

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE & HOME MAGAZINE

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE DOMINION.

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Poultry Commissioner for Canada.

At a recent meeting of the Toronto Poultry, Pigeon and Pet Stock Association, it was decided, by an unanimous vote, to recommend the appointment of a Poultry Commissioner for Canada. The motion went on to state, that in view of the natural adaptability of Canada for the production of eggs and market poultry, and that the exports from this source alone now amount to nearly two million dollars, the Association feels that it would be in the interests of the country that a commissioner should be appointed who would devote his whole time and attention to the encouragement of this important branch.

Judging from the large number of excellent contributions received in our prize essay competition on "Poultry Raising from a Farmer's Standpoint," the poultry industry is a very live one, at least in the minds of the people of Canada. Several of the best essays were written by farmers' wives, and we regret not being able to publish more of them in this issue, but will do so in future numbers.

In awarding prizes we always make a practice of having the essays judged by an expert in the special lines upon which they touch. In this instance, we have pressed into service Mr. Geo. G. McCormick, of this city, who is well known both as a large and successful breeder and exhibitor of poultry, and also in his official position of Treasurer of the Ontario Poultry Association.

eggs—a total of \$4,000,000, but we should do more. We should follow the example of the breeders in the United States, who make every year \$300,000,000 from their poultry. Cannot this output be increased by at least 25 per cent., which would add at least a million dollars to the wealth of the province? What the masses want is practical utility. Some are raising poultry for fun, but the farmer is after the dollars and cents. He does not care about the color of the feathers nor how many lobes there are on a cock's comb, but he wants the breed that will fill the egg-basket.

He said that the people were lacking in correct information as to how they could do this work. Such associations were a great educative factor, but they did not reach the people. He wanted them to do more educative work, as that was what they received this annual grant from the Government for. He then held up a copy of the report of the association and said that it was a little thin. There were plenty of intelligent men in the association, and they had good addresses and discussions, but very little of this was to be found in the report.

He wished to scatter this information throughout the province by means of the report. He proved that this would be of mutual advantage to the whole country, for this distribution would cause a better demand for pure-bred fowls. The breeder would add to his wealth. The farmer would raise more and better fowls, and the wealth of the country would be increased.

Farmers are breeding too much from guess work, and he urged more care in selection in both grain and stock. Varieties of grain, he said, would never run out if the best was selected each year. In conclusion, he reminded all members that it was more blessed to give than to receive, and that by sharing up their knowledge of the poultry business with others not so enlightened they would in addition to benefitting themselves be public benefactors.

MISTAKES IN POULTRY RAISING.

Mr. J. E. Meyer, Guelph, gave a description of the average farmer's hen-house, and then proceeded to point out the mistakes which were most frequently made. The first was that they did not give poultry the same care that was given to their other livestock. A man would clean out his horse stable every day, but he would often let the filth in his hen-house accumulate all winter. The house should be cleaned out at least three times a week—every day would be better. In winter the floor should be covered with about six inches of cut straw.

In his opinion there was not enough green food fed, and not sufficient variety in the feed. Wheat was the best single grain for feed, while cut clover hay and crushed grain steamed made a good soft feed for winter use.

Another mistake was the rearing of chickens too late in the season. He did not hatch any after June 1, and they certainly should not set any eggs after the first week of June.

Flocks were too large; fifty was the outside number, twenty-five was better. More money was obtained from keeping small flocks and giving them plenty of run.

Another mistake was made in keeping a large number of males. The speaker considered that there were at present 700,000 cocks kept in Ontario which gave no profit. It would cost at least \$500,000 to feed this number of useless fowls. But if they were replaced with pullets, they would give a profit of this half a million of dollars.

Our fowl should be more carefully selected. He believed that by careful selection, etc., poultry now put upon our market could be increased to double its present weight, and with very little increase of cost to the producer.

In conclusion, he advised the novice to choose the variety which he liked best, and keep only one variety until he felt satisfied that he was making a success of it.

Allan Bogue, of London, gave those present the benefit of some facts gleaned from his long experience in poultry breeding. His opinion was that the only worth of a fowl depended upon its value for the spit, and the value of a hen depended upon her capacity for laying eggs. From this standpoint he criticised some of the improved varieties. He condemned those which had large combs, for he said that very few farmers had houses where there would be no danger of their combs being frozen, and in his experience he had found that a hen which had her comb frozen was useless as a layer. He thought that the chief use of pure-breds should be to produce cross-bred fowls for the farmer.

