

# A Rural School Fair

*Farm Boys and Girls of Portage la Prairie district at their Annual Fair show better Crops and Livestock than most of their fathers produce*

There were some proud boys and girls at Portage la Prairie on Friday, October 8, when the judges placed the red, blue and white cards upon the winning exhibits at the second annual school fair, held under the auspices of the Portage la Prairie Rural School Trustees' Association and the Manitoba Agricultural College.

The fair was the culmination of a summer of industry and anxiety. It was a day when the result of a whole season's work by the farm boys and girls of the district was submitted to the inspection of the grown ups and the experts from the Agricultural College. The past season has been a very trying time for the farmers. Frosts early and late, insect pests, drought and storm have all tried to kill the crops and the boys and girls who have been raising grain, corn, potatoes and vegetables have had to be constantly on the alert to save their crops from disaster. The exhibition they made at Portage la Prairie shows what great things can be accomplished even in the face of difficulties. There was no poor stuff shown and a great many of the exhibits were of a really high class order.

## A Big Exhibit

There were over a thousand entries and more than 500 school children were exhibitors. There are thirty-nine schools in the rural municipality of Portage la Prairie, and thirty-seven of these sent exhibits to the fair. The fair was held at the Portage la Prairie Exhibition grounds over on the beautiful Island Park, and from an early hour in the morning the young exhibitors were busy getting their stuff in position. Last year the school fair was held in connection with the Portage Exhibition, but as that event was not held this year, the boys and girls had a day of their own. This was fortunate, because both the big pavilion and the poultry building were completely filled with the exhibits.

The fair was really two exhibitions in one, one section being conducted by the Boys' and Girls' Farm Club, of the rural municipality of Portage la Prairie, which is looked after by the Extension Department of the Department of Agriculture, and the other being open to the children attending the schools of the rural municipality of Portage la Prairie, and conducted by the Rural Trustees' Association of the municipality. The two organizations, however, are very closely allied, both having the same president and secretary, James McKenzie, of Portage la Prairie, filling the former office, and H. W. Cox-Smith, of High Bluff, the latter, while Inspector T. M. Maguire is also interested in both organizations. The remaining officers of the fair are school trustees, one being appointed from each ward of the municipality, but the Boys' and Girls' Club executive

includes seven vice-presidents and an assistant secretary chosen from among the members. Frank Muir, of High Bluff, is the Assistant Secretary this year, and the Vice-Presidents are Thomas Stait, Charles Smith, Eva Crewson, Edna Vint, Elsie Swales, Clarence Hyde, and Graham McDonald. The boys and girls assisted to some extent in preparing for the fair and it is hoped that as they gain more experience the grown-ups will encourage them to take more responsibility and eventually to practically run the show, subject to proper supervision and counsel, of course.

## Young Homemakers

In the individual competitions prizes were given for writing and drawing, work books, compositions and essays, maps, raffia work, plasticine models, darning, buttonholing, photography, nature study, vegetables, flowers, and bread and butter making. This was all work

a fair share of the premiums. East Prospect and West Prospect were second and third respectively in the Maguire Shield competition.

## A Shipment of Grain

East Prospect carried off the honors for the best collection of wheat, oats and barley of the 1915 crop. Artistic arrangement was taken into account in awarding this prize and the winning school showed the grain as the cargo of a fine model of an ocean liner bearing Canadian grain to the Motherland. Other features of the school competitions were exhibits of noxious weeds and weed seeds, and a singing contest.

## The Club Exhibits

While this was the second rural school fair, the Boys' and Girls' Farm Club was holding its first show. The club was organized only last winter, the Extension Department of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture and its

to help with the threshing which had been held up by wet weather and only re-started that day. It was too bad they couldn't be there to see how their potatoes were admired.

## Raising Prize Potatoes

The winner of the first prize, Alvin Kennedy, in his report described his experience as follows:

"I received my potatoes on May 11 and planted them on May 12. When cutting the potatoes I left three eyes to each piece of potato. The potatoes were planted in hills 5 inches deep and a foot and a half apart. I watered the potatoes once a day for about a week and a half. When the tops were about a foot high I began hilling them. When the potatoes were in blossom the frost came and spoiled them. When the tops were frozen I began thinking that the potatoes would not grow. I dug a hill up in growing season, but the potatoes were very small. During the last three weeks my potatoes grew very rapidly. I noticed that the best potatoes were in hills where ashes had been put on the garden last winter. I dug the potatoes with a pitch fork to avoid cutting the potatoes. After digging the potatoes on October 2 I put them in the cellar to dry. My potatoes amounted to two bushels. I am keeping some for next year's seed."

Clara Rowland, of High Bluff, won third prize for potatoes.

