

not benefit, but injured, the farming community. The Association had done a great deal of good at one time, but like many other things it had outlived its usefulness. They had many good shows throughout the country unsupported by Government aid. The running expenses of the Provincial Fair in 1879 amounted altogether to about \$17,000. If it required this sum to expend \$12,000 in prizes it was not run on a business basis. He took the ground that an institution handled like that could not exist much longer. They claimed in that year a balance to their credit of \$1,075, but he believed that was shown only on paper, and that it would be found on investigation that the institution was really bankrupt. He would ask, if the Provincial institution was managed well, how it was that the independent shows receiving no Government aid paid so well. He trusted that the Minister of Agriculture would look into the matter, and give them some light regarding it.

Mr. DRYDEN said the Agricultural Association had for several years been becoming somewhat unpopular. The original object of the grant was to enable them to give sufficient prizes to make their Exhibitions a success. But now this was no longer necessary, as the increase in the population and the greater facilities for travel, would enable the Association to be self-supporting. The question to be decided was whether the annual grant would be a benefit or not. The Industrial Exhibition was a great success, as were the Exhibitions at Hamilton and London, and they did not get a grant from Government. If they were so successful without the grant, why should not the Agricultural and Arts Association be equally successful without a grant? If they were to give the large annual grant, he thought the recipients of it should report to the House what they did with the money. He thought, however, that the time had come when they ought to discontinue the grant.

Mr. ROSS thought that the time was come to consider the advisability of discontinuing the grant to the Provincial Association. At one time the grant was an absolute necessity, but circumstances had changed. London, he believed, inaugurated the system of independent fairs, and these were now much more successful than the Provincial. If the grant was withdrawn the Provincial Show, so named, would no longer exist, but the principal cities would all establish their annual fairs, which would more than supply the want. By distributing the sum voted to this Association amongst the farmers for the purpose of improving stock-breeding, it would work much more good.

Mr. LAIDLAW would not move for the abolition of the Provincial Show as a Provincial Show. One of the independent fairs—the Guelph Fair—was by no means a success. The independent fairs throughout the country, with few exceptions, were not a success. He thought that some good might yet be done by the Provincial Fair, but he was forced to admit that it was not to be looked for under the present management. He would therefore vote for the withdrawal of the grant.

Mr. WOOD said he was glad to see this question discussed, and to see it discussed so frankly and fairly. He was certain that when members made such statements, they would not make them without having thoroughly investigated the matter. In the past large prizes had been given to induce prominent Americans to exhibit. But that time was past, and Canada's exhibit at the Centennial had shown that we could now do even more than compete with American stock growers. One thing must be remembered. If a cry were once raised against a society, the public were apt to take up the cry and repeat it. The Association had been charged with the reckless expenditure of money, and that the prizes were not equitably distributed. This was a grave charge, and if true should be investigated. No doubt they had been somewhat careless in making returns, but some slight returns had been made, and from these he would now read certain statistics. The state of the Agricultural and Arts Association financially was shown by the cash balance on hand to their credit as follows:—

1874.....	\$11,320	1878.....	\$5,050
1875.....	18,126	1879.....	1,865
1876.....	No return	1880.....	1,075
1877.....	3,642	1881, 1st Jan.....	1,666

They have had to borrow, however, on their real estate to the extent of \$5,000, and this mortgage was now standing against them. The gate receipts in 1874 were \$19,000, which had fallen to \$10,000 in 1880. Therefore it would be seen that in 1874 the Association had over \$11,000 to their credit, while now they had fallen nearly \$5,000 in debt. Seeing that this was the case, it was well to consider whether the Government would be justified in longer giving the grant. The motion was very properly put, and it was

right that it should be carefully considered. He could not, however, go so far as to withdraw the grant without the most thorough investigation into the amount of good that was being done by the Association. The Government would during recess make such investigation and give the matter their most careful consideration; and he would therefore ask that the motion be withdrawn.

Mr. MEREDITH said on a question of this importance the Government should have some fixed policy.

Mr. WOOD said that the Government intended, as he had said, to give the matter their most careful consideration. He was sure that members had no data at present on which to form a judgment.

Mr. BRODER said that at Ottawa the falling off of the gate receipts of the Provincial Show was not owing to a want of attendance, but owing to mismanagement on the part of the Association. If the grant was withdrawn he thought some of the Western shows would be asking for a portion of that grant. As the Association was doing a public good the \$10,000 grant was merely a nominal sum for the Province to pay. He was loth to sweep away the Association at one blow.

Mr. BALLANTYNE questioned whether so much improvement in their live stock would have taken place but for the existence of the Provincial Fair in the past. There was no doubt that a diploma from the Agricultural and Arts Association was held to be of more value than any other. The fact that the eastern portion of the Province desired the continuance of the fair was one reason why it should not be abolished. It was a question whether it would not be desirable to re-model the whole system of aid to agricultural shows, large and small. The feeling was that they had too many shows. The local small shows had been productive of but little good. The withdrawal of grants might, as in the case of colleges, be a means of stimulating and strengthening these societies. He was not prepared to vote for abolishing the Provincial Fair.

Mr. BOULTER thought that the passing of the motion would strike a blow at a great interest. They had not too many shows in the east, and he would not advocate the withdrawal of the grant.

Mr. HAY said that one point in favour of the Provincial Fair was its Provincial character, a character none others could assume. He could not see why a representation from the rural districts was not placed on the boards of the shows at London, Guelph, and Toronto, thus giving them a more representative character. They should not drop the idea of a Provincial Fair, even were it held at a greater interval than once a year. It might, perhaps, be placed permanently in Toronto or even London. The whole question of aiding electoral societies should be approached with a view of stimulating to a greater enterprise and strengthening the various township societies.

Mr. FERRES said the people could if they wished amalgamate two or three small shows into one large one. They had not done this, therefore the shows were as the people wished them. The main object of the agricultural societies was to educate the people, and it did not matter whether the shows were large or small, they fulfilled that object. The Agricultural Association of Brantford had passed a resolution to the effect that the county shows should be done away with, and the grant to them given to the township shows. As regarded the Provincial Exhibition, it was well known that wherever the Exhibition was held that immediate vicinity got all the prizes. If it was held at Ottawa the farmers about Ottawa got all the prizes. The same was true of Toronto, Hamilton, and London. He was of the opinion that the Provincial Association no longer possessed the utility it once had. The Industrial Exhibition was taking its place in the estimation of the people, and he thought it would be better to give the grant to some other society. He would sooner give it to the township shows, as he believed they did the most good. If the township societies were done away with, the consequence would be that three-fourths of the farmers would never see an agricultural show. Some small township societies are very healthy educational institutions, and from every point of view he was in favour of developing and strengthening them.

#### RETURNS.

Mr. HARDY presented a list of revised Public School text books, also a return respecting Collegiate Institutes.

Mr. PARDEE, with the leave of the House, presented the eighth report of the Committee on Railways.

AFTER RECESS.