


The Central Experimental Farm.

URING the years immediately preceding the year 1884, Canada's most important national industry, agriculture, had settled into a bad rut. The products of our rich and fertile soil were neither abundant nor of good quality. Agricultural depression was general. In 1884 Parliament appointed a Select Committee to inquire into conditions and find out the trouble. This committee found the soil fertile and climatic conditions favorable, while the trouble was found to rest with the farmers themselves, who, it appears, were, in general, unacquainted with the needs of the soil and with the best means of working it.

The remedy for this evil was evident. The farmer must be educated. But, how to educate the farmer was a difficult question. Immediate relief was needed by the farmers. The committee therefore recommended that experimental farms be established where tests and experiments in all branches of agriculture could be made, and whence information could be sent out to the farmers.

Accordingly, in 1886, an Act was passed, authorizing the establishment of a Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa, which, with four Branch Farms, was to form a chain across the Dominion. These farms were to carry on investigations into all important branches of agriculture, horticulture, and arboriculture. From these investigations facts were to be accumulated and reports and bulletins published for the farming communities.

The inauguration of these farms marked the beginning of a great advance in Canadian agriculture. The condition of the farmer has improved wonderfully and the exports of farm products have increased enormously. The Dominion Government encourages inquiries from the farmers. In the last ten years inquiries by letter have increased from 70,000 a year to 100,000, while reports and bulletins during the same period have been increased by over 100,000. This growing demand for information, but, especially, the opening up of new territories, has caused the establishment of three additional farms and three smaller stations.

The Central Experimental Farm is admirably situated, occupying a high plateau just outside the southwestern boundary