



Hon. Mr. Fisher

Agriculture in Japan

Farm Products at the Osaka Exposition—With
Mr. Fisher in the Orient

(Written specially for the Farming World.)

In mountainous Japan only 12 per cent. of the land can be cultivated. Still more than half of the population is engaged in agriculture, and probably more than one-half of the national revenue is derived from the farming population. The display of Japan's farm products made at the International Exposition at Osaka is interesting and highly creditable.

On March 20th, the Hon Sydney Fisher made a careful examination of the agricultural exhibits, accompanied by several of the important officials of the Exposition and myself. The exhibits are generally very tastefully arranged, showing in great detail, not only all agricultural products, but also all plants grown for the arts and industries. The exhibits are mostly grouped by provinces or "Kens," large areas of country, something between our provinces and countries. Each "Ken," as a rule, has a little court of its own, in which its exhibits are displayed. The northern ken and the southern ken have products widely different, but nearly all of them showing quantities of staples, such as rice, soja and other beans. Many show tea and silk worm culture, others flax, but more hemp and reeds, for making mats.

JAPAN APPLES AND PEARS

Several of the northern kens show fine collections of apples, resembling a good deal the coarser California apples, most of them with small spots, but of fine red color, good shape and large size. They, however, look coarse in texture, and are said to be so in flavor. Some pears of a light brown color, round in shape and quite large, are shown. These are coarse in texture and hard, though not of a bad flavor.

A good deal of tobacco and rape seed is shown. From the latter oil is made for cooking and lighting purposes. The refuse after the oil is pressed out is used for manure. The quality of the rice grown in the different provinces varies considerably. In some it is very fine, and in others coarse. Tobacco is grown very generally, most of it rather coarse leaved, a good deal like the French-Canadian article, but of a finer color. However, quite a lot of tobacco is grown from American seed, which is of better quality and is used for making cigarettes. The home-grown is used for smoking. The Japanese do not chew tobacco, hence, none is grown for that purpose.

WHEAT AND OTHER GRAINS

A little wheat is grown nearly

everywhere. The kernel is large, not of very good color, and looks soft. The barley is fairly good, and is used for both malting and to make meal, which is mixed with rice and used by the poorer people for eating. Some rye, grown in the southern island, is used in the same way. Indian corn is grown apparently successfully, but not to any large extent. It is not used for cattle feed at all. The soja bean is used almost entirely to make sauce, which is oily and sharp in flavor. A great deal of a small, dark-red bean is grown, and used largely for food. Very few oats are grown. We saw only one sample that was fairly good. Buckwheat is grown largely in the north.

ROOTS AND VEGETABLES

Very few roots are shown. Some turnips of the white variety and various radishes and carrots, the latter very large. We saw pictures of cucumbers and squashes, but none of the vegetables. They are said to grow well.

In one of the kens there is quite a display of Tokai grapes and dried persimmons. The southern provinces show oranges. Some are large in size, like grape fruit. One lot of California navel oranges is shown, also lemons, ginger and ginseng. The last is used in Japan as well as exported to China. The sugar shown was coarse and poor looking in quality. Indigo and the vegetable sponge are also grown. From one province are exhibits of plants for paper making. There is a large exhibit of starch made from potatoes and from rice.

LIVE STOCK

The Hokkaido sections where they have introduced American stock, machinery and methods, show some fine pictures of cattle and horses, which, if true to nature, there must be some fine herds of Shorthorns, Ayrshires and horses. The army is largely supplied from horses raised in these sections. The number of cross-bred horses have steadily increased during the past 25 or 30 years, while the number of pure-bred native stock is decreasing in about the same proportion. The beef in the large cities evidently does not come from the northern provinces, where these imported cattle are. We hear of nothing but Kobe beef, which is fattened near the large centres. The cattle we see being driven to market in the streets have an admixture of foreign blood and are not unlike the Jersey or the Canadian cattle, but rather smaller and coarser. The bulls, which weigh over 1,000 lbs., and are thin-set, shapely animals with wide spreading horns, are used singly in the streets of Tokyo for draught purposes. The Japanese fatten their beef cattle extremely well, and must kill them young, as the meat is remarkably tender and good. They are fattened chiefly