

THE DUTY OF POULTRY ASSOCIATIONS TO THE FARMER.

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IT may seem strange to some that I should select the above heading for my paper, but I look upon poultry associations as being intended for the farmer, and that through the members of these associations the Government expect in return for the amounts granted that the farmer will be enabled to gain some information as to what he should do in order to improve his stock. He therefore has a claim to their consideration.

The primary object for which these associations were established was that the farmer and those engaged in the breeding and raising of poultry for business purposes, should find in these associations a school wherein knowledge could be obtained. If information has not been more extensively gained, the question naturally arises, who is to blame for it? Perhaps there has been of late years more dilatoriness on both sides than there should have been, the farmer considering his old stock good enough for his purposes, and the associations seeing that the farmer was indifferent and not patronizing the associations, did not exert themselves as was required. The holding of these annual exhibitions I do not look upon as the only object the Government had in view for their existence, and is certainly not the primary object the Government had when giving the grant. It is only a means to the end. Among those prominent in the breeding of fowls, there are always those whose first object is to win prizes. In doing this, they are also an educational medium. They present to the eye what they consider an ideal bird for people to copy. The public see the birds; they become enthusiastic over what they see; they say they would like to have such fowl. They naturally ask, how are they brought to such a state of perfection? They naturally look either to the association or its members for such information as the breeders are supposed to possess, and through this means of communication, to obtain the required information. This may appear a new idea to some, but I think the Government had some such view when giving the grant. So you see that these associations, through their members, have a duty to perform by reading papers at their monthly or annual meetings, which should contain valuable information and suggestions pertaining to the industry. These papers would, through the Agricultural Department, be distributed amongst the farmers. The latter would then begin to study the nature of the various breeds. They might have amongst their flocks of fowl specimens of some particular breed that would meet their requirements, either as early layers or good table fowl, and yet have no proper knowledge of them; but

by reading these papers or hearing discussions, they would be enabled to make a proper selection from amongst their birds, and by this means produce what they really wanted. This is an important matter, and one on which they should have some definite and reliable information. Another important point, and one which they have not a proper knowledge of, is the care and housing of their fowls, and the right kind and correct quantities of food to feed. In order to produce the best results, either for the production of eggs or adding more flesh to the fowl, all these matters are subjects for discussion, and through these discussions the required information is conveyed to the farmer, and educates him in this particular and important branch of his industry, and by increasing his income, adds wealth to the country.

Another point that up to the present time has evidently escaped the attention of the associations, and sooner or later, if the initiative is not taken by them, the attention of the Government may be called to it, and an intimation given that a revision or adjustment of the prize list is advisable, in order that a provision may be made for those breeds raised by the farmers, instead of giving so much to those ornamental breeds that are not fit for market purposes. The grant is given to encourage the development of fowl for market and useful purposes. This is a matter that must now be taken hold of in a firm manner and brought before the associations. Already the farmers are complaining that the prizes offered are not sufficient to warrant them in sending their large birds to the exhibitions. It is a question if a class should not be provided for the farmer for the best all purpose breed raised by them, and have them shown alive and also properly dressed for market.

The poultry industry is now assuming such vast importance that both the Dominion and Local Governments are taking an interest in it, and in a short time the income derived from the sale of poultry and eggs will surpass the most sanguine expectations of its promoters. Look at the good results that our local association has already produced. Compare our market to day with what it was a few years ago, and I ask, should we not feel proud at the result? Let us, then, show increased interest in the poultry culture by spreading widecast amongst the farmers such information, as will educate them as to what breed of fowls to raise for market purposes at the least cost and most remunerative prices. Let us show the Government that we are making good use of the amount they grant us. We can then appeal to them for increased aid, and justly say "We are doing our duty; aid us further, and increased good will be the result, by putting it in our power to still further develop this industry."