

WASHINGTON STATE FAIR BIG SUCCESS

By J. E. Griffin.

(Special to Farm Magazine.)

EXHIBITORS, racing men and the patronizing public all conceded the Washington State Fair, held at North Yakima September 21-26, to be one of the most successful of any of the Northwest fairs held last season. Not only this, but the Department of Agriculture, under the direction of which the Fair is held, is highly elated at its success financially, as the fair ended without a deficit.

Knowing ones interested in fairs have analyzed it and pronounced first one thing and then another as the probable cause of the marked success, but in all probability a combination of circumstances, into which the element of luck entered, was the chief contributing feature. It was not luck alone, but good management in grasping the opportunities that presented themselves.

To begin with, the 1914 Washington State Fair had two experienced fair men at the helm—J. E. Shannon, of North Yakima, as secretary, who had served in the same capacity before, and Dr. H. T. Graves, who has been a close observer at all the fairs of the state for the past five years, in either an official or professional capacity.

A Real Problem.

The fair of the previous year, while an admitted success from the standpoint of an exhibition, could hardly be classed as a financial success, requiring some \$12,000 of the appropriation calculated to be used for the 1914 fair to meet its obligations. So, the problem that confronted the Department of Agriculture was—can this fair be held again, without weakening it as a state exhibition and without making it purely a county or local fair? The answer was, after the department had carefully checked up all its accounts, "Yes," if the enormous administration expenses hitherto piled up could be cut out altogether.

At first this did not seem possible, but when a report was submitted to Governor Lister, showing that the major portion of administrative expenses could be taken care of by the Department if started early, he is said to have laconically remarked: "We can do better than that," went the Department one better by pledging the support of all departments under the chief executive and took it up in person with the Commercial Club and other citizens' organizations of North Yakima. They liked his plan; said so with actions, and promised to take care of all the administration work that the Department could not manage.

Public Spirit Helps.

Services on the part of public-spirited men of the Yakima Valley were donated, and an advertising campaign commenced that thoroughly covered the valley and reached to the larger cities. The newspapers of North Yakima led the way and the Department of Agriculture went to work on arrangements so that in a very short time preparations far in advance of previous years were under way.

Early in the year an opinion based upon the large amount of the appropriation used by the 1913 fair went abroad that no fair could be held in 1914, and this was the one big obstacle that the combination working on the fair had to overcome, but preparations went forth so rapidly that it took but a short time to regain the confidence of the public.

Dr. Graves, who formerly was State Veterinarian, had a hobby for livestock, and thought this was the largest industry represented at any fair, and when he got the chance to feature his hobby, took it in good measure. Those who know him intimately claim that he also has a hobby for trotting races, in place of automobile or running races, so he bore down hard on these two features, arguing that they were the attractions that would bring the returns at the gates. The events that have transpired proved he was correct, for while the number of people who actually passed through the turnstiles during the past season does not quite reach that of the 1913 fair, everyone connected with the institution admits that without these departments featured the 1914 attendance would hardly have been half that of 1913, and reports of other state fairs throughout the country bear out the statement.

Effect of War.

Just about the time it was determined that trotting races should be the feature before the grandstand, the powder-keg upon which Europe had been sitting exploded, and one

of its immediate effects was to prevent a carrying out of the racing cards in Canada. Dr. Graves and Dr. Robert Prior, of North Yakima, to whom had been assigned the speed department, immediately took advantage of the situation and made one big bet on their judgment.

Had they failed the 1914 deficit would have been as big as the 1913; did they win, they might break even. The racehorse men all wanted to try the North Yakima track and ends were greatly stretched all around to give them a chance. They took it and all were satisfied, if the expressions of the racing men after the meeting is any criterion, for each and every one left the fair grounds satisfied with his portion of the \$7300 cash that was dispensed during the week in prizes.

It is generally conceded that a fair of this kind is primarily an educational institution, but according to Secretary J. E. Shannon, two elements are necessary to make it such. Assuming that the best possible displays are obtained, he argued that it was necessary to have something to bring the people to the gates to spend their money.

This the races and other entertainment attractions were supposed to do, then the remaining thing was to make them take an interest in the displays after their appetites for pleasure had been satisfied. This inducement was furnished by the state institutions in the form of novel displays never shown at a fair in this state before, and so well did these exhibits attract that portion of the uninterested public to the fruit, vegetable and other departments, that it is estimated that not a single individual who entered the fair grounds failed to take in the entire agricultural exhibit, after being drawn to the building by the state fish exhibit.

Races Success.

Approximately \$16,500 was spent on premiums and races, every dollar of which brought out the maximum

competition according to the officials of the fair. The races cost \$7300, and both the racehorse men and the public were satisfied, to such an extent that North Yakima has probably won a reputation as the best racing city in the Northwest. The \$6405 dispensed in livestock premiums is scattered all over the Northwest and as far east as Iowa. Premiums paid in other departments of \$469 in poultry, \$396 in horticulture, \$577 in agriculture, \$213 in dairying, \$170 for bees, and approximately \$960 for arts and crafts, have demonstrated that it is possible to arrange the premium list in such a manner as to get most excellent exhibits for the part of the gate receipts which they probably earned, or in other words, to make each department pay its own freight.

