

# The Farming World

## And Canadian Farm and Home

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### Seeding Operations

THOUGH April was a very backward month, farmers have had a chance to catch up with their work during the first ten days of May. Conditions have been fine for seeding operations and the middle of the month will see seeding pretty well finished up in most parts of the province. From several quarters come reports of injury to fall wheat from the cold spring. In quite a few instances, farmers, who had a promising crop when the snow went off, have been forced to plow up the fall wheat and sow some spring crop. It is to be hoped, however, that this has not been done to a sufficiently large extent to have any great effect upon the area seeded to fall wheat in