

small and too remote. The past season also saw the establishment of two new factories in the town of St. Mary's; also a new post and customs office, several stores and a grain elevator. We are also in line for the Niagara electric power. But what has all this to do with agriculture?

some may ask. Well, don't forget that it spells progress, and probably prosperity, not only for the town, but the surrounding country. In spite of the temporary financial depression which we have just passed through, the prices of farm produce, on the whole, did not suffer any ap-

preciable diminution. We appear to have obtained a grip on that valuable home market, which has been the long-promised Messiah of the manufacturers; and as long as it stays as now, the farmer can live. J. H. B.

Fairs and Exhibitions Delegates Deliberate.

Greater efficiency in rural constabulary, and an increased grant to agricultural interests in Ontario, were two demands made prominent at the ninth annual convention of the Ontario Association of Fairs and Exhibitions, held last week in the City Hall, Toronto. Other questions that received attention comprised law reform, responsibilities of railway companies in regard to level crossings, entry fees at fall fairs, wet-weather insurance, and the reinstatement of plowing matches as valuable features in agricultural education. In some cases strong champions lined up on both sides. In addition, able addresses by Professors G. E. Day and C. A. Zavitz, of Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, contained sound advice and valuable suggestions as to the duties of judges of stock and the work the agricultural societies could afford to take up for encouraging improvement in farm crops.

At the evening session, the convention was honored by the presence of Hon. J. S. Duff, Minister of Agriculture, in the chair. Over two hundred delegates, from all parts of Ontario—from Algoma, Glengarry and Essex Counties, and districts within the triangle formed—were in attendance. The enthusiastic support of these delegates, as well as the rapid development in every particular during the past year, as shown by the annual report, proved that the Department of Agriculture made a change that meant much for Ontario's greatest industry when J. Lockie Wilson was selected as Superintendent. From divers sources came congratulations on the success of the Field-crop Competitions in standing grain, while the returns for 1908 showed an increase of fifty per cent. in gate receipts throughout the Province, and of forty per cent. in number of articles exhibited. Further, when Superintendent Wilson, in strong terms, denounced gambling at fairs, and warned those in charge for 1909 that all wheels of fortune and games of chance must be eliminated, he was heartily applauded.

By all, it was pronounced the greatest convention in the history of the Association. Four sessions, filled with vigorous and, as a rule, broad-minded discussions of matters that relate to agricultural-society duties, were opened by an anecdote from the "Spice of Life" columns of "The Farmer's Advocate," and closed by a handsome contribution to the Sick Children's Hospital. Wm. Laidlaw, of Guelph, the genial president, was in the chair, and, considering the fact that, at times, enthusiasm prompted half a dozen delegates to give their views on a subject at the same time, performed the duties in a creditable manner. In some instances the discussions became rather animated, because those taking part did not take into consideration the fact that it was necessary to make allowance for conditions altogether different from those which prevailed in their societies.

OPENING ADDRESS.

The rapid development of Canada was referred to by President Laidlaw in the opening address. A nation's greatest asset, he said, was her people, and education played a great part in directing that development. Those men who took advantage of every opportunity that meant education were the men who held high positions in banks, in offices, and in legislative halls. Farmers were urged to widen their knowledge of affairs, and be in a position to assume new duties. It was the privilege of the agricultural societies, by means of exhibitions and other features, to educate those of rural districts.

Dealing with the question of money grants for exhibition purposes, the president hoped for a liberal increase from the Ontario Government, and also, at least part of the \$50,000 that the Federal Government had turned over for Dominion Fair purposes during recent years.

REPORT OF SECRETARY WILSON.

After thanking the secretaries of the 360 societies in all parts of Ontario for their co-operation, J. Lockie Wilson proceeded with his most-encouraging annual report. In almost every case officials had been prompt in sending returns for 1908. A few societies would be obliged to lose the grant, because their secretaries had been dilatory. Every department of the annual fall fairs showed advancement. Receipts at the gates were 50 per cent. larger than in 1907. The number of exhibits had increased 40 per cent. In addition, educational features were more in evidence.

Some delegates had suggested further organization. Mr. Wilson's opinion was that it was useless to attempt more. All that was necessary was to make better use of what organization now existed. Not only should these local societies be

utilized for electing officers and holding shows, but every detail affecting agricultural work should receive consideration. The popularity of field-crop competitions showed what could be done by launching out along new lines. For the first year, only ten societies were attracted by the offer. Last year it had developed to 47 societies, including about 650 farmers, and taking in over 6,000 acres of oat land. Those taking part were rewarded by sales of seed grain at double the market price, and in some cases at \$2.50 per bushel. The work would be continued, he said.

Coming to the question of special attractions, the secretary said that next year every possible effort would be made to drive gambling devices and wheels of fortune from Ontario's fall fairs. Directors who permitted it were liable to heavy fine, and also to the loss of the Government grant. In many cases special attractions did not pay for themselves. Boys and girls got no lasting benefit from them. It would be much better to be satisfied with smaller gate receipts, and give demonstrations of value to the young.



H. J. Gould, of Uxbridge.

President Ontario Association of Fairs and Exhibitions.

