

HOW IT CAME TO PASS.

A PIECE OF THE HISTORY OF THE EXHIBITION ASSOCIATION.

Where It Originated and How It Grew—The Act of Incorporation—A Period of Dullness and How It was Broken—The Resources of the Association.

The history of the exhibitions held in St. John, if written, would be a curious record of success and failure, of profit and loss, of surprise and disappointment.

Each and everyone of them has originated in the public spirit of the people of the city and province, that spirit which is ever to the front and always prompted to give in this way some idea of the resources of the province from every standpoint.

Nothing can do this so well, so thoroughly, as an exhibition, which is really a collection of the best of everything from the product of the manufacturer to the product of the land. The skill and industry of the housewife and the farmers science all come to the front. The dexterity and skill of every craftsman can have a place, and a prominent one at that, in the multitude of exhibits. Even the painstaking and clever work of children in the schools is brought to the front to show that the coming generation is alive and ready.

Thus it is that a great and successful exhibition affords a better indication of the real progress of the country than anything else. It is really a place of comparisons—comparisons not only of the work of the present but with the work of the past, and when one exhibition exceeds another it is only fair to assume that the country has progressed in the same ratio.

The success of exhibitions, from the standpoint of the people—not the judges, for it might easily please one and not the other—is made or marred in a great measure by the management. A poor show from the judge's standpoint can be made a popular one by wise management while a genuinely good show can be called a failure if the management is poor. This, in some measure, accounts for the varied history of the exhibitions held in St. John in the past. Sometimes through lack of funds, sometimes through the interference of politicians, who, because of government grants, feel inclined to see that they were properly spent, and all spent exhibitions that would have compared successfully with any in other countries were a disappointment in the end, because of financial afterclaps that took all away all their real success and pleasure.

Such was the exhibition of 1883. True, the province had to stand the brunt of the deficit, but that same fact has frightened the people of St. John and of the province from attempting anything on a grand scale since. They were afraid of failure—of the horrible deficit, and they preferred waiting until public opinion should again demand an exhibition.

Public opinion has come to time at last, and next Wednesday another exhibition will be opened in St. John. How this has been brought tardily about is one of the interesting stories of new beginnings in St. John, and deserves to be recorded. The men who took the burden of the work are bearing it today, and to them PROGRESS tries in this issue to give some adequate credit for their keen and patriotic public spirit.

It was fully three years ago—a little longer perhaps—when the idea of another exhibition was broached to the people. It came gently and made a slight impression, and as the idea grew the impression deepened, and the result is seen today.

No person would have dreamed of advancing such an idea unless he could back it up by showing how it could be made to pay expenses.

That was the main idea. The thought of more deficits was repulsive, and when Mr. James A. Estey talked in the Board of Trade one fine afternoon about an exhibition, he was armed with documents showing how in Toronto, the Queen City of Canada, an Exhibition Association had been formed and incorporated, and was carrying on successful and paying annual exhibitions. The members of the board began to listen. They were ready at that time as now to give the city any kind of a boom in order to show that the advertised depression did not exist in any degree in this part of Canada. Mr. Estey was ready with his facts and his figures, and what he could not give were procured at an early date. They were looked into by a sagacious and wide awake committee, and their report showed the feasibility of the scheme.

This it is that the Exhibition Association is an offspring of the Board of Trade, for a few of the members applied in due form soon afterward for incorporation. In doing this the charter of the Toronto association was followed very closely, and when the bye laws of the association were passed they had their main features from those of the experienced and older Ontario association. It is one of the easiest things for any number of men to get incorporated. That is the business of the law makers, and they do not generally waste much time about it. The trouble begins after the incorporation, especially if there are no signs of large and speedy profit to come from the operations of the company. This association, which was formed with the idea of keeping within bounds and paying expenses, had not for its main object the coining of dividends for the stockholders, and the simple result was that after the act

of incorporation was secured the idea fell flat. Public interest dropped and almost died until one bright morning in the early spring of 1889, new life and energy was infused into the directors and the people. All this was done by the energy of one man. The writer was seated at his desk and busy when, with a hasty step Mr. Ward C. Pitfield entered the room and asked, or rather demanded, stock for the Exhibition Association. They wanted to hold an exhibition that fall, and they must have the stock—more than that, the cash. There was no time to argue the matter, for before the writer had time to ask any questions, he had signed the stock sheet and Mr. Pitfield was away to some other citizen. The good work done by this gentleman in those few days put life into the Exhibition Association. Before that it was a puny, delicate infant, but when his work was done it was full of lusty health. He asked no merchant to do what he would not do himself. He headed the sheet with a subscription for 50 shares of stock and with each of the members of the firm of Manchester, Robertson & Allison down for 25 shares, he found his work comparatively easy. He succeeded in raising the subscription stock to 1000 shares and gave the association a balance in their bank book of about \$1,000.