No better weather could have been asked for, and it actually seemed as if the weather man was holding old Jupiter Pluvius back by the bit as long as possible, and then did let him go with a vengeance, for although clouds did appear in the sky occasionally during the week, it did not rain until the Sunday after the fair closed, and then it rained plenty.

Thus in summing up the 1914 Washington State Fair, one could be pardoned for suggesting that Dr. Graves wears a rabbit's foot, for with such men as Mayor A. J. Splawn of North Yakima, Doctors Barton and Prior, and Secretary J. E. Shannon, working like a well-oiled machine, with the public spirit of the Yakima Valley behind the fair, with the weather man doing his best and with everyone from the Governor to the ticket-takers boosting, what could have happened but a success?

It is true that other fairs have been a success financially, but they have been in close proximity to large cities, and the 1914, Washington State Fair will go on record at least for being patronized by more people than there are in the customary 75-mile radius of the fair grounds.

Farmers Should Get Out of Rut

BY J. A. HART.

IHAVE driven teams considerable over bad roads and noticed that where the roads were badly rutted and a wheel got in, it was hard pulling to get out again and often required the ingenuity of the driver and the strength of the team exerted to their utmost to get out again.

There is a rut into which many of us farmers fall that is equally as bad and often more difficult to pull out of. I refer to the habit of running a store bill. Habit, I say, for when all is taken into consideration, most of us could dispense with the luxury and be none the worse off.

True, a system like ours requires a certain amount of credit, and that is a large amount, but the worst kind of credit a man can get is credit at the local stores. In the first place credit here is not restricted as it is at the bank, or other places of business, and the inevitable result is that some "bad" accounts are carried; accounts that are never paid and for the loss of which the merchant must add to the price of his goods if he is to continue in business.

Then, too, the tendency is to purchase things which, while we may and doubtless do need them, we could get along without till such time as we had the cash to pay for them. In looking forward to the net result of our labors and operations we are apt to overestimate the returns or to underestimate the expenses, and so the end of the year finds us where its beginning found us. In fact, we are mortgaging the day after tomorrow to pay for the day before yesterday.

Value of Paying Cash.

It is safe to say that the farmer who allows himself to carry a store bill through the year pays an average of 10 per cent more for the goods he uses than the one who has the cash and pays promptly. This is not the merchant's fault—it is clearly his own—for by patronizing the credit system he places the merchant under additional expense and the handicap of waiting for his cash. He also indirectly encourages the carrying of men who are not responsible and the consequent loss to the merchant of at least a part of the business done.

I speak from experience. For years we have been running store bills and at the end of the year it has frequently been the worst bugaboo that we had to face to square these. In most other things we have got on a fairly

good business basis and been able to meet our obligations with some degree of promptness, but here we have failed. Your credit is good, the merchant has the goods for sale and is willing and anxious to sell them to you, and you need them, too. It's so easy to begin and, having begun, you feel you are under obligation to him, which, indeed, you are.

Better to Borrow.

But why follow a plan that you know is working to your own hurt? Why not borrow the money, if need be, and pay that store bill and then resolve resolutely by the help of God and that little wife of yours that you will pay as you go? Better to pay 8 or 10 per cent at the bank for a time than pay the added profit. Most farmers have sufficient income at almost any time of the year to meet the most urgent living expense, if they only think so.

There are the cows and chickens and perhaps you have some apples or potatoes. Make it a rule to bring into town each week as much or a little more than you bring out. Then when you sell a bunch of stock or a lot of hay or grain you have the cash to go and get the things you have long wanted, and these will seem the better because you had to work hard and wait patiently to get them.

Wife and I have agreed that we are going to pull out of the rut, and that 1914 is going to establish a new record for us in this respect. Of course, there may be times when it is hard, when the demand for the necessities of life is urgent, but we are going to head off that store bill or break a trace trying.

The man who uses \$500 worth of store goods during the year and pays \$400 on account has really been getting credit on the \$100. But he has been paying the added profit on the whole account. In other words, for the privilege of this \$100 of actual credit he has paid approximately \$50 during the year. The bank would only charge him \$10—a saving of \$40 on the year's purchases.

But the worst feature of this is that what he loses is not always the merchant's gain. In fact, the merchant, too, loses by this plan, for he cannot pay the jobber as promptly, and consequently must pay more for the goods. Moreover, as previously stated, in extending credit to a large number there will always be some who fail to pay. This is the reason that the prices asked by the home merchant are often higher than those of catalogue houses. Help the merchant by helping yourself and do your part to put things on a better basis. You can if you will.



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