For cross-breeding, birds if well bred, though perhaps a little off color, were as good as any, and every fancier has some of these which he is willing to sell cheaply. He believed in the first cross only—condemned in-and-in breeding. Was much in favor of the Indian Game and Dorking cross. It would reduce the comb and give both a good layer and a good table fowl. He did not think that it was a good plan to warm water for fowls.

MR. MCCORMICK.

Mr. G. G. McCormick, of London, then addressed the meeting on the care of poultry. In beginning he dealt rather severely with the Experimental Farm at Ottawa in regard to their poultry department. He thought that the money would be better employed if it were applied to aid the dissemination of knowledge by means of poultry associations. He then gave a good practical address, which occasioned considerable discussion.

The requisites for a good keeping egg, he said, were the following:—They should be infertile; after the hatching season all males should be put away. They should be gathered every day, and packed in oat hulls or chaff with the large end down.

"Chickens," he said, "should be fed three times a day for the first three months."

Wheat should always be fed to the chicks for their evening meal, instead of soft food, as it takes longer to digest. Corn chop, bran and shorts mixed with skim-milk would be found excellent food.

Give the fowls plenty of run. He advised letting them run in the potato-patch. Paris green would not hurt them, and they would eat the small potato-bugs.

He was not in favor of large windows in the poultry-house, preferring them only sufficiently large to let in the light.

He condemned the custom of selling eggs by the dozen and dressed poultry by the pair as being neither fair to the buyer or seller. This system did not offer any encouragement to the farmer to produce the best. In his own experience in this matter he had found it impossible to get more for his chickens than the average price per pair, though they all weighed considerably more than those on the market.

He believed that the introduction of a system of selling both eggs and poultry by the pound would lead to such a great advancement of the poultry industry of Canada as had never been seen before.

Poultry were like cattle, and the farmer must breed for what he wanted. "The farmer who wants eggs principally must seek the Mediterranean or Hamburg varieties. Those who want early meat must go in for American varieties; those who want winter meat must go in for Asiatics, Games or Dorkings; and those who want something for the boys and girls must go in for the bantams.

The discussion which followed showed that some of those present disapproved of a number of the suggestions brought forward by Mr. McCormick.

One speaker greased his eggs and then packed them in salt with the small end down, but the majority favored the method of packing in chaff with the large end down, and when the box was filled turning it once or twice a week.

Very few of the members had had any experience with hens eating potato-bugs. In regard to poisoning with Paris green, it was stated that if the mixture was not stronger than one teaspoonful to a pail of water there would be no danger of loss through this cause.

The discussion on the egg and dressed poultry trade showed that the system of selling eggs and poultry by the pound was gradually being introduced, and that doubtless before long it would be the rule instead of being, as at present, the exception. Mr. Burns, of Tilsonburg, who shipped very largely, said that he bought all his fowls by the pound; the price averaged from 6c. to 8c. per pound the year round.

Mr. Barber, of Toronto, one of the largest retail dealers in that city, in answer to a question, said that he would like to buy his poultry by lump and sell by the pound.

Hon. John Dryden was much in favor of the system of selling eggs and fowls by weight, and thought that this association should do something towards popularizing the movement. He also suggested that a conference of all the egg dealers should be held to consider the subject.

It was also stated that firms in Seaforth, Walkerton and Stratford had bought eggs by the pound last year for the first, and that they were well satisfied with the result.

WELCOMED TO THE TOWN.

John D. Meyer, M. P. P., welcomed the association to the town of Hamburg in a neat speech, in which he claimed for his county and that vicinity the having given birth to all the men who were largely interested in the egg and dressed poultry trade. They had also built the first cold storage building west of Montreal.

POULTRY SHOWS AND THEIR RELATIVE VALUE TO THE COUNTRY.

Mr. C. J. Daniels read a very timely paper on this topic. He first considered the importance of the poultry industry to the farmers of Ontario, and then showed that the great improvement which has taken place in the poultry business of late years was due almost entirely to poultry shows and association meetings.

He then gave a few points of interest to all farmers, which had been drawn from his own experience. He preferred a Plymouth Rock or Wyandotte, for the reasons that they were good foragers and would stand sudden changes in climate or neglect.

He condemned inbreeding, and stated that an infusion of new blood would double the number of eggs. He urged poultry keepers to be more particular in regard to cleanliness in the houses. His belief was that most cases of loss of eggs on farms were due to the filthy condition of the hen-houses.

In the discussion which followed, cedar posts 8 inches in diameter and then quartered were recommended for perches, for the reason that lice do not like cedar. Coal oil, lime and white-wash were recommended as preventatives for lice, as was also the kerosene emulsion, which should be sprayed all over the inside of the house, especially along the corners and cracks.