

ERADICATION OF THE SAN JOSE SCALE.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I will refer briefly to some of the subjects of greater interest which have been brought officially under the notice of the division since I last had the honour of addressing the committee. Of these not one perhaps was of greater interest to every fruit grower than the work of the Ontario Government in trying to control the San José scale, an extremely injurious insect which attacks almost all kinds of deciduous fruit trees and ornamental shrubs, and with regard to which I addressed the committee at some length last year.

By Mr. Wilson :

Q. Has any other province been bothered except Ontario ?

A. Well, no sir, not bothered; but the scale occurred in British Columbia in two districts; steps were however promptly taken by the Government inspector of fruit pests, and it was wiped out entirely.

Q. By the local or Dominion Government ?

A. By the local government. It occurred only in a few isolated places, and the trees were at once cut down when it was discovered, which stopped the infestation. In Ontario it was a much more serious matter, because before its discovery it had already made considerable headway and there was naturally a great objection on the part of the fruit growers who did not understand the serious nature of the introduction, to have their trees destroyed, or even to go to any great expense in treating them. In one or two districts the insect obtained a foothold and spread rapidly, the fruit growers throughout the country could not be made to understand what a serious infestation this is, and consequently strenuous enough efforts were not made at first to control the scale, which is, as has often been stated, by far the most difficult insect enemy we have ever had to combat. However, after three years' experience the fruit growers of Ontario have learned its true nature, and the very men who at first maintained that the danger from this pest was unduly magnified by entomologists, and that for this reason no Act should have been passed by the Ontario Government to control it any more than many other insects found in orchards, now claim that the insect is so firmly established that it can never be eradicated, and therefore the government should treat infested trees instead of insisting on their total destruction. It was known at first that it was going to be a hard, long fight to control this scale insect, and that any measures adopted would have to be kept up continuously, if any good results were to be obtained. The Ontario Government was hampered by public opinion, from the beginning, and finally during the past summer had to relax their wise efforts in behalf of the fruit growers and give up the plan which they had at first adopted of destroying all trees found to be infested by the San José scale.

I have recently read in the newspapers that the provincial Minister of Agriculture is now going to allow fruit growers to treat their trees instead of having them destroyed by the government. This is in response to widely expressed opinion that the fruit growers do not wish him to persist in carrying out the drastic measures which he had adopted for the eradication of the scale—measures which I believe, from all we know of the nature of this enemy, were the proper ones for him to have adopted if control of the insect was to be secured—but governments, of course, are not like ordinary individuals; they merely represent the people and have to bow to public opinion when this is found to be the will of the majority concerned.

Q. These measures were to destroy the trees ?

A. Yes, the destruction of all infested trees. I think if that step had been taken at first and had been adhered to strictly, this insect could not have spread because it was not widely established, and the Federal Government soon passed the San José Scale Act, of 1898, which has been stringently enforced. Therefore, no new infestation was possible, and, though statements are made to the contrary, I do not believe there has been any fresh introduction of the scale on infested nursery stock from the United States. Of course, there are always some people

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