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THE past season marks a new era in the history of weed control in this province. For the first time every municipality has one or more weed inspectors employed and except in the case of one or two municipalities, each weed inspector devotes his whole time during the growing season to this work. This system has enabled the inspectors generally to do much more thorough work, and no part of the province has been overlooked.

During the summer months some one of the three weeds commissioners has made it his aim to visit each municipality and travel over a portion of the district with the inspector, although in a few cases we have failed to do this. This plan has given us a good opportunity of obtaining a large amount of valuable information regarding local weed conditions at first hand and, besides, we were often able to render timely assistance to the different municipal inspectors at a season of the year when their work was in full operation.

For the first time in the history of this province each municipal weed inspector is required to prepare a report showing the prevalence of weeds on each quarter section and the approximate area devoted to farm crops and summer fallow. One copy of these records will be kept in the municipal offices, and another copy at the office of the weeds commission. These reports will prove exceedingly useful in many ways; first, in checking up the work of the inspectors each year, and besides, it will prove of inestimable value for future reference.

What the Weeds Commission Found This Year

When we took office last year we were well aware that the work

The Weed Problem in Manitoba

Substance of an address by S. A. Bedford, Chairman of Weeds Commission delivered at the Meeting of the Union of Municipalities at Brandon

before us was a difficult one, in fact the biggest problem of the province, but we found the weeds even worse than we expected.

Perennial Sow Thistle—We knew, for instance, that the curse of the province, the perennial sow thistle, was very generally distributed over the Red River Valley, but we have also found it in

throughout the West. It will necessitate that all fields be summer fallowed every third year at least, and these fallows will have to be kept perfectly black all summer and fall. Not a single leaf of the thistle must be permitted to appear above the ground, and even harvesting and threshing operations may have to be suspended to

During an unfavorable season your grain may not germinate above fifty per cent, but every ripe sow thistle seed will grow.

Canada Thistle—This weed is also spreading rapidly in all parts of the province. Perfectly black fallows recommended by us for sow thistle, will also wipe out the Canada thistle, but unless every plant of these two kinds of thistle are absolutely kept below the surface, the summer fallow will prove of very little use, and may even stimulate the thistles to a more active growth.

Couch Grass—This very noxious weed is spreading rapidly, and already I know of several instances where the farmer has been driven off his land from this cause alone. In some instances this land has been sold by a loan company to a good farmer who has cleaned it up and nearly doubled the value of the farm. Some have used a late and heavy seeding of barley for this purpose; others have had excellent results from the cross plowing



NOT A SOIL ROBBER IN SIGHT

(Courtesy of the Man. Dept. of Immigration)

practically every municipality in the province. In some instances as many as a hundred infested fields were found in a municipality located 75 miles west of the Red River Valley, and this weed is spreading in an alarming manner everywhere.

It is a great mistake to suppose that this weed will not thrive outside of the rich soil belt; we found it just as persistent in the rolling prairies of centre and western Manitoba as it is in the neighborhood of Winnipeg, and unless we get full control of it the western part of the province will become just as badly overrun as the eastern portion.

I fear that very few Western farmers realize what it will mean to them if the perennial sow thistle becomes generally distributed

allow the men and teams to work at the fallows. It may mean that in a wet season it will be found impossible to keep these weeds destroyed. Careless farmers, particularly those on rented farms, will allow their land to become breeding places for these weeds, and the seeds will spread from these centres into every portion of the West.

At the present time some of the municipalities have only a few patches of these sow thistles, and now is the time to eradicate this pest before it gets a firm hold. Once firmly established in patches of scrub or bush, along the shores of ponds or streams, nothing you can do will drive them out, and the light downy seed will fly everywhere. We find that every fully matured seed will germinate.

of summer fallows and the dragging of the roots to the surface by means of harrows, narrow toothed cultivators, etc. The first method is most suitable for a wet season and the latter for a dry one.

Russian Thistle—This weed is also spreading rapidly. On light, dry soil it thrives amazingly and becomes a very noxious plant. It has been plentiful adjoining the international boundary for some years, but, much to my surprise, we found it as far north as the municipality of Miniota. It is an annual, and if destroyed before the seeds ripen it can be readily exterminated.

Wild Oats—Where farmers have followed the practice of double disking and skim plowing in the fall all land intended for bar-

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