When this was done the exhibition was to be held in the fall of 1889. The stock was subscribed with that idea and the merchants began to count upon it.

Fortunately or unfortunately a postponement was brought about by one means and another. The summer carnival fiasco was one important factor in the postponement and the objections of some manufacturers at the short time to make a display settled the fate of the show for the fall of 1889. There can be no doubt now but that it was most fortunate, for at that time the association was not in the condition that it is now to make a successful show. The buildings were so much out of repair that it is a wonder the carnival management found them in good enough shape to occupy. Just here it may be mentioned that the slim attendance at the electrical exhibition appears to have been a providential occurrence, for had the expected throng put in an appearance, nothing could have prevented a disaster, the result of which must have been fearful. The facts come to light only a few weeks ago when the question of running the railway track in the machinery hall was brought up. President Everett asked if the foundation had been examined and was answered in the negative. Because the electrical exhibition had been there it was taken for granted that the foundation was thoroughly secure. They tore up the flooring and found that the supports were, in every instance, rotted away and that had a locomotive entered the hall it would have without a doubt gone through the floor. At an expense of over \$1,000 the association had the foundations rebuilt and this time of brick and mortar, so that they would remain for all time.

In addition to the condition of the buildings the funds of the association were almost in as bad a state. They had no money to run an exhibition save a grant of \$2,000 from the province and the stock of the association. It was already July and no advertising had been done. So much depended upon the fate of the carnival that the directors came to the wise conclusion to postpone the exhibition for another year. That it was a wise conclusion was proved but a few days later. The immense crowds that thronged the city carnival week could never have been brought back in the fall to an exhibition. So it went over until 1890.

A little before '89 went out the directors met and fixed upon the dates of the exhibition, September 24 to October 4—1890.

Perhaps nothing quite as important happened to the association since it was organized as the engagement of the irrepresible and energetic Ira Cornwall, who in his own good way has given St. John more effectual advertising in two short years than it ever had. This is not the place to give a pen portrait of the secretary; in another column there is an engraving of him and some letter press. It is sufficient to say in this brief history of the association that Mr. Cornwall's engagement as secretary marked a change in its progress. His experience and intense energy has been expended to the greatest advantage since he became connected with the Exhibition Association.

He had to do much with little. With the true instinct of a newspaper man the secretary knew that if the exhibition would be a success it must be extensively advertised. To do that without cost to the association was a problem from which abler men than him might have shrunk. Had he been unacquainted with the business energy of the St. John merchants he might have failed, but knowing their willing generosity to back up anything that would forward the exhibition, he prepared an admirable illustrated leaflet showing the advantages of St. John as a port and a city, and, leaving sufficient space upon it for the cards of leading merchants, set out to place from a quarter to half a million of them in different sections of the country. Progress knows just how many went out, for its Engraving Bureau and printing press did the work, and 350,000 of advertising leaflets were distributed. It was a great work, and gave the exhibition an immense boom in the country.

HELP FOR STRANGERS.

LODGING AND REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED FOR THOUSANDS.

The Work Done by Chairman Ward C. Pitfield of the Lodging and Refreshment Committee and his Associates—Something About the System.

To take care of the strangers, to see that they are fed and lodged comfortably for a reasonable sum is one of the chief ends and aims of the lodging and refreshment committee over which Mr. Ward C. Pitfield, of the firm of W. C. Pitfield & Co., so ably presides.

To the man who knows nothing about such work such an object has little labor. If he was set about it he would speedily

will give the applicant the information in the same style as it is presented below:

Name—Mrs. John Smith.
Residence—No. — King street.
Number of rooms 4; single 3, double 1. Can accommodate 5 persons.
Price of lodging per day, each person, \$1, or per room, \$1.50.
Furnish meals: Yes. Breakfast \$0.30; Dinner \$0.50; Supper \$0.30, or \$1.00 per day for board and lodging.
Price per week for board and lodging, \$5.00.
Signature—Mrs. John Smith.

