

CORRESPONDENCE

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Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition.

SIR,—This Exhibition, which took place at Halifax from Sept. 29th to Oct. 3rd, was quite a success. It was one of the best, if not the finest, ever held in the Province. The citizens of Halifax, combined with the committee and farmers, were determined, if possible, to make it such, having offered a larger sum for prizes—which always tends to swell the number of entries and brings more competition to the front; also having just erected a very fine exhibition building, which gives credit to the cause it represents and to the city to which it belongs; its general appearance is very prepossessing.

The weather was about all that could be desired, fine and dry, though rather warm. The visitors had pleasing countenances, not the haggard look of fair day when mud is knee-deep. The main building would be a credit to many of the large Exhibitions in Ontario. The accommodation for stock was not at all equal to that found at Western Exhibitions, the horse stalls being all open, without means of enclosing in case of bad weather or at night. This, no doubt, will be improved in time. The display of horses was very inferior, and the judges' decisions would not tend to improve matters, as they had the horses trotted out and awarded the prizes solely on speed, never leaving their stand to examine a horse in regard to soundness or size; beauty, endurance or utility were not considered—speed was the only quality wanted to take a prize. This system has filled this part of the country with a lot of cheap, small scrubs of horses. The loss to the Province from having such a class of animals must be immense, as they are not the class of horses that bring good prices either in the English or American markets.

The show in cattle was encouraging, they being more in numbers and generally better for competition than for years before. The Durham herds of Messrs. Fraser, Lawson, Eaton, etc., and Ayrshire herds of Messrs. Starrat, Blanchard, etc., were good, and they are striving to advance the breeds of cattle in a good direction. As usual, Col. Lawrie's herd of Devons was the only one on the ground; he has a good herd, but public opinion is not "Devon" down here at present. A few Alderneys and Jerseys were on the ground, but the Herefords and Galloways were not represented, these latter classes not being favored in the Maritime Provinces. In one particular as regards the cattle the Board deserves credit, that is, in getting foreign judges, two from Canada and one from P. E. I. This, in a Province so small, where everybody knows everybody and everybody's business, is almost essential, for judges from the home Province will not give entire satisfaction and almost invariably show partiality; therefore having foreign judges, particularly for horses and cattle, is usually preferred.

The show of sheep and pigs was fair; there was, however, considerable room for improvement, although some very good pens of each were exhibited. Other stock on exhibition, not mentioned here, may be described in a similar manner. Quite a creditable display of poultry was made.

In farming implements, as usual, home manufactured articles were few. The enterprising firm of Frost & Wood, of Smith's Falls, had a fine display. In this department a pleasing half hour of the day's wanderings might be spent.

The fruit and vegetable department occupied a good space in the main building, arranged in rotation, a space being allotted to each county, so that their respective good producing qualities could be readily shown.

The carriage display was very good, and the best part of it was a patent seat for a sleigh or cutter, got up by Mr. Murphy, of Halifax. Its

arrangement was so simple, and yet so good, that it proved attractive to everybody, being made to slide under the ordinary seat of a cutter and not be noticed; by simply pulling out a couple of braces, the seat coming at the same time, room can be made for four instead of two.

The most pleasing time to pass through the main building was at night, it being well lighted by gas, with a band of music to enliven the proceedings until 10 o'clock. Our Ontario brethren might take pattern in this particular. The ladies' work, fine arts, etc., appeared to good advantage in the evening. Mr. Ayr, of Sackville, exhibited nice leather goods, imitation morocco, etc.

VIATOR, Nova Scotia.

What are our Agricultural Exhibitions Coming to?

