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Canadian Grown Seed Corn

A TOPIC of vital importance discussed at the recent seed growers' convention at Ottawa, and to which, perhaps, too little time was given, was that of seed corn. While wheat and wheat growing are of the greatest importance to Western Canada, corn and corn growing plays, or should play, just as important a part in the agriculture of Eastern Canada. The Seed Growers' Association can render no better service to our farmers than by encouraging the selection and breeding of types or strains of seed corn that will mature and grow well in this country.

Canadian corn growers, for the most part, have had to depend upon American grown seed. While this seed in itself has, on the whole, been good, it is not suited to our more northerly conditions. Of late years growing seed corn has become somewhat of a specialty in Essex county. Essex grown seed, though a considerable improvement on the American variety, so far as meeting our more severe climatic conditions is concerned, does not altogether meet the needs of the more northerly parts of the country. The only way these needs can be wholly met is to experiment in the production of seed corn in the more northerly districts. Many good seedsmen are skeptical about anything very practical ever resulting from work of this kind. We, however, have faith enough in it to wish to see it tried. The possibilities of seed selection and breeding are almost illimitable, and it should not be a very difficult problem to produce seed corn in the more northerly districts that would be so acclimatized as to insure the farmer a well matured crop of corn almost every year. Frosts sometimes injure the corn crop in some of the corn growing centres of the United States, yet they stick to the corn. The same thing might occur here, yet not sufficiently often to discourage the corn grower. With an early maturing variety, specially selected and acclimatized, a corn crop should be a reasonably sure proposition for most farmers in Eastern Canada. At any rate the advantages from such a crop are so great as to well repay considerable effort in this direction.

Paying for Milk for Cheese-making

The views of the dairy instructors on the question of paying for milk for cheese-making by the Babcock test, as given elsewhere in this issue, will bear careful reading. Every farmer who supplies milk to a cheese

factory should be interested and ready to act upon the advice given. There can be no doubt but that this system is largely in disrepute among the great majority of the patrons of cheese factories in Ontario. As several of our correspondents have pointed out, the chief reason for this is to be found in the attitude of the maker towards the test. Until his attitude changes, or until a competent outside man is engaged by a number of factories to make the test, it will be difficult to influence patrons to accept the principle of paying by test. Nevertheless the growing tendency to tamper with milk for cheese-making purposes, makes it necessary that some steps be taken to replace the present system of "pooling" milk for cheese-making by some plan that will give each patron pay for his milk according to its quality. The Babcock test if properly handled supplies a cheap, effective and reliable means of doing this.

Weeds and Crops

The weed problem is a most trying one at any time for the thrifty farmer, but this season it is especially exasperating. The prolonged period of wet weather, while it has produced rapid growth in all grain crops, has caused weeds to grow as they have seldom grown before. Cultivating has comparatively little effect. About the time the cultivation of a field of roots or corn is finished, a rain storm comes up, battering the loosened weeds into the ground, when they immediately begin to grow again as if nothing had happened to disturb their onward march. The dry, hot weather, the delight of the farmer, who likes a clean farm, has been absent this season, and unless the cultivator or weeder is kept going almost continuously, weed pests will much more than hold their own this year.

But there are compensations. Weather conditions that make the weeds grow make the grain and root crops grow also. At present writing the prospects for abundant field crops in Ontario are bright. Hay has picked up well, and new meadows especially give promise of a big yield. Growth has, however, been so rapid and the weather so wet that grain is very soft in the straw. A week or two of dry weather, not too hot, is needed to stiffen things up a bit. A heavy storm will put things flat on the ground if this soft condition continues. In fact, reports of some storms a week ago show that in several localities grain has been knocked down so badly that it is not likely

to straighten up again, thus causing an immense loss. Live stock, however, is the mainstay of the Ontario farmer, and losses in the grain crop do not affect him so seriously as in other places.

The School Book Commission and Agriculture

The commission appointed by the Ontario Government to investigate the school book question will not be doing its full duty to the people, a majority of whom reside on farms, unless they make a thorough canvass of the position of agriculture in relation to the rural schools of this province.

We appear to have reached the "do-nothing" stage in regard to this important question. Some years ago the Department of Education authorized a text-book on agriculture for use in public schools. That this text-book had considerable merit and was well adapted for the purpose for which it was intended is shown by the fact that it has since been authorized by several of the States of the Union. Moreover, some of the new provinces of the West have authorized this book for use in the schools. But if it is not adapted for the purpose, get some book that is suitable.

Considerable prominence was given to this question at the time, both by the Department of Education and the press, but for some reason or other, which we have never been able to ascertain, the subject has become practically a dead letter so far as public school education in this country is concerned. What is called nature study has come largely into prominence in recent years, but its relation to agriculture and the teaching of that subject in rural schools has not been made very clear. The new commission should make an exhaustive study of this phase of our educational system. There cannot be any doubt but that the best way to keep the boys and girls on the farm is to educate them for the farm. Whether we call it nature study or agriculture, pure and simple (we prefer the latter term), makes little difference. The important thing is that the children from the farm, and from the city, if need be, be taught enough of the principles of agriculture, the conditions of soil and climate that have to do with plant growth, how these plants grow, etc., and in such a way as to create within them a love for the farm and the beauty of country life. Why should not a country boy, even in his early years, have a knowledge of the life and conditions with which he comes in direct touch every day of his life? Will not such knowledge aid his mental development as much, if not more, than some of the subjects that to-day crowd our public school curriculum, and fit him better for his life's calling?