Visitors will oblige by returning these tickets to Refreshment Committee when leaving town.

When the stranger gets such a card as this he should lose no time but get to the place, introduce himself, and if accepted, he is at leisure to do as he pleases.

Another phase of the work of this com-



CHAIRMAN WARD C. PITFIELD.

find himself in a mess of trouble. We all expect and know that the ordinary places of entertainment will be more than crowded during the ten days of the show. It has been the chief aim of the committee to get a complete list of those places in the city where board and lodging, either or both, can be obtained. There are so many people in the first place in the city who would be out of their way in a large hotel who are always used to quiet life at home and seek the quietest retreat in the city that they can find. They are apt, too, to find a price which suits them better on a quiet street than at a first class house.

It will be a comfortable reflection to such people to know that through the efforts of the committee their wants will be supplied. All they will have to do is to make a personal application at the lodging office on Prince William street and get a card which will give them full directions.

The cards will be properly filled in and

Before this the agricultural society of St. John had joined with the association, and in consideration of certain privileges had added their grant of \$1,000—the district grant of the province—to the association's own grant of \$2,000 obtained from the government. This made an actual province appropriation of \$3,000. The city grant was also \$3,000, and both city and province have guaranteed to give \$3,000 more—\$6,000 in all in the event of a deficit. Before that can be touched, however, the stock of the association will be eaten up. This is not desirable, and will not happen if the directors can avoid it. Further than this the city has repaired the buildings to the amount of some \$4,000.

It would hardly be possible to judge of the value of the buildings from the cost of them. They were built hastily and under circumstances that made them more expensive than they would otherwise have been. A careful estimate values them at about \$40,000. How far this is out of the way may be left to the judgment of the people.

The repair bill of \$4,000 does not include what was mentioned before, viz: the discovery of the rottenness of the machinery hall supports which cost the association over \$1,000.

Another source of expenditures, the erection of permanent stock buildings at Moosepath, where the live stock show will be. The buildings there will cost in the vicinity of \$4,000.

It will be readily seen that the great expense of the exhibition is coming on the first year, and its success this time means that its chances in the future are fully 50 per cent. better. It does not often do to say much about the future, but it is the intention of the association to make these exhibitions annual—to hold them every fall. They cannot always expect such large grants and guarantees, but no doubt, in view of the benefits to the province at large of such shows the government could not

mittee is the attending to the catering privileges. They asked for the highest tenders for the privilege, and accepted that of T. C. Washington, who for a certain sum has the right to sell refreshments on the grounds at Moosepath and on the barack square.

Mr. Pitfield's work for the exhibition has not been confined by any means to the chairmanship of this committee. He is an energetic director, and has from the first been a firm friend of the exhibition. In another article in this paper is told how he aroused the people from their apathetic indifference at a critical moment.

His work has not been from any selfish motive, because by a regulation which he, with the other directors passed, he cannot exhibit his own goods on the floors of the exhibition building. His work was for the city's good, for the advancement of its interests. These are the kind of citizens that make live cities.

fail to consider an application for assistance very favorably.

The buildings of today are good enough. It would be better if they were located in such a spot that the live stock show could be a part of the main exhibition, but this at present, is impossible. They are well fitted up in the line of power, having one permanent boiler of 125 horse power and providing such additions that the power will equal 250 horse. The Ball and Wheelock engines will drive the machinery, the former getting its own steam from a locomotive boiler sent from London, Ontario.

The lighting of the buildings depends upon the Calkin Electric Light Co., which has the contract for lighting the city with electric lights in the near future. It will take a mile and a half of wire to wire the buildings and furnish electricity to 100 lamps of 2000 candle power each.

Many more things, interesting in themselves and showing the growth of the exhibition, might be written, but this article is confined to certain limits and the same information will in a great measure be found under other heads.

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Our stock today is:—

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Above in store here.