The demand for Government judges had increased. In 1907, 178 had been sent out. Last year, 224 requests were met. Seed fairs had become a success, increasing 400 per cent. last year.

Looking to further improvements in 1909, Mr. Wilson had approached the manager of the Canadian National Exhibition, at Toronto, with the object of getting special prizes for a display of grain in sheaf from the field-crop competition areas. His mission was successful. It was possible, too, that several societies would take steps to revive plowing-matches. Insurance against wet weather on fair days, too, had been suggested. Taking the returns for the past three years as a basis, he found that there were fifteen societies whose gate receipts fell below \$200. If every society contributed \$5, a fund of \$1,800 would be provided annually to recoup the unfortunate fairs.

In the discussion that followed, many important features of agricultural-society work were brought up. Some found fault with the Government-judge system. D. Evans, of Strathroy, advocated having them transferred from one district to another, because exhibitors knew their placing without entering the ring when they had attended a fair or two in a locality. A. C. Griffin, of Waterdown, said trouble had ensued over the judges not being present on time. With S. Egan, of Bolton, the complaint was that they were finished too early in the afternoon. One of the judges, J. Brockbank, of Paris, urged that steps be taken to provide enclosures in which stock could be judged, so that the crowd would not be in the way. In reply to a suggestion that score-cards should be used, and the score placed on each animal or article, Mr. Brockbank said he had done that once, and never would attempt it again. He was willing to point out defects to the owner privately, but not in public.

Although many delegates favored some system of wet-weather insurance, the prevailing sentiment was that each society should manage its own finances and keep sufficient money ahead to meet expenses. If they did not do so, they should be obliged to pay out of their own pockets. It was pointed out that insurance companies handled such business. The executive was empowered to deal with the problem.

ENTRY FEE ON EXHIBITS.

In discussing the advisability of charging an entry fee on exhibits at fairs, J. E. Roxburgh, of Norwood, said that, just as children pass from Public to High Schools, and on to the University, so do exhibitors develop from the township fair to the county fair, and later to the larger central Provincial or Dominion exhibitions. To have best results at the smaller shows, it was necessary to have the boys interested, and in most cases the entry fee could be done away with to advantage. Some societies, levying entry fees, made prize-money larger, but the net sums paid to exhibitors was not larger than they could have paid without the fee.

That the present system of dividing the Government grant would prove unfair to societies not charging entry fees, was the opinion of Wm. Hickson, of Bobcaygeon. Directors wished to make the prize-money as big as possible, so as to get more out of the Provincial grant. While an entry fee kept out undesirable exhibits, it also kept away some desirable ones, and it looked bad to see empty stalls and benches. R. Vance, of Millbrook, thought it was unfair that one man could make 20 or 40 entries on his membership fee of \$1.00, while another member had only one entry. Large exhibitors should pay extra. D. Evans, of Strathroy, claimed that, since there was a tax on gate and grand-stand, in order to swell the receipts, so there should be one on entries. He had known men to enter horses for exhibition, in order to avoid paying at the gate. Encouragement for amateurs was the aim of R. E. Cowan, of Galt, who urged protection against professional exhibitors. Local directors were left to use their own judgment in the matter.

USING GOVERNMENT GRANTS.

To the questions, Is the present method of distributing the Government grant satisfactory, and should the grant be increased? Dr. McGuire, of Waterford, answered doubly in the affirmative. In order to prevent professional exhibitors from carrying away the lion's share of the prize-money, he suggested two classes, so that professionals could not compete against non-professionals. An effort should be made to have the Government grant increased from \$70,000 to \$100,000. In distributing the extra \$30,000, Dr. McGuire suggested that it be given on a percentage basis to those societies that owned their buildings or grounds. Many delegates opposed special aid to societies already strong, and wanted the basis of distribution for the entire grant left as at present. After thorough discussion, R. H. Leary, of Peterboro, introduced a resolution asking that a delegation wait on the Government, and ask that the grant to agricultural societies be increased to \$100,000, and that this be distributed among the societies according to the amount spent for agricultural purposes.

The resolution carried, and on Thursday a large delegation, with H. J. Gould, R. E. Cowan and David Evans as spokesmen, waited on Hon. Jas. Duff, Hon. Col. Matheson and Hon. Dr. Reaume. The Ministers considered the demand for an increased grant a reasonable one, and promised that it would receive serious consideration at the hands of the Government.

PLOWING MATCHES.

In introducing the question, Should plowing-matches be revived and encouraged? J. W. Sangster, of Toronto, referred to the straight furrow, with the fine comb, so common a few decades ago, the object being economical preparation of a desirable seed-bed. Later, the presence of grasses and weeds led to the popularity of a flat furrow. Dairy farming then came into prominence in many parts of Ontario, and soon fancy plowing and annual matches fell into disrepute.

The revival of the plowing-match, Mr. Sangster claimed, would arouse enthusiasm, and be of great benefit. Present-day farmers wanted a visible, practical lesson. As a rule, the man who plowed well also was thorough in other operations on the farm.

It was pointed out by J. W. Wheaton, of Toronto, that of late years the aim was to turn over the land as quickly as possible. Plows