

Farmers' Week in Manitoba

A Community Week for the Province

The third week in February is rapidly becoming a noted one in Manitoba. It is community week for the province. Not only do farmers gather from every nook and corner of the province to consider ways and means of getting acquainted with more scientific methods of agricultural production, more widely diversified lines of operation, better methods of organization, a broader acquaintance with one another and a measure of recreation, but they meet many business interests and have an opportunity to learn of other lines of activity in the province than their own. This week there have been held the annual conventions for the province of Agricultural Societies, Canadian Seed Growers' Association, Bee Keepers, Home Economics Societies, Horticultural and Forestry Association, Dairymen's Association, Tenth Annual Soil Products Exhibition or Seed Fair, Winnipeg Poultry Show and Agricultural College Day, etc. It has been a kind of glorified extension day for the college. But in addition there have been more small townsmen in Winnipeg this week from all over Western Canada than at any other time of the year. There have been conferences of rural storekeepers and of wholesalers, as well as a steady conference of bonspielers. Practically all the farmers' gatherings were held in the city's Industrial Bureau. While the attendance this year was perhaps not quite up to last year the interest and enthusiasm seemed to be equally as strong. Well arranged programs for all meetings greatly enhanced their efficiency. The provincial legislature staged some special stunts by way of entertainment for those who grew weary of their own meetings. The provincial treasurer made his budget speech, and various members hurled a few accusations at one another. It was interesting, the hardly so exciting as in the days before the war.

Agricultural Societies' Convention

There were about 200 at the opening of the Agricultural Societies' convention. The president, A.D. McConnell, thought the system of fighting weeds by inspectors appointed by the local municipalities was not anything like so efficient as it should be. It was too expensive. He believed there was nothing like sheep to control weeds and some system of getting more sheep on the farms should be encouraged.

Professor Bedford did not think such criticism of the weed commission's efficiency was warranted. No real attempt had been made until recently to cope with the menace, and a nuisance of 20 years' standing could not be eradicated in a year or two. He doubted the possibility of completely eradicating sow thistle in the Red River Valley. He believed all his staff was efficient. The local weed inspectors only cost 58 cents for each 160 acres. He believed the farmers had confidence that he was doing his utmost to serve them.

A most able and exhaustive report of the work of the societies was given by Superintendent B. T. Newton. The past two years had been difficult ones. Some of the points emphasized in the reports showed that for this year: There was a decrease of at least 25 per cent. in the livestock exhibits; that there appeared to be more Clydesdales exhibited than all the other heavy horses put together, and among the cattle exhibits the Shorthorns held an equally important place; that the entries in home products were larger than the prize lists in general would warrant; that the summer fairs were generally favored with fine weather while the fall fairs had a less fortunate experience with the weather man; that thirty-eight societies show a decrease in membership; only 25 societies paid out over \$100 for women's and children's work; that Kildonan is the only society which had placed women on the board of directors; and that livestock judging at local fairs does not start soon enough.

The government grant to agricultural societies was \$34,854. The municipal grants totalled \$24,716. Municipal and government grants, together with the expense for judging amounted to \$61,500, or an average of over \$7 for each member. This does not include the Brandon Fair, which received a municipal grant of \$5,650 and a government grant of \$7,456.

Only the Stonewall, Kildonan and Warren societies had standing field crop competitions, the third should be a popular feature of society work. Plowing matches had not received the attention due them. The superintendent said the plowing match, standing field crop competition, the seed grain fairs and good farming competitions are legitimate phases of the agricultural societies' work and are likely to pass out of the hands of the agricultural societies if they do not live up to their opportunities.

Boys' and Girls' Clubs

The importance of boys' and girls' clubs in aiding the work of the societies was clearly shown. Last year there were over 100 clubs, with close on to 600 branch clubs, and over 13,000 members, and of these

10,000 had exhibits at the various fairs. The government expended for supplies for the clubs about \$9,000, and in prizes about \$3,000, or in all a little over \$12,000. The people themselves furnished over \$8,000 for prizes in addition to running expenses.

The societies could aid boys and girls: 1—By the members encouraging their own boys and girls to take part in the club activities. 2—By loaning wide-awake boys and girls money at reasonable rate with which to buy pigs and seed grain for these two contests. 3—By holding standing crop competitions and including a strong section for boys. 4—By having a juvenile section at the live or dressed poultry shows. 5—By taking the initiative in case a club has not been organized. 6—By helping the officers to secure funds. 7—By giving the best possible moral support and by getting as many interested in the young people as possible.

The success of boys' and girls' clubs is due to the active co-operation of the public school teachers and inspectors, agricultural societies, home economic societies, grain growers, bankers and other business men, with the departments of agriculture and education and the Agricultural College.

Professor Herner, of the College, discussed "Making Poultry Shows a Success." He recommended the holding of poultry shows in connection with summer and seed grain fairs. There should be one class for English and American breeds, Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, Rhode Island Reds, Orpingtons, and Dorkings. Thus a better class of stock would be drawn out and the poorer stock would not have a chance to win. Prize money would be increased and competition keener and better quality required



The kind that every Agricultural Society should encourage

to win. There should be separate sections for cocks, hens, cockerels and pullets. In addition there should be pens of one male and three females confined to adult stock only. Ducks all breeds, geese all breeds and turkeys all breeds might be put in a miscellaneous class.

