

Canadian Seed Growers' Association

The third annual convention of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association was held at Quebec, P. E. I., and St. John's, N. B., on July 10 and 11. While the attendance was not large it was very representative. Among those present were Dr. J. W. Robertson, St. Anne, Que.; G. A. Giguault, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Quebec; John Mooney, Valley River, Man.; W. L. Davidson, Bethel, Que.; Prof. L. S. Klinek, St. Anne's; Hon. W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture, Saskatchewan; Thos. S. Waugh, North Bedford, P. E. I.; J. O. Duke, Olinda, Ont.; Donald Innes, Tobique River, N. B.; Theodore Ross, Charlottetown, P. E. I.; Geo. Batho, Winnipeg; J. W. Wheaton and Messrs. Steele and Rennie, Toronto; Geo. Robertson, St. Catharines, Professors Harcourt and Buchanan, O. A. C., Guelph; Dr. Chas. E. Saunders, and Professors Macleize in, and Shutt, of the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, and G. H. Clark, Chief of the Seed Division, Ottawa.

A gathering of this kind must of necessity be small, as it costs a lot to bring delegates to the distance. Besides, in the early stages of organizing the work of the association the work can, perhaps, be better done by a smaller body than a larger one.

The program provided by Secretary Newman was a comprehensive one and quite sufficient to fully take up the time of the delegates. The directors' report advised several more or less important changes in the constitution, tending to a greater safeguarding of the registration of seeds.

The secretary presented a most satisfactory report. The association was in good financial condition, and the past year had been one of steady progress. Farmers were more sympathetic with the objects of the association and applications for membership from them were rapidly increasing.

In discussing the directors' and secretary's reports, Mr. G. H. Clark, Seed Commissioner, spoke of the general work of the association. It was a work which it would be difficult to persuade the majority of farmers to take up, as there did not at first sight appear to be any profit in it. The results from selecting seed were, however, always satisfactory, the yield was increased and the quality greatly improved. The success of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association depended upon the reputation of its members and, therefore, only those of the best standing were wanted in it. Every effort should be made to drive out men who fraudulently disposed of poor seed.

Representatives of the Seed Commissioner's staff in the various provinces reported on the work of the association in their respective districts. Mr. F. W. Broderick for the Maritime Provinces, Mr. J. C. Cote for Quebec, and Mr. McKillean for Alberta and British Columbia. They spoke most encouragingly of the work of the association and its effect in creating a greater interest in good seeds.

About twenty-five new members were nominated for election to the association, and all were admitted by a unanimous vote.

NOTABLES SPEAK

On Wednesday evening the delegates listened to three important addresses by Dr. Robertson, President of the association, Hon. Sydney Fisher, Dominion Minister of Agri-

culture, and the Hon. Mr. Motherwell. Dr. Robertson emphasized the work of the association was being in the interest of good seeds. Its chief object was to increase the yields of field crops by seed selection. From returns received from 50 members, 85 per cent. report improvement in size, plumpness and quality of kernels; 64 per cent. report that respective strains mature more evenly; 83 per cent. say that the method of selection has been valuable in enabling them to keep the strains pure; 75 per cent. report that strains are better adapted to local conditions and 47 per cent. report that selection gives ability on the part of the plant to withstand rust. This educational campaign of the association was widespread and vigorous. There is good profit for the farmer in growing seed for sale. It opens up a field to specialize in. While the soil and climate cannot be greatly modified by anybody, the crops can be very greatly improved by better seed.

The gist of Mr. Fisher's address was agricultural and educational. While Canadians rather gloried in their systems of education, after all it was somewhat superficial and inclined to skim over things—more so than in the old lands—were, perhaps, a little too self-reliant. There is an inclination among farmers to think that study is not necessary. There is a great lack of knowledge in all walks of life, but in no walk is there a greater lack of knowledge than in agriculture. We have to reach the grown-up farmer. A great deal has been done in this direction, but it has not yet reached the heart of our agriculturists.