SIR,—The object of our Agricultural Exhibitions, as I take them, is no doubt the improvement of agriculture in all its branches. But unless due attention is directed to the realization of this object, it is likely to be lost sight of in what appears to be the increasing desire to make these exhibitions mere excuses for attracting large assemblages of people for days or weeks together, merely for the purpose of "bringing grist" to the mill of the merchants, tavern and boarding-house-keepers, in the towns and cities where they are held. So far as farmers are concerned, two days are enough for all useful purposes. One day should be devoted to the exhibition of agricultural and horticultural productions, dairy produce, and the interesting hand-work which shows the taste and skill of our farmers' wives and daughters. The second day should be given to the display of live stock, including poultry and agricultural implements and other manufactured articles. American exhibitions are degenerating into what I should call horse-racing, did I not fear to offend the directors who prefer to call them "trials of speed." Throwing off the fox-hounds on a drag (as was done at a leading exhibition) from the exhibition ground, was a novel idea, intended probably to enable the sportsman to show off their white caps and top boots (this may serve as a new "winkle for cousin Jonathan's horns") but, alas, the best laid schemes of nice and hunters "gang oft a-glee." The dog must needs put in his inopportune appearance, and paid for his temerity with his life, as it seems they could not be whipped off, until they had cruelly mangled the poor little terrier. It was fortunate that no accident occurred. For what are called the fine arts, such as painting and statuary, these should be reserved for special exhibitions, when the services of competent judges might be obtained. Swings and roundabouts should be strictly relegated to occasions of pleasure, such as pic-nics and social assemblages in the summer season. Many of the features as now managed are mere excuses for gambling. Baseball and lacrosse matches have no necessary connection with agricultural exhibits, and should also be reserved for special occasions. Yet the farmers may justly complain of the temptations to which either they or their sons are exposed by the neglect of the municipal authorities, or directors of the exhibitions, to exclude gamblers and bogus peddlers of every description from the exhibition grounds, which are worse, because more insidious, than the Driving Park meetings, which only serve as means to attract all the rascality in the country within a radius of fifty miles to the place, to the profit of gamblers, black-legs and tavern-keepers. If I remember rightly, no liquor can be legally sold within three hundred yards of any Agricultural Exhibition, and this law should be strictly enforced, as well as preventing any unlicensed grog-sellers who may make their appearance beyond the prescribed distance. As for the Board of Arts and Agriculture, I believe I am only expressing a very general opinion when I observe that the sooner that Board is wiped out of existence, or remodelled, the better for our farmers generally; but here I fear political interest will interpose a very formidable obstacle. I cannot agree with your strictures on the Agricultural College at Guelph. It is but natural that the great stock-breeders should disapprove of the annual sale of stock at the College, as they tend to keep down the high prices which these breeders would undoubtedly charge but for the competition of the College sales. That the farmers themselves approve of it is proved by their numerous attendance on the ground at the recent sale. And as for your remark that the boys receive no better education there than they ought to get at our public schools, I may say that they do not get so good an educa-

tion in our public schools. That the farmers themselves approve of the college may be fairly inferred by the fact that more boys apply for admission than they can accommodate, and as the preparatory examination is very properly very strict, many are rejected, which does not say much for such public schools as they may have previously attended. The Government have had to erect additions to the college buildings this year, which, when completed, will accommodate 80 boys. The last President, Mr. Johnston, whenever any boy had passed his examination, used to examine his trunk, and if he found any of the vile sensational books there with which the country has for many years been flooded, they were confiscated, and their introduction into the College forbidden under a heavy fine, and I have no reason to suppose that his successor, Mr. Mills, who bears a high character as an educationalist, will exercise less care in this respect. They are taught Botany and Entomology, subjects which ought to be, but as a rule are not, taught in our public schools for the plain reason that, so far as I know, not one teacher in a hundred is capable of teaching these subjects; besides they have lectures on veterinary surgery, and they have to take notes of the lectures they hear, which necessitates habits of attention; these are, as a rule, little attended to in our public schools; besides I consider the co-education of the sexes in our public schools, coupled with the unrestrained reading of the pernicious dime novels, has had much to do in producing the prevailing demoralization so frequent amongst the rising generation. Besides, they have been allowed to form themselves into a Battery Company, which necessitates military drill, which ought to be, but is not always, practised in our public schools. I can readily admit that for some years after that College at Guelph came into existence, it was conducted in a very disgraceful manner, but that state of things has now passed away, let us hope never to return. The late President, Mr. Johnston, in his last annual report, recommended that the College should be endowed with six townships on the line of the Canada Pacific Railway, so as to place it on a firm foundation, and lift it out of the region of politics. This project the Government refused to entertain, and, so far, I blame them as much as you can do. True, the farmers did not ask for the College, although they seem pleased with it now. Well, neither did the farmers ask for the Act conferring the franchise on farmers' sons, which was not really necessary, because, any farmer might have his sons' names placed on the voters lists by merely giving him an interest on his farm. But, in fact, many of those who voted for the Act, did so, not because they cared for the farmers, but avowedly because it was a step further in the direction of universal suffrage. But, a few years hence, events will clear the dust out of farmers' eyes, and they find their votes swamped by the votes of the railway and canal labourers, the very classes who are most likely to sell their votes for whiskey; they may have cause to curse the Act and those who passed it. It is to be regretted that some one who can afford the expense cannot be found, possessing different public spirit, to bring the Council of the Board of Arts and Agriculture into Chancery, and oblige them to give an account of their stewardship. SARAWAK.

Ground Bones as a Fertilizer.

"T. E." of London Township, says: After using ground bones on his farm he finds them not nearly so valuable as a fertilizer as he knew them to be in England. For the first year after their being applied to the land the benefit is comparatively very little. Their benefit to the succeeding crop is more marked. He asks how do we account for this difference.

[The difference is attributable to the difference of the climate. No fertilizer in an insoluble condition is available as plant food. The climate of England being humid, and having at the same time sufficient warmth, the bone dust is there quickly dissolved and feeds the growing plant, whereas the absence of a similar state of humidity has a tendency to preserve the fertilizer as applied in an insoluble state. The consequence is that for the first year after its application the benefit is comparatively little, and being afterwards dissolved by the fall and spring rains it becomes available as plant food. The best method of rendering ground bone available when applied is to add it to farm yard manure as a compost. The heat and moisture from the fermentation will render it soluble, and the compost will be an excellent fertilizer, both stimulating and nourishing.]