## Girls Won in Poultry

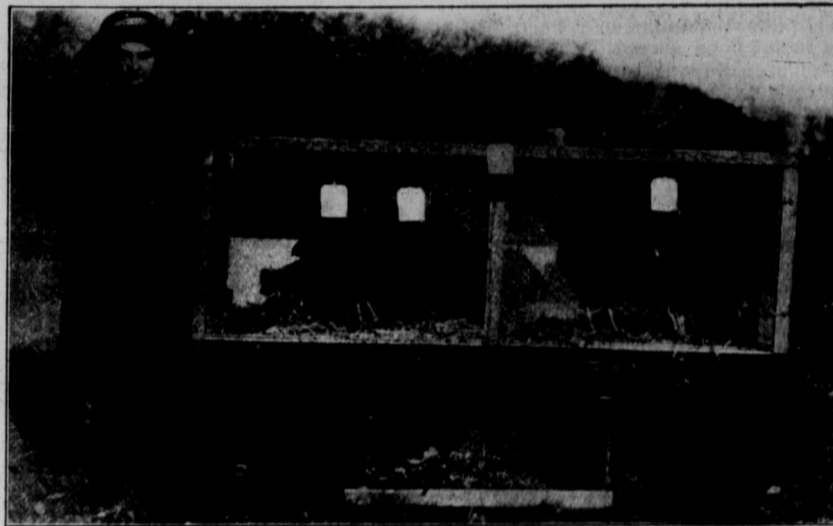
The poultry made a fine showing and it took over 60 pens to hold all the birds. Edna Thompson, a 12 year old girl, who lives on a farm near the city of Portage la Prairie, was awarded first prize in Rhode Island Reds for a pen of nine fine birds. Edna got 12 eggs from the Department of Agriculture and did not have the best of luck with the hatch, the hen breaking two, while one chick died in the shell. She brought the nine along, however, and Professor Herner, from the Agricultural College, who judged the poultry, told her not to sell any of the roosters for less than \$3 each.

Marie Baron was second in this class.

In White Leghorns girls were also the winners of the first and second prizes, Mildred and Olga Tidsberry being the successful raisers of this breed.

A very fine pen of White Wyandottes was shown by David Boddy, a 15 year old boy from Macdonald, and won him the first prize of \$2 in that class. David was taught to look after chickens by his mother and now that he has no parents he lives on the farm with his elder brothers and takes a keen interest in the club work. He reared 12 well grown chickens from 12 eggs. Clarence Olson, also of Macdonald, was second for White Wyandottes. The other breeds raised by club members from eggs supplied by the Department

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Edna Thompson and her Rhode Island Reds, the best chickens at the fair

of, an eminently practical kind and the large number and all-round excellence of the exhibits showed that the teachers and parents of the district are doing a most valuable work, with the help and encouragement of the fair board, in training the boys and girls in those arts which are essential to happy home-making. Prizes were given to the teachers for the best plan of school grounds and buildings and for a history of their school district.

A splendid display of grain was made by an eleven year old boy, N. Clarke W. Winters, who showed Marquis wheat, Banner oats, barley and flax in bundles of two dozen heads and stalks of each grain. Tied up with red, white and blue ribbon, and mounted with a Union Jack for a background, the grain was a splendid display typical of the times and of the country. This exhibit won the first prize for each variety of grain.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of the school exhibits, however, were for the prizes offered for competition among the schools. The Maguire Shield, one of the chief trophies of the fair, given by Inspector T. M. Maguire, is held for one year by the school making the best exhibit of school work shown in a space of eight square feet. This was won by Oakville school, with an exhibit which included samples of buttonholing, darning, silk fancy work, plasticine models, and knot tying, beside the regular school work. The schools of the Oakville district prepared for the big fair by having an exhibition of their own on the previous Tuesday, the schools at Oakville, Curtis, Mill Creek, Ingleside, Glengarry, Beautiful Valley, Elm River and Willow Range taking part. This was done because transportation facilities made it difficult for a great many of the exhibitors from that district to visit Portage la Prairie, and the best of the exhibits from the local fair were sent on to the big show, where they captured

director, S. T. Newton, being entitled to the credit for its formation. These clubs, which are being organized in every part of the province where the local people can be induced to co-operate, are designed to develop in the farm boys and girls of Manitoba a love of farm life that will keep them on the land. Instead of merely doing chores for their fathers and possibly learning to look upon farm life as drudgery, the members of the clubs are set up in business on their own account and enabled to carry on a little farm of their own.

## Poultry and Potatoes

Poultry raising and potato growing evidently occupied the majority of the members of the club during the past summer. The Department of Agriculture helped very materially along these lines by furnishing free of cost a dozen pure-bred eggs of a laying strain or 10 pounds of pedigree seed potatoes to each club member. With the eggs and seed instructions were given as to the proper care and treatment, and each member was required to keep a record showing exactly how they cared for and fed the chickens or cultivated the potatoes. Then, on the day of exhibition, the results of the season's work were shown and an essay telling just how these results had been secured was submitted. In the potato growing contest there were 51 competitors for 16 prizes, ranging from 50 cents to \$2. Boys and girls both competed and while boys won the first and second prizes, a girl came third. First prize went to Alvin Kennedy, of Poplar Point, a boy of 12, who produced two bushels of fine clean potatoes of fair size from his 10 pounds of seed, after the tops had been frozen when in blossom. Alvin's older brother, Donald, age 14, was second, his potatoes being very similar, but not quite so large and clean. These boys were not able to be at the exhibition, having to stay home



The winner in Wyandottes, David Boddy, of Macdonald, raised twelve thrifty birds from twelve eggs



The champion pig raiser, Ralph Zimmerman, of Elm River School