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ERGOT IN GRAIN AND HAY

Conditions which favor the development of one plant disease also favor the development of other diseases, and during 1916, in addition to wheat rust, the crops showed signs of many other diseases such as smut, chaff spot, ergot and so forth. One of the commonest of these was ergot.

Ergot is a name given to those hard black or purple colored lumps which emerge from the seed in many grains and grasses and are usually larger than the seed and slightly bent in form, those developing on the wheat resembling burnt wheat, but several times as large and showing purple when cut open.

Owing to the fact that ergot is a commercial drug, having a strong effect on the nervous system, it is carefully looked for by the millers, and inspectors frequently turn back ergot grain. Rye is most susceptible to ergot, barley next, then wheat, it is never found in oats, but it is found on many grasses, the worst of which is blue stem or blue joint, a tall growing small grass and the chief cause of the ergotized hay, which, owing to the fact that ergot causes abortion, should not be fed to livestock.

There is no treatment for ergot, as the hard, black ergots fall off readily while the crop is being harvested, lie in the ground over winter and germinate in the spring, tiny pink spots appearing, from which thousands of spores emerge and spread the disease to the next crop. So there is no way of getting them out of the ground and of treating the seed. To change the crop, drain the land and avoid rye is about all that can be done, but in this dry climate ergot is never sufficiently important to warrant a change of our cultural methods.

The Ontario department of agriculture has granted Prof. Geo. E. Day of the O.A.C. leave of absence for a limited period to take charge of a campaign for the stimulation of the production of bacon in Canada.

MANITOBA PURCHASING DEPT.

Manitoba is to have a purchasing department, just the same as a big railway company. Such a department will be a new government enterprise as far as the continent is concerned, officials of the new department say. E. A. Gilroy, former auditor of purchases has charge and he will be known as the government's purchasing agent.

The purchases made by the province in a year are estimated to average around \$2,000,000. Everything that is required by any of the departments will have to be requisitioned for and will have to be put through the purchasing department.

In contrast to former slipshod government methods of buying things here and there in a hodge-podge way and with an eye to patronage, all the purchases of the province will be made on a purely business basis, just as are those of a large corporation such as a railway. Everything will be bought at market prices and at the lowest price consistent with the desired quality. Every purchase will be made on the open market and subject to competitive pricing.

Drawbacks to Manufacturers

Replying to a question in the House of Commons the minister of customs gave the following figures showing the amount of customs drawbacks for the last fiscal year: Cockshutt Plow Company, \$10,163; International Harvester Company, \$29,020; Massey-Harris Company, \$97,118; Frost and Wood Company, \$4,381; Ford Motor Company, \$371,481; Quaker Oats Company, \$231,125. These drawbacks are refunds of customs duties paid on raw materials that are used in the manufacture of goods for export.

The new franchise bill that is now making its way through the British parliament will add about 6,000,000 voters to the list. Of these 5,000,000 will be married women.

Saskatchewan Political Platforms

THE LIBERAL PLATFORM

The Liberal party of Saskatchewan held a provincial convention in Moose Jaw recently and drafted a platform upon which the party will appeal to the country in a general election some time in the next two or three months.

The following is a condensation of the resolutions passed at the convention:—

- 1.—Improvement in the educational system and giving every child a thorough knowledge of the English language.
- 2.—Making the teaching profession more permanent.
- 3.—Giving high school educational advantages to a larger number of children in the province.
- 4.—Proper care and assistance for returned soldiers.
- 5.—Better medical attendance and hospital accommodation and nursing in outlying communities.
- 6.—Training school teachers for the health inspection of the child.
- 7.—Better conditions of employment for women and girls in factories and offices.
- 8.—Pensions for needy mothers.
- 9.—A vigorous land settlement scheme.
- 10.—The government to take an inventory of all vacant land and purchase it as required for actual settlement and resell to bona fide settlers on long terms with low rates of interest.
- 11.—Investigation of the high cost of farm machinery to see whereby reductions can be effected.
- 12.—Extension of branch railways if necessary by the province itself.
- 13.—Provincial assistance in the construction of Manitoba roads throughout the province.
- 14.—Extension of the telephone system to all urban communities in order to encourage rapid development of rural systems.
- 15.—Financial assistance in the marketing of livestock and meat products.
- 16.—Encouragement in the establishment of additional creameries in outlying settlements.
- 17.—Improved election laws to stamp out corruption and curtail expenses and provide full publicity of campaign fund contributions, as well as provide for speedy trials in the case of protested elections.

