

The real solution.

It is not possible under our present agricultural system to banish weeds entirely from Saskatchewan. But our system of agriculture will change under the pressure of economic necessity. Our farms will some day be smaller and better worked, our fields will be fenced. More live stock will be kept. A greater variety of crops will be grown. Then the prosperous farmers will become more prosperous, while the poor farmers will either become better farmers or drift into other occupations or situations. The last great West will steadily become more like the older provinces and states. And when these changes are brought about the noxious weeds problem will not any longer be a serious one. In the older provinces and states this result is seen. In the older farming districts, in Great Britain and the Continent we have a basis for comparison. There, land is too valuable to grow weeds and this fact mainly explains the changed conditions regarding freedom from weeds. Weed laws did not do it. Weed inspectors were not responsible for it. Economic laws did it and they when fully recognised will cause equally important improvements here. Indeed, evidences of change here are even now apparent. The growing interest in dairying and live stock farming proclaims it.

What Government and Municipalities in co-operation can do.

I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if I may mention one or two ways in which the rural municipalities and the government might co-operate to promote the change which is inevitable? I do not think it is necessary at this time to mention the many ways in which the Saskatchewan Government has endeavoured to promote "better farming" and the interests of Saskatchewan farmers. To touch upon Co-operative Creameries, Live Stock Distribution Policy and the others would take too much time. I have already referred to the ready response of many municipalities to the suggestion of spending a sum of money for the support of agricultural secretaries. I overlooked saying that at least twenty appointed agricultural secretaries for 1916 and one municipality, I am informed, has appointed a man at a salary of \$2,000 per annum. I realise, however, that many others did not continue to appoint agricultural secretaries. I also realise that it is a very difficult matter to find men who combine the high qualifications needed to carry on this kind of work successfully and when they are found they must have the sympathy, the co-operation and the support not only of the council but primarily and essentially of the ratepayers. The ready response of our municipalities and the large number of appointments the first year surprised us and shows us that some action is desired, but I fear that the difficulty of finding the needed type of man will militate against the extension of the agricultural secretary system as at first proposed.

District Representatives.

I wish to say, Mr. Chairman, that for a short time we have been working through district representatives in the western portion of the province and while the war has, only temporarily we hope, taken three of our four representatives, I believe that this line of work can be carried on jointly by the provincial government and the municipalities. I do not wish to commit the government in any way to a rapid extension of the system, as the difficulty of getting the highest type of men will also