722 *lb. ch*, fine to finest *yungchow, sargones, padraes, ex. Steamship "Sennos" from Foochow, China, to New York, hence to St. John.*

527 *Do, Do, ex. Sh. "Strathleven" due New York 1st Oct. from Foochow. First crop Teas.*

Above direct Teas are the best goods, bought on the best market by experts of first rank, with experience of the sorts which, like BANNER CHOP, have become LANDMARKS in the trade. Chosen on the unculled crop of the season before the best chops are picked off for other markets. Bought in quantities that give control of brands of highest merit, and secure lowest cost. Sold at one profit only above cost of importation.

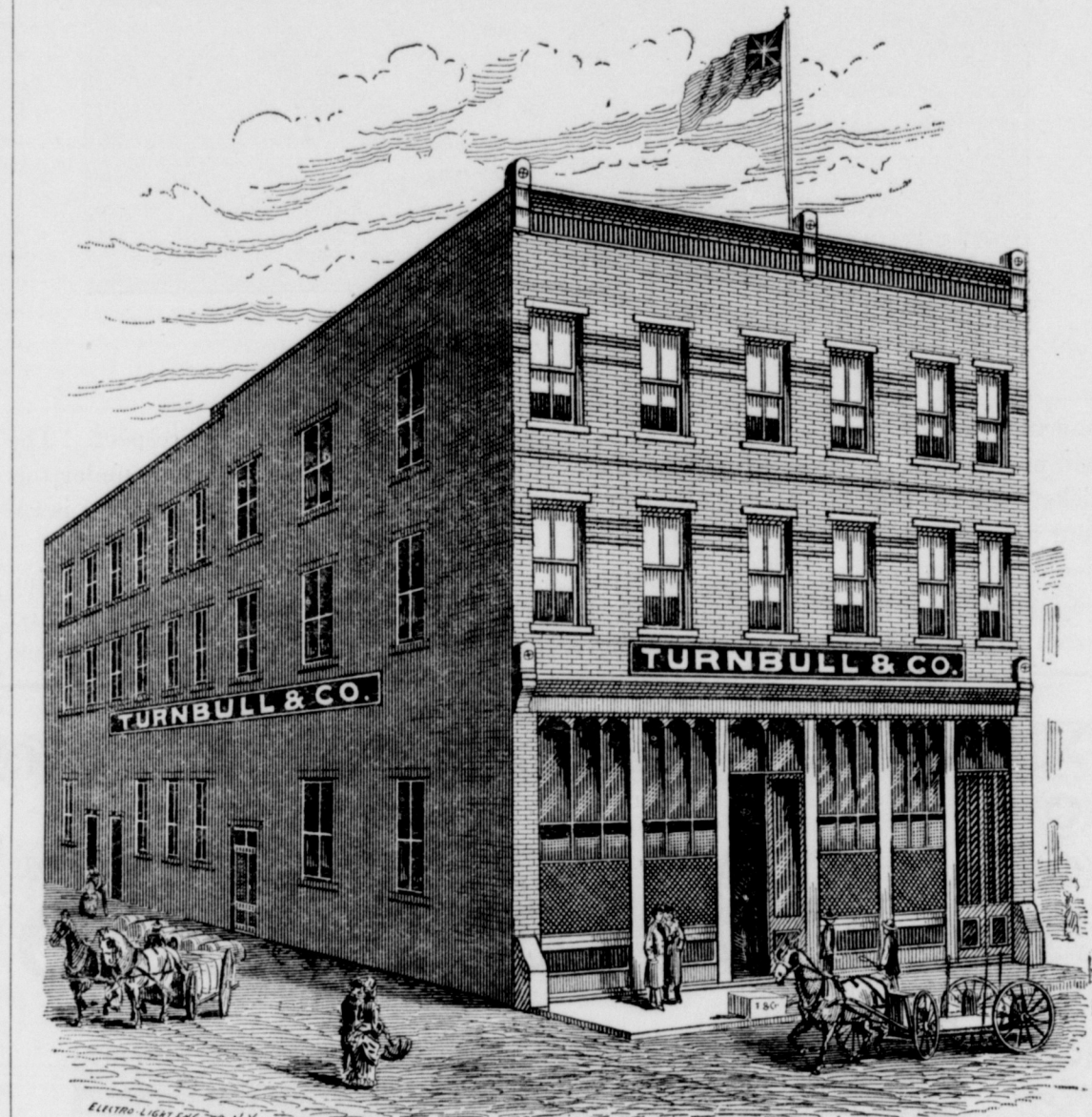
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