

FARM

Grain Classes at Seed Fairs.

The Dominion Seed Commission for Saskatchewan is advising agricultural societies that contemplate holding seed fairs to make a class in their prize lists for grain from fields that have won prizes in field grain competitions. The suggestion is a good one and should be generally adopted. Such a class would enhance alike the effectiveness of the fair and the field competitions. It is rather difficult for a judge to determine the quality and purity of the grain from an inspection of a bushel or so of it in a bag and it may sometimes happen that grain from fields that would stand no chance whatever in a field competition comes into the prize money at the seed fair. By making a class for the grain from these prize winning fields this will be avoided. It is not the quality and apparent purity of the grain as it appears in the bag that makes it of value. To the farmer purchasing seed it is much more important that its growing performance be known, that the purity of the variety has been demonstrated by an inspection of it growing in the field. A bushel of grain at a seed fair may contain no more than fifty per cent. of the variety it is purported to be. It may be half impure. Yet a judge would have difficulty in detecting the impurity and such grain might score over that which was wholly of the variety named. Grain from a field that has won first prize in a competition is of much greater value for seed than grain that simply wins a prize at a seed fair. It is from such that seed should be selected if the greatest progress is to be made and improvement effected in the grain growing and in the quality of the grain.

Developing Institute Talent.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

The most difficult problem that confronts Institute superintendents in this country is to get hold of capable men to speak and demonstrate and teach at Farmer's Institute meetings. There is no dearth of men in these provinces or in any other part of America qualified to discuss agricultural problems theoretically, but there is a decided scarcity of men who can take the public platform at a farmers' meeting and discuss practical farm questions. This scarcity of practical talent is due, not to the fact that farmers lack the intelligence and intellectuality necessary for such discussions, but to a natural timidity which the best of them have, when it comes to facing an audience from the platform. The result of this is that to a very large extent the

work of teaching through the Institutes has been left to the theoretical farmer class, and the prestige and usefulness of the organization has suffered. An audience is quick to discover whether a lecturer has any practical knowledge of the subject he is endeavoring to discuss, and too many Western Farmers' Institute audiences have discovered in the past that a good many of the men who came among them posing as experts in the particular line they were talking on, failed completely and fell down flat when a question bearing upon the practical side of their subject was shied at them from some hard-headed farmer listener. Practical men are wanted as Institute workers, not exactly college professors, nor men from the Eastern provinces but farmers of our own, who are familiar with western problems and capable of discussing those problems in a practical, understandable way. There are plenty of them in the country. Practically every successful farmer can be developed into a successful Institute worker. Such development can be brought about in one way only. By holding more local Institute meetings, in which problems of local interest, together with those of wider import, may be discussed by local men. We need Institute clubs operating in connection with the Institute in every district of the West. The greatest work the Institute can do for the farmers is not at the regular two or three meetings of the year, but by encouraging these local meetings, by bringing together the farmers of their district several times a year for an interchange of ideas and a practical discussion of the district's agricultural affairs. This is work that is only nominally in charge of the superintendent. Its success is largely dependent on the officials of the local organization and upon the local members. Various ways will suggest themselves for carrying on such meetings as these. Debates and discussions on agricultural questions may be held. Subjects may be assigned at one meeting to be taken up at the next, or general matters discussed. However conducted, such work tends to develop practical talent for Institute work and practical lecturers is what the Farmer's Institutes at present is in need of. A good many of the agricultural problems of the West, the discussion of which falls properly within the sphere of the Institute, are large ones and we need men of large ideas, broad minds, and much experience to discuss them. Then there is a big work to do among the newcomers who reach this country in increasing numbers every year. Large numbers of these men have no experience in farming whatever, and their education into western methods falls logically upon the Institute. They are of the class who are willing to learn if anybody is available to teach them. They are not seeking long-winded harangues on some scientific phase of agriculture, but practical instruction from practical men, on subjects

which may be the simplest and most elementary involved in western farming.

This is the largest and most properly the greatest field of Institute work. It calls for men of practical ability, capable of telling in an intelligible way, their own methods of dealing with the problems that confront the inexperienced farmer. Few of such men are to be found on agricultural college faculties, there are too few of them among the ordinary Institute lecturers. They must be drawn from among our own farmers. Their talents as agricultural teachers require developing and such development can be best accomplished and the true function of the Institute best performed by the local organizations assuming their proper share of the work. At present altogether too much of the work devolves on the superintendent, and local officials are too prone to thrust on him the entire management and direction of their Institute's affairs.

Roblin Mun., Man.

"MEMBER."

The Western Grain Trade from September 1st to November 30th, 1907.

Compiled below are data covering the grain movement for the past three months. Compared with last year there are some marked differences in the quantities of the different grades offered. For the three months in 1906, spring wheat inspections totalled 27,718 cars. Of this amount 9.8 per cent. was number one hard; 42.1 per cent. number one northern; 26.4 per cent. two northern; 2.6 per cent. was three northern; 0.7 per cent. graded four northern; 0.07 per cent. feed and the remaining 19 per cent. was in the rejected or ungraded classes. This year during the same three months receipts aggregated 20,716 car loads. Of this 0.5 per cent. was number one hard; 18.4 per cent. number one northern; 25 per cent. two northern; 18.5 per cent. three northern; 7.7 per cent. number four; 5 per cent. number five; 3 per cent. number six; 9.7 per cent. was feed, and the remaining 12 per cent. went into the rejected or ungraded classes.

Not in a good many years has our review of the grain trade compiled about this season shown such a condition of affairs as these figures indicate. And they do not tell the whole story of the remarkable year now nearing its close. It will be observed that the figures for all the lower grades, for feed wheat and the rejected grades, increased at a more than proportionate rate in November over the two preceding months. There is reason to believe that, when the figures for December are available the percentages of these lower grades will be higher still. Frozen wheat has not been marketed as early or as freely as it should and a considerable proportion of frosted stuff is still on the farmers' hands. Standard grades have been marketed more freely. In fact, if the figures are examined in detail, it will be found that at least half the total of the small quantity that did grade one hard, and quite a percentage of the one northern, especially that received during September, was last year's wheat.

Approximately 23,000,000 bushels of this year's crop has passed inspection. Of this 6,000,000 bushels have classed into grades below number five. While



A. B. MOFFATT'S OUTFIT IN THE BROOKDALE, MAN., DISTRICT.
In the season of thirty-six days 83,000 bushels were threshed. Photo on the farm of J. Winters.