

# CANADIAN Historical Quarterly.

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## AGRICULTURAL EXHIBITIONS.

*Their Origin and Development in Ontario.*

THE following very interesting paper was read by Mr. Thos. E. Champion, of Toronto, before the Ontario Historical Society:

It is now more than fifty years since the first Provincial Agricultural Exhibition was held in Toronto. It took place in the Government House and grounds at the corner of Simcoe and King Streets, and was a very quiet and unostentatious affair. Nevertheless, it was the precursor of what has developed with the growth of the Province into the magnificent collection of live stock, machinery, domestic manufactures and fine arts that we now see around us.

The Exhibition now referred to was opened on Wednesday, October 21st, 1846, and remained open for that and the following day. Seeds, fruit, ladies' needlework, etc., were arranged and exhibited in the various rooms of the old Government House, the agricultural implements were in the yard immediately adjacent, and the cattle, horses, sheep, etc., in the grounds. The first intention had been to exhibit the cattle in the grounds near Caer Howell, but almost at the last moment this plan was abandoned and notification was given to the various exhibitors by hand-bill. The first day was fine but

somewhat cold, and the same atmospheric conditions obtained the second day. It is interesting to quote what one of the newspapers of the time had to say respecting this exhibition. It spoke thus: "One of the most practical and important results of this exhibition arises from the fact of its furnishing a standard by which to measure the actual state of the agriculture, arts and manufactures of the country. The bringing together of the various productions of art and ingenuity and comparing them with productions of former periods will enable us to form a tolerably correct estimate of the progress we are making. "Some excellent specimens of cattle were exhibited. It is true they were mostly the offspring of cattle imported from England, and we are warranted in saying on the authority of Canadians, who were once English farmers, and who are competent judges on the matter, that some of the cattle exhibited were fully equal to any produced in England. It has been customary to speak of cattle as being 'good for Canada;' but we are approaching that state when Canadian cattle will bear a comparison with that of any country in the world. In sheep and horses, the last few years have produced a marked,