The same convention determined in favor of a bill of rights for Saskatchewan, which is demanded from the Parliament of Canada. A summary of this bill of rights is as follows:—

- 1.—Free wheat.
- 2.—No tariff on farm machinery.
- 3.—Lower tariff on the necessities of life.
- 4.—Reduction of tariff of British imports to one-half the general tariff, with view to free trade within the Empire.
- 5.—Rapid construction of Hudson Bay Railway under public ownership and steamship connection with Great Britain.
- 6.—Transfer of natural resources of the province to public control.
- 7.—Transfer of school lands and school endowment fund to the province.
- 8.—Amendment to the banking system to permit of the establishment of local agricultural banks.
- 9.—Removal of the exemption of taxation on C.P.R. lands.
- 10.—Complete provincial control of the liquor traffic, including manufacture and importation.
- 11.—Extension of the federal franchise to women.

R. McKENZIE IN ONTARIO

Secretary McKenzie, of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, addressed meetings in Huron county, under the auspices of the United Farmers of Ontario. At one of the meetings, owing to extremely unfavorable weather, the attendance was small, but at one point it ran up to 150. Speaking of conditions in the western provinces, Mr. McKenzie said farmers on the prairies are preparing to make their influence felt in the next election. "R. C. Henderson, in Macdonald; W. L. Brown, in Lisgar, and Mr. Beveridge, in Souris, have," he said, "all been nominated on the farmers' platform, and, altogether, ten or twelve candidates will be in the field for the commons in Manitoba on the same platform."—Toronto Globe.

THE CONSERVATIVE PLATFORM

Representatives of the Conservative part of Saskatchewan have met three times during the year to draft a platform. The results of their deliberations are substantially as follows:—

- 1.—Minimum salaries, pensions and residences for teachers.
 - 2.—Simplification of the curriculum; erection of public boarding schools; making of the school a community centre and consolidation of schools, especially in English speaking communities.
 - 3.—Increase in the duties, powers and numbers of inspectors; provision for technical training.
 - 4.—Pensions for destitute mothers; minimum wage for women workers; equal pay for equal work between men and women; financial assistance for nursing in outlying districts; more humane treatment for women prisoners; better factory conditions for women workers.
 - 5.—Cheaper long term credit scheme; long term land purchase measure; provision for short term money.
 - 6.—Provincial road commission; initiation and construction of all good roads work by municipalities; apportionment of road costs between municipalities and the province.
 - 7.—Encouragement of co-operatively owned mills, abattoirs, packing plants and cold storage warehouses by loans.
 - 8.—Establishment of a department of general research at the university.
 - 9.—Shaping of all railway legislation with a view to nationalization of all railways by the Dominion.
 - 10.—Direct legislation, initiative and referendum.
 - 11.—Absolute prohibition without the help of the federal government.
 - 12.—Voluntary hail insurance; payment of all losses in full.
 - 13.—Care of returned soldiers.
 - 14.—Civil service reform.
 - 15.—Improvement of rural telephone system.
 - 16.—Establishment of jail farms.
 - 17.—Improvement of the election law.
- Carried into effect the Conservative platform would make many important changes. The educational planks would increase the number of school inspectors from 41, the present number. The Conservatives say they would discharge several school district inspectors, as they are termed, men who speak many languages, now employed by the government. The question of suffrage for women in federal elections came up for discussion in the convention in Regina in January, but was not dealt with in the April convention when the platform was revised. It appears that the candidates looked upon this as a matter for the federal government to deal with. The providing of pensions for destitute mothers is a plank in the platforms of both parties. The party pledges its best efforts to secure the complete nationalization of all the railways of the Dominion. Another long step in advance is the declaration in favor of carrying direct legislation as far as this can be constitutionally done.
- The question of hail insurance is an important one owing to the great losses sustained from hail in 1916, in which year the provincial system was able to pay only 40 per cent. of the claims. Dissatisfaction has naturally arisen because of this. Under the present law insurance is compulsory and payments are made only to the extent to which the available money will go. The misfortune of 1916 overtaken the province before it had time to build up a reserve sufficient to meet the heavy losses.

A windbreak will stop a lot of snow which largely soaks into the ground when it melts. This makes a good place for a garden and for small fruit. The snow may be hard on tree fruit, breaking off branches in settling. The roots from the trees will extend out to a distance at least equal to the heights of the trees which means that the strip next the trees will not be good for most crops. But beyond this strip there will be four or five rods in width, and in many cases more, which will have a better moisture supply than if there were no trees. The windbreak will also protect whatever is grown in this belt. This protection enables crops to grow better and especially vegetables and fruits.

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