Eggs should form a prominent section of the poultry show and Prof. Herner suggested this being made a section for the boys' and girls' clubs. Eggs should be judged on the basis of quality, weight and appearance, and points allowed for every ounce over prescribed weight. The speaker recommended a class of live farm chickens intended for the market. These should be shown as single birds first, then killed, dressed and judged as table birds, taking into consideration the percentage of meat dressed out. Such a scheme would bring a more uniform system of judging live poultry, eggs and dressed poultry at all the fairs of the province. It would require less funds rather than more, and prize money would go where it properly belonged.

C. A. Bailey, secretary of the Elgin Agricultural Society, gave one of the ablest addresses of the whole week. He discussed in detail ways and means by which directors can give the greatest service in making a successful fair. His speech was full of concrete suggestions. We have not room for it in this issue, but hope to give it to our readers long before this year's shows.

S. E. Greenway, director of Agricultural Societies for Saskatchewan, outlined the work done in that province. Many stallion shows had been held. The plan of sending two speakers for two days to each of the seed fairs gave the opportunity of presenting general livestock and field husbandry topics to the pupils of the schools. This helped school garden work.

A live and instructive discussion followed Mr.

Greenway's address. An amendment to the proposed new Agricultural Societies Act was asked unanimously. The change was requested in the schedule of payments by the government to the Agricultural Societies, and called for a grant of one dollar per member from the government up to two hundred members. In addition, the government is asked to contribute 60 per cent. of all cash paid out by the different societies in prize money, etc. This, it was estimated, would be of greater benefit to the weaker societies.

The Canadian Seed Growers

Professor S. A. Bedford in his opening remarks recommended that no wheat be sowed this year that weighed less than 58 pounds to the bushel. He strongly endorsed the provision made for giving power to the municipalities to secure seed and help the farmers in this way during 1917.

Prof. Harrison, in his report as president of the Manitoba branch, said the black rust had been responsible this year for the decrease in the total wheat production of Manitoba of 40,000,000 bushels, as well as reducing the quality from Nos. 1 and 2 to Nos. 5 and 6 feed. Part of this loss had been made up by the increased prices. The producers of registered seed, however, had not been so fortunate because frequently the quality of their seed was not good enough to permit of registration. Some growers were unable to register their seed this year on account of scarcity of labor preventing them from cleaning it. The heavy enlistment had also meant the discontinuance of work in some places.

The encouragement of co-operative selling had been carried on and an attempt made to organize special seed-producing centres at various points in the province. Last year the extension department of the College supplied 165 boys with either registered Marquis wheat, Banner oats or O.A.C. No. 21 barley. Only 16, however, had made hand selections, largely due to the unfavorable crop conditions. For next year the association is planning to supply 300 boys with seed.

James H. Bridge, cerealist for the Agricultural College, presented the secretary's report. Suggestions were made as to how fields of rusted grain might be handled. A bulletin on hand-selection and harvesting of the seed plot had been prepared by A. R. Judson, B.S.A., and sent to each member of the junior society of the association. The work amongst the younger boys is being specially pushed next year. W. G. Weiner, B.S.A., has been appointed field husbandry representative on the extension staff of the college to extend this work in every possible way. Professor Harrison gave a very interesting paper on effects of cultural methods in the production of wheat in 1916. Space does not permit of the publication of this article now.

Professor Jackson discussed very fully the wheat rust problem. He dealt with the possible origin of the outbreak last summer, as well as a full discussion of the life history of the disease.

William Southworth, M.S., who conducts plant breeding work at the Agricultural College, gave a very interesting address on "plant improvement" in relation to the seed grower. Crops might be improved by building up the soil fertility, by adopting better methods of cultivating and handling the soil and by growing better varieties of crops. A great field lay before us in the development of leguminous plants, such as clover and alfalfa. At present, the commonest killed out very readily over the winter. In the work at the College, at the present time, hardy plants are being obtained by natural selection. From these seed is obtained and the best plants again selected and hand-fertilized. This system is continued until superior purebred types are established. This system of "plant improvement" is very slow but thorough. Little can be done to hurry it up, but great things can be accomplished over an extended period.

A strong resolution was passed asking that the few barberry plants distributed thru Manitoba be completely exterminated.

The Department of Agriculture was thanked for the money grant which facilitated the inspection of seed plots, as were also the press and the district representatives.

Soil Products Exposition

Considering the fact that last summer was perhaps the worst we ever saw in Manitoba for damage of crops, the exhibition of grains was exceedingly good. It is evident that there is still considerable good wheat in Manitoba. There were 130 entries in the entire exhibit. Oats, especially, made a great showing. The exhibit of flax was good, as was also the one of fall rye, and there was some splendid fodder corn shown. The forage crop exhibit was the best that has ever as yet been made at this exhibition. Five prizes were offered for judging wheat, oats and barley by teams of stu-

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