grain-growers' Associations have accomplished already a great deal, but there are still big questions with which they should deal, and as time goes on there is almost certain to be new ones arising, the solution of which will necessitate united action on the part of the farmers of this country. The inspection and grading of grain is not at present entirely satisfactory, and through the mixing and blending of grades a great injustice evidently is being done to the grain-grower. There is, hence, every reason why the question of grading wheat should be gone into. If by mixing, the average quality of any grade of wheat is being reduced, those who grow it have every right to demand that the practice should cease.

It is to be hoped that the annual meeting, to be held in Regina, on Dec. 16th to 17th, will be well attended. As pointed out by the President, the sympathetic and financial support of the individual farmer is necessary to secure further remedies. There is not a farmer engaged in grain-growing in the Territories nor Manitoba but has benefited by the legislation brought into effect through the efforts of the association, and we hope there is no one of these who is satisfied to let others bear all the responsibility of a work from which he is getting equal benefit. In union there is strength. The larger the force the easier it will be to accomplish the desired result.

One of the Many Received.

The William Weld Co., Winnipeg, Man.:

Dear Sirs, Enclosed find \$1.50, to be applied on the subscription of 1904. I take much pleasure in congratulating you on being able to furnish the public with such a paper. Its veterinary as well as all other departments to it are invaluable.

Wishing you every success with your weekly issue, I remain, Yours truly,

Parlingford, Man. JOHN C. SMITH.

Are the Fairs Properly Managed?

BY J. M'CAIG M. A., LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA.

It is a universal custom for both central and local governmental bodies to aid and stimulate national or local industries by bringing the products of a country into competitive display. The great English Exhibition of 1851 was conceived by the Prince Consort in order to give Englishmen an object lesson in what was being done in industry all over the world, and so to encourage and stimulate English industry and English workmen. In our own country it is the practice, both with the Provincial and Dominion Governments, to make grants in aid of yearly exhibitions, but more particularly with the local Legislatures, as the immediate interests of agriculture are under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Governments. The interest of the Dominion Government in agricultural matters arises from the relation of this industry to foreign commerce and trade, which are naturally Federal concerns.

FAIRS INTENDED TO AID AGRICULTURE.

This leads us to notice that the fair is originally and primarily intended for an aid to agriculture. The grants are made to what are called Agricultural Societies. The exhibits must necessarily be chiefly those of the stock-breeder and cultivator in the early history of a country, with a few articles of domestic manufacture, chiefly from agricultural homes. There is no doubt in the world that grants to agricultural societies are wise and beneficial. Anything that improves or stimulates the work of local centers increases the average excellence of the national products, and it must be granted that the district fair is the best way known at present of presenting for general survey the products of live-stock and other classes of the best operators of the district. There seems no warrant for discontinuing this means of instruction and emulation. It is the cheapest kind of object lesson.

WHO SHOULD BE DIRECTORS.

There are other things to be noticed about fairs. When fairs are held it is natural to select the center of densest population in the district. This is a matter of convenience, economy and ordinary wisdom. It means greater success to the fair, but it is likewise a benefit to the village or town in which the fair is held, as fair time is a time of rather free loosening up of cash, both by the home people and by visitors from a distance. The fair in time becomes more and more a town concern. The chief influence in its management and direction passes from the farmer into the hands of the town fellow. It is, perhaps, natural that it should. The town man, by reason of his greater knowledge of affairs, has what may be called facility and smoothness from wider business experience, and it is the experience of many agricultural societies that their business affairs do not flourish on rural patronage alone. The fair must be assisted in its management by town representatives, and must appeal to people of the town as well as of the country.

SPECIAL FEATURES—QUESTIONABLE ATTRACTIONS.

