

# Fair Board Annual Meeting Sat'y, Jan. 21st.

## Richmond Hill Fair Is An Asset To This District and Deserves Better Support

### The Day of the Small Fair Is Not Gone If Community Alive To Opportunity It Offers.

The annual meeting of the Richmond Hill Agricultural Society will be held in the council chamber, Richmond Hill, next Saturday afternoon at 1.30 p.m. The business will include the annual election of officers and the commencement of plans for the 1928 fair. The report of the treasurer will be presented and will show that the 1927 exhibition had a fairly successful year financially and several recommendations from the old board will be considered. Among the recommendations adopted at a meeting shortly after the fair last year was that the women's fancy work and poultry departments be omitted from the 1928 prize list. It was the feeling at that time that the women's department did not bring out any appreciable local competition and that the society was merely paying out good money to professional exhibitors. As there was very little competition in the poultry class and as the society has no proper building to house the exhibit it was thought advisable to drop this feature also. It is regrettable that these attractions must be discontinued but the fault does not rest with the directors. In face of conditions as they exist there seems to be no alternative. BUT IF THE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND THE WOMEN GENERALLY IN THIS DISTRICT FEEL THAT THIS FEATURE OF THE FAIR SHOULD NOT BE DISCONTINUED THEY SHOULD ATTEND THE MEETING ON SATURDAY AND GIVE THE DIRECTORS THE BENEFIT OF THEIR SUGGESTIONS. There seems to be no good reason why the women's department should not have generous patronage in

this community and if the women show sufficient interest to assure a good competition there is no doubt whatever that it would be continued by the directorate. The same applies to the poultry-breeders. There are a great many in this district interested in poultry but if the breeders take no interest in the fair which should be a great advantage to them, the directors cannot be blamed if they leave poultry off the prize list. We trust that the women and poultry breeders will be present in large numbers at the annual meeting next Saturday. The Richmond Hill Fair is one of the oldest in the province and citizens of this community may take just pride in its record of progress through the years. THE SUCCESS OF THE FAIR DEPENDS ON THE PEOPLE. The measure of its usefulness and growth will be in proportion to the degree in which the people support it. If you have any suggestions or if you have none, at least show by your presence at the meeting on Saturday that you are in sympathy with the organization. EVERYONE is welcome and by paying the small membership fee of \$1.00 is entitled to vote and take part in the proceedings. IF YOU WANT TO BOOST THE FAIR, now is the time to do it by throwing your energy into the organization and helping along the good work. The Richmond Hill Fair represents a great opportunity and is an asset to every stock-breeder, every farmer and every business man in this district and the annual meeting should attract a larger and more representative gathering than has characterized these meetings in former years. In view of the declining interest in

so-called small fairs supposed to have been reflected in the decline and disappearance of many societies it is interesting to note what has transpired in other places. From the comments of our exchanges on this point it would appear the consensus of opinion favours the doing away with the elaborate "trials of speed" by fancy named animals and substituting there for those of the product of the local fields and farms. However, we submit the following as showing the trend of discussion on this matter taken from our contemporary, the Goderich Star:—The country fall fair is said to have originated over a century ago in the fertile brain of one, Elkanah Watson, a New England farmer. He had procured a pair of merine sheep and had advertised an exhibition of them to satisfy all who might want to see them, as they were the first in his section. The attendance was so large that it suggested to him the idea of an annual stock show. The prizes offered the first year were \$70, but next \$208, so the fair developed. Perhaps no one institution has done more for the improvement of agriculture than the fall fair which has introduced the element of competition and prompted generous emulation resulting in a worthy ambition to win the largest number of prizes for the best stock, grain, roots and fruits; and for the farm ladies to show their prowess of the home in baking, sewing and the finer arts of decoration. The somewhat doubtful success of some fall fairs, among them the Goderich fair, has led to much questioning as to what is needed to make a really successful fair. "Fall fairs seem to be booming," says The Milverton Sun, "and 1927 has been a particularly successful year, if we can judge by all newspaper reports that we see. Every one tells the same story. If the weather was good, the previous records were nearly all broken; if it was only fair or none too good, the crowds were there just the same, although not so large. A few years ago, it was thought that times were hard for fall fairs and that they were going into the discard. Quite a few did succumb but it seems to have been a weeding out of the villages. This year's reports—and we have glanced over a good many—all tend to prove that the remaining fall fairs are in for a good time and should have a period of growth and expansion. Given decent weather at all, it seems that they are going to get the crowds and, of course, the money. And with more funds, they can have more attractions and so draw more people and have more money. Not all fall fairs are successful, however, and the following article from The Lucknow Sentinel is interesting. Fall Fairs — Successful and Not So Successful In an article on fall fairs, The Chesley Enterprise of January 12 asks "What is the reason that the attendance is always small at Chesley Fair whether the weather is good, bad or indifferent?" It appears that this year the Chesley Agricultural Society increased the gate admission charge from 25c to 35c. in an effort to increase revenue. But the increase resulted only in bringing in \$50 more than was received in 1926. The Enterprise points out that the gate receipts at Tara fall fair were this year \$347; at Markdale \$800 and at Teeswater \$1,300. At Chesley, so the Enterprise says, the receipts never reach \$500. All the places named are in a class with Lucknow—that is, as to conditions which might be expected to promote a fall fair. Lucknow is no better off than Chesley, the gate receipts averaging around \$400, and this likely, is the case with the great majority of agricultural societies throughout Western Ontario. In view of these facts it becomes an interesting question as to how to account for the marked difference in the fairs. Some blame the town and its general atmosphere, and others the board of directors or the secretary. In this connection the newspaper above referred to (The Chesley Enterprise) has the following pertinent remarks: "It isn't the dropping of horse races fault for they do their best to encourage attendance by courteous treatment of exhibitors and good service.

