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Editorial.

Growing Seed Wheat.

It has been frequently pointed out by those directly interested in milling and marketing wheat that mixtures of inferior milling wheats are gradually becoming more common in the wheat fields of the West. Extensive methods of growing, cheap lands and expensive labor have not been conducive to keeping up the quality of the total product. The problem is one of interest, not only to individual farmers, but particularly to the country as a whole. Careful observations from this year's crop show that in some districts this defect prevails to a far greater extent than in others. With the exception of the Experimental Farms at Indian Head and Brandon, fields of absolutely pure Red Fife are comparatively rare.

The proportion of these impurities varies in different localities, but on farms where wheat has followed wheat on the same soil for years, their effect is most marked. In general, these impurities are of sorts that shell more readily than Red Fife, and coming as a volunteer crop in the second seeding, they increase the proportion of foreign varieties.

The vital question that now confronts those who are interested in maintaining the good reputation which Western wheat has enjoyed, is how to encourage the production of more pure seed. Pure Red Fife has become difficult to obtain. The supply produced at the Experimental Farms is totally inadequate to meet the present needs of the country. The average grain-grower has neither the time nor the inclination to dabble with three or even ten pound lots of seed wheat or oats, but he is willing to pay extraordinary prices for high-class seed in quantity.

As was pointed out in these columns a few months ago, the demand for seed-wheat of the best quality offers excellent inducements to grain-growers whose farms are reasonably free from weed pests and are capable of producing wheat of the best quality in the average of years. The fields that now contain mixtures would be increased in value, on an average at least fifty cents per acre, were they pure Red Fife, but they can be made and kept absolutely pure only by following a continued system of careful selection. If a few farmers in districts that are well suited to wheat-growing would take up the production of pure seed in quantity, the result would be of incalculable benefit to the country, and remunerative to the seed producer.

Professor Robertson, Commissioner of Agriculture, has given considerable attention to this matter, and as an outcome of the Macdonald Seed-grain Competition that closed a few months ago, has undertaken the formation of associations of producers of pure hand-selected seed grain. The object of these organizations is to encourage the production of high-class seed-grain, according to the most improved methods of selection and growing. The amount of seed which each member can produce will be catalogued and offered for sale annually, and as a means of ensuring purchasers against fraud on the part of producers, should any be inclined to so practice, suitable measures of inspection will be adopted by the Commissioner's department.

It is gratifying to know that in this great wheat-growing belt from Winnipeg westward, upwards of fifty farmers have already signified their intention of becoming members. This number

will, of course, not be able to supply the demand, but it has been suggested that lands suitable for producing a first-class sample of Red Fife wheat and Banner oats should be set apart for the special purpose of growing seed grain. However, there is reason for gratification that one matter has been taken up, and no doubt those who have it in charge will put forth every effort in their power to accomplish the much desired object.

Siftings.

Nothing shows the progress of the West more than the number of handsome buildings which have been erected during the summer.

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The crops are heavier and the harvest considerably later in the Territories than was expected. The heavy rains coming just before the crops ripened gave an impetus to growth which is almost phenomenal.

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The hail storm at Moose Jaw was a serious one. Crops were completely destroyed over an area twenty miles long by about four miles wide. After the storm, orders were sent cancelling by one half the number of harvesters wanted at Moose Jaw. Very few if any of the sufferers had their crops insured against hail.

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A considerable amount of hay has been destroyed in the Territories by the heavy rains which fell in the latter part of the haying season.

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The buffalo herd at Banff is rapidly growing. Where there were sixteen buffaloes in 1898, there are forty in 1903. There has been an increase of twenty-seven and a loss of three. Already this summer eight calves have been born and further increases are expected. There have been increases, this summer, in the moose, elk and goat families within the animal enclosure, and the many cute-looking little youngsters are interesting attractions for visitors, says the Banff paper.

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Insurance of fairs against wet weather is advocated by an exchange. The method proposed is the amalgamation of a number of organizations, holding annual or periodical fairs, for the purposes of insurance. When the financial coffers of a society would suffer by a rainy day, they would be recuperated from the common fund reserved by the amalgamated societies for that purpose.

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Americans continue to prospect through the country in search of land. We meet them in the trains, in the hotels, out in the country, at the fairs, and, in fact, everywhere we go. They are all here with the one object of securing land, some few for speculation, but the great majority with the object of securing homes on which to locate.

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Roadmaking is discussed at farmers' institute meetings. It is a matter of very great importance, and cannot be too much discussed. Roadmaking has ever been a vital part of the development of countries.

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Where loading platforms are needed, the necessary formalities should be carried out and petitions forwarded to the grain commissioner at once. Do not delay until you are just going to use the platform.

Better Management Needed.

One of the most striking features of the local summer shows for this year was their lack of management. This criticism, although not applicable in every case, could be pretty generally applied. The failure of the officers in charge to accomplish the best purpose was not so much due to lack of ambition nor a desire to make their show a success, as to lack of general organization and the absence of a system suited to the successful carrying on of a local show. The men who try to benefit their district by having an exhibition of its products usually make much greater sacrifices than are ever paid, and we have, hence, no desire to lay the fault at their door.

In the Northwest Territories the Legislative Assembly have recognized the need for and the benefit the country may derive from the improvement of local shows by appointing a superintendent who has a general oversight of all Territorial fairs. Already some commendable changes have been made in the system of management, and it is intended that others will follow very soon. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Dr. Elliott, has himself shown a deep interest in the welfare of the agricultural societies, and has already visited a great number of shows, extending from Edmonton southward, and east to Yorkton. Substantial improvement in local shows, therefore, may be looked for in the West.

In Manitoba the time would seem to have arrived when a superintendent of shows should be appointed. With someone in charge, a uniform system of management could be established, and the local shows made at least worth their present expenses in time and money.

The Wandering Farmer.

Conditions in the West have produced a class of farmer who is to be met with in any and all districts. He is in some respects quite a power in the settlement of the land. He is the wandering farmer or pioneer. He seems to follow no method, and his aims seem to find achievement when he is in the actual transition stages from one place to another, and at no other time.

At one time he is heard of running a farm in the older settled parts of Manitoba. The next we hear of him he is busy getting a homestead into shape in some remote part of the Territories. As already said, he constitutes a force in the land. He is in conversation pessimistic with regard to the present, but highly optimistic in his speculations of what the future has in store for him. He does not wait for fortune to come to him. He goes in search of it, and wherever he goes he will not long wait its coming, when he will get up and try for it in another place. Many discoveries have been made and many new districts have been opened up by men of this type. They acquire and carry with them a great deal of useful information and practical training, and they are generally of the "hail-fellow well met" temperament ready and willing to diffuse knowledge and impart instruction.

Australian Farmers Prospecting in Canada.

It seems a long way to come to engage in harvest operations from Australia to Canada, yet a party of twelve Australians from South Victoria came in on the Aorangi, with the object of working through the Canadian harvest and obtaining a knowledge of prevailing conditions. Their intentions are to stay here should a favorable impression be made by their experience.