It is the predominance of town interests in fairs that has led to many who recognize the agricultural and industrial interests as fundamental finding fault with the character and tendency of modern fairs. There has been plenty written about what the countryman doesn't know about the town, and there is just as much room to talk about the townsman's ignorance of country interests. Certainly it is the case that if a fair were to depend on its agricultural exhibits for its patronage and gate receipts, the show, in common parlance, would soon "go broke." What the farmer friend of the society kicks about is that the fair year by year minimizes the agricultural and industrial features that constitute the chief instruction and substantial profit of the fair, and that it features sensational and frothy elements that are of no perceptible lasting good. The chief part of the advertising is done for the special attractions. It may be high diving, rope walking, dancing, or mermaids. To ensure a crowd, it is necessary to have as large a list of special attractions as possible, and to have them well advertised. The pioneer supporter of the agricultural fair feels keen disappointment and sometimes disgust at the change. A sparse representation, scarcely enough to disturb the cud-chewing cattle and sheep, may hang along the stock pens, while a show manager, with a silk hat, Prince Albert coat, and the hardest mug on the grounds, has a gaping throng about him waiting for the appearance of a greasy, so-called Egyptian lady snake-charmer on the platform in front of a smutty tent. The monstrous and morbid attract, the hurdy-gurdies play, the youths throw cork balls at wooden dummies for bad cigars, the fellow needing experience buys soap for dollar bills, or bets on the pea and shell game, and the fake races are pulled off by local crooks. Big crowds, big receipts, big success! The town side has been strongly in evidence in the new management. Outside visitors have been attracted and considerable outside money has been dropped in town. One of the town fellows tells the story of it next day: "The show was going 'on the bum, and a few of us took hold of it in town here and we brought in a lot of new features. People want something besides bulls and pumpkins to look at."

GATE RECEIPTS NECESSARY.

The introduction of specialties of any kind means, with the growth of towns, the predominance of the special feature side of shows over the agricultural and industrial, and few shows have been able to go on successfully and keep the agricultural side in greatest prominence. General receipts are a necessity, so the fair must be made to appeal to the general public. It suits the agricultural exhibitor or director to have large receipts, and it suits the town director to attract outside visitors by novelties, whether morbid, spicy, or sensational. This is the history and general evolution of the district fair. The exceptions are conspicuously few. There is not much use finding fault with an apparently inevitable tendency, though it seems a pity that under the name of exhibition of such and such an agricultural society the original commendable aim of the founders of the society should be so lost sight of, or, at least, ignominiously subordinated to transient interests and features.

TOWNS NOT ALTOGETHER TO BLAME.

As a matter of fact, the side features cannot be ascribed wholly to town influence, and cannot be wholly discountenanced or discredited, as they are no doubt the means of bringing more of the country people to the fairs than would otherwise come, and as the fair time is a traditional outing day for many of the country people, they themselves appreciate other features than those immediately connected with their business. The special features to some extent have been a necessary aid to keep the interest in fairs from flagging.

IMPORTANT CHANGE COMING.

It is beyond dispute, however, that the agricultural fair has reached a changing point in its evolution. Its agricultural features are swamped by special attractions. The necessity and utility of agricultural and stock displays and competitions is not less now than heretofore. We have not yet reached a point at which further progress is impossible by reason of perfection having been reached, and emulation is a constant human property that may be banked on to promote progress. The agricultural fair must take a separate direction in order to preserve its identity and usefulness. The law of differentiation and specialization must operate in this institution as in all others. There seems already to be a movement in this direction, and it is a matter of congratulation that the Territories are entirely up-to-date, if not better than the older Provinces in this respect. This is in the matter of holding the combined show and sale for live stock. This is narrowing the scope of the live-stock exhibition, or, we should rather say, lessening the number of persons who may glance at or inspect the live stock of the district. The spectators will be limited to those actually interested. The interest of spectators, however, will be much more real and substantial when they are persons actually connected with the business. The live-stock show will get dignity from the real enthusiasm of its patrons. The introduction of the sale feature will give the show greater interest, for those who attend will have a business aim, and the animals brought out will include many more than the specially pampered show animals, against which

there is, perhaps, considered from a breeder and in a sale seems to be live-stock exhibition will be given and will be made business use and made at fairs, and are at fairs animals as breed proved stock, and hibitions. It animals are to be can be done in and not necessary done with stock of stock in great tion of the general hood, and he at breeding animals prices, by bringing buyers and selling fixing of an average of individual trade.

SALES DIFFICULT.

It may be difficult to in all cases where the fact that the out not only stock of a neighborhood or accomplished seem to be for prominent in all stock competition lectures competitions by farmers themselves and shows, dog the live-stock added, more sw given, and the

There is just of the agricultural opportunity and to his interest features from the

Fat Stock

The Royal Association, of New its members' enthusiasm in the may be noticed five steps have and stallion March, 1904.

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