"It isn't the dropping of horse races for the attendance was low in the days when racing was a part of the program. "It isn't the amount offered in prizes for the amount paid for competition in the various classes is as high as in other places that have double the proceeds. "It isn't for lack of advertising, for the director's in Chesley spend as much for printing and advertising as is spent for other fairs. "It can't be for lack of special attractions for Tara fair draws the crowd without any specialities. The prize animals, parading around the ring, are the only special attractions in Tara. "To what then can the small attendance at our fall fair be attributed? To our way of thinking it is the lack of interest among a considerable number of people in the town and surrounding district whether the show lives or dies. That was the cause of Walkerton fair passing out and it will cause dry rot to set in with any fair. That is all very true, and exactly right, but the reason given by The Enterprise needs explanation. Why is there a "lack of interest among a considerable number of people in the town and surrounding district?" Why in one district more than in another? The people are much the same in the towns and districts mentioned. The explanation is that "Nothing succeeds like success," and that success often is due to chance—not all chance, of course, but largely chance or luck. In the case of a fall fair, or anything in the way of an out-door celebration, nothing will so assure a large attendance and make for success, as the belief that their is going to be a crowd," others and yet others will go just to see the crowd, and thus the crowd will be built up far beyond what the original attraction or attractions, would of themselves warrant or guarantee. The Teeswater Fair, for some years was one of the most successful village fairs in the province, is an outstanding example. Not so many years ago this fair was in a class with Chesley, Lucknow, Ripley and Kincardine—the gate receipts ranging from \$350 to \$500, according to weather. Teeswater has a fine park and a good race track, and the combined influences of park, horse races and a succession of favourable days started the Teeswater Fair on its career of success, the climax of which, apparently, is not yet reached, as this year the crowd was bigger and the Fair was better than ever before. A directorate and secretary can take advantage of a "boom" tendency when it sets in, but they cannot promote it. That depends upon a set of circumstances not controlled by them. The "Northern Exhibition," Walkerton for years, was a rival in local popularity to the Toronto Exhibition of 50 years ago. It was a three-day affair with races, and the exhibits many and of a high order. But some change in conditions or in public taste knocked it and it finally faded out of existence altogether. Success of Fair Depends on Interest of Farming Community The Seaforth Expositor discussing the conditions on which the increased success of a fall fair depends has the following article:— Who has not heard the statement often repeated, that the day of the country fall fair is over, that its use as a market, as a social centre where friends and neighbors may meet once a year, to compare notes and renew old friendships, has passed with the modern mode of travel and the advantages of present day communication. That if the old Fall Fair is to survive, the directors of these fairs will have to import midways and go into the show business generally in order to draw a gate. Frankly, we do not believe any such thing. We believe that the automobile to bring opportunities for increasing success and interest to fall fairs, that they never before possessed, and that if the side shows and other entertainment of a side show nature were banished, it would prove of lasting benefit to these shows. Any person in an agricultural community, in which the average Fall Fair is held, who can not take pleasure out of a good display of live stock, or who pretends he or she does not, is about in the same class as the person who can not take any pleasure out of travel on the highways unless they are cutting in or passing everything in sight. Seven times out of ten that person is the driver of a Ford, and seven times out of ten the man who runs down the Fall Fair is also in the light car class. As stated, we believe the Fall Fair to-day has a better opportunity of be-

coming an asset, a very great asset than it ever had before. The opportunity, however, of realizing on this asset, does not lie as many people seem to think, in the hands of the Fair officers and directors, no matter how capable, how energetic, or how good they may be but it does lie in the hands of the farming community in the district. Why is it that a farmer, who has good stock, horses, cattle, or whatever it may be, is accused of taking all the prize money, and giving no one else a show, and is rarely given credit for helping to make the show a success. What does the prize money amount to anyway, compared to the possible purchaser his exhibit of his stock may bring to him? People are never unanimous on a judge's decision. A man with an individual entry, in the minds of many, may have a better animal than the actual prize winner, and what is a two dollar or three dollar prize at most if the other fellow makes a sale and a profit of three times that much, or more, to a purchaser who has seen his animal on exhibit. Or don't you believe the time or trouble it takes to fit and exhibit stock pays? Where does the prize stock that the country flocks to Toronto or Guelph to see, come from? Seven times out of ten it is picked up through the country, and is not the product of any big breeding establishment. There is as good stock in this district to-day as was ever shown at Toronto. It may not be fitted or trained, but the foundation is there and it would be at Toronto if any of the big breeders of the Province knew of it. What better way is there of bringing it before the public than by exhibiting it at the local fairs? THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE RICHMOND HILL FAIR WILL BE HELD NEXT SATURDAY IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT 1 p.m. REMEMBER THE FAIR NEXT MAY 24 WILL BE NO BETTER AND NO WORSE THAN THE PEOPLE MAKE IT. SHOW YOUR INTEREST BY YOUR ATTENDANCE.

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