Mr. Motherwell's address was of a more or less general character, with special reference to the need for good seed in Western Canada and the efforts being put forth to secure it. There was to him a more demand for good seed in the West than the supply. He referred to the good work done by seed fairs and the seed grain special.

A WESTERN SESSION

The addresses and discussions Thursday morning pertained more particularly to wheat growing in the West. The Hon. Mr. Motherwell led the way, in an address "Wheat growing." There were three points to be considered: soil moisture, good seed and weeds. In the West soil moisture was obtained by summer fallowing. All fall and spring plowing should be harrowed down as soon as possible, so as to retain moisture. Weeds compel Westerners to be good farmers or quit. They sow deep and thin, as the latter will stand the drought better than thick sowing.

The relationship between soil conditions and crop improvement formed the subject of a valuable paper by Prof. Harcourt, of the Ontario Agricultural College. He laid special stress upon the importance of feeding plants and the proper food necessary to their growth. As well expect an animal to thrive on improper food as a plant to grow on an insufficient or incomplete plant food.

Dr. Chas. E. Saunders, Central Experimental Farm, followed with a well prepared paper on "Quality in Wheat." Variety in grain is a race or breed and has its own characteristics. The color of the skin was no indication of the mill value of wheat. He preferred the terms hard

and soft rather than red and white to indicate quality. Softness or hardness was governed by the color in red rather than in the skin. A hard wheat had an advantage in the quality of the flour. A wheat with a white skin is just as liable to be soft as one with a red skin.

DOCTORS DIFFER

At the close of his address, Dr. Saunders stated that the superiority of Western wheats was not so much due to soil and climatic conditions as to the fact that Red Life was so much grown. Frank T. Shutt, Chief Chemist, Central Experimental Farm, at the opening of his address on soft wheats and smut preventions, made a statement that differs somewhat from the above. He said that climatic and soil conditions have a great deal to do with the quality of wheat. With this latter view we are inclined to agree. How far the color of Western wheats be accounted for otherwise? Red Life was grown in Ontario long before it was taken to the West, but the term No. 1 hard was never applied to Eastern wheats. Continuing, Prof. Shutt said that soft wheats were probably more susceptible than hard wheats to injury by smut treatment. Germination was retarded by smut treatment. The degree of injury was determined by the strength of the solution, the time of immersion, the period between treatment and sowing and the vigor of the germ. He gave some figures to show the effect of the bluestone, formalin and salt treatments, giving somewhat similar results to those reported last year.

CEREAL CROPS

Some effects in varieties of cereal crops arising from different conditions of growth were the subject of a valuable address by Prof. Buchanan, O. A. C., Guelph. He stated that the milling qualities of winter wheats were affected by conditions of the season. The Red Life grown several years at the College became much softened in quality. Grown as a fall wheat it was better than Ontario grown spring wheat, but not so good as the Western variety. Referring to oats, he stated that one variety of white and black oats had some of the characteristics of wild oats.

Mr. Buchanan's address was followed by several valuable papers, copies of which have been secured and will be published later. These are: "Improvement of the Potato," by W. T. Macoun, Horticulturist, Central Experimental Farm; "Some Results in Horticulture from Selection of Seeds," by Geo. Robertson, St. Catharines; and "Methods of Storing Indian Corn," by Prof. L. S. Klinek, St. Anne de Bellevue, Que. Mr. J. D. Duke, Olinda, Ont., gave a county county grower, led in the discussion on Prof. Klinek's paper.

The old board of directors was re-elected with the following changes: Hon. Mr. Motherwell takes the place of Dr. Robertson, Dr. Chas. E. Saunders and Theodore Ross the place of John Readey, Charlottetown, P. E. I., L. H. Newman, Canadian Building, Ottawa, is secretary. Information and particulars regarding the work of the association may be had by addressing him as above.

Before closing a resolution was unanimously adopted commending the rural school garden and recommending rural schools in all parts of Canada to take up this important educational work.