

By Mr. Featherston:

Q. Do those weeds grow in the crops or after the crop comes up?—A. Both. A weed that ripens before the crop ripens drops its seeds on the ground year by year and causes great trouble by steadily increasing. Those that are cut with the crop are easily handled, but some of them ripen their seed before the crop is cut and thus they keep on increasing.

Q. What are they?—A. There are many and some of them most aggressive and serious enemies: tumbling mustard, hare's ear mustard, wild mustard, ball mustard, false flax, wild buckwheat, wild oats and many others.

Q. They have no rag weed?—A. Yes, indeed, they have in several places.

Q. The farmers say it is a great advantage to have it, because they plough it down as a green crop in the fall?—I have not much faith in that mode of treatment. I have seen it grow eight and ten feet high in the Southern States, and when once I asked a farmer in Virginia why he did not cut it, he smiled on me as an ignoramus, said: "why, that is my manure for next year." But the miller who gets rag-weed seed in his wheat will tell you that this weed gives him the greatest trouble of all. The seeds are just about the same size as the grain of wheat, and the Keewatin Milling Company say that this is the weed they like least of all the many kinds of which the seeds appear among wheat.

By Mr. Pridham:

Q. Are they much troubled with the Russian thistle?—A. The Russian thistle occurs only in Canada along the southern borders of the Northern Pacific Railway in Manitoba and every effort is being made by the railway company to destroy it. If farmers in Manitoba and the North-west did one-quarter as much as the Northern Pacific Railway Company has done to keep down the weeds, it would be a great thing for Manitoba. The railway company recognized the fact that they are accused of having brought this weed in, and they have certainly made every possible effort to destroy it. I was along the railway last July, and I saw a gang of men going along from Brandon to Winnipeg right through, to stamp out this weed, and not only the Russian thistle, but any other dangerous weed, wherever it might occur along the line. They were mowing and keeping the weeds down all along the line and giving a grand object lesson to the farmers in the neighbourhood. I understand, too, that they did not do this spasmodically but regularly all the time, and it would be a good thing if the farmers would follow their example. I think probably the Russian thistle scare is one of the best things for Manitoba that has ever happened, because, it has awakened the farmers there to the fact that they have got to do something with their weeds, and that they are menaced by a great danger. I detected for miles and miles, as I went along the Northern Pacific Railway the worst weed ever introduced into Manitoba and the North-west—Tumbling Mustard, which was first introduced, it is alleged, about Indian Head. During the past summer this was allowed to get such headway out there on the big Brassey farm, that they actually mowed down and ploughed 1,500 acres out of 2,000 and got no crop from it. The rest of the farm was kept sufficiently clean to get a crop, but this 1,500 acres they lost altogether. I asked Mr. Robert McKay, of Indian Head, to make a photograph for me of a large specimen, and here is a picture of that sample, it was three feet high and two feet across.

Tumbling Mustard has now spread all over that country round Indian Head, so that when you look out of the window as you pass by in the train, the country is just one sea of yellow with it. The trouble is that the farmers are not doing nearly as much as they ought to be doing to keep it down. Some told me I was running down the country by drawing so much attention to this weed. I reply to this: "It is absurd to talk like that. My duty is to call your attention to this, or any other dangerous enemy and make as much of it as I can." It has spread for miles and miles up there and also Southern Manitoba is now a sea of tumbling mustard, over hundreds of thousands of acres where this weed has been allowed to spread, and for a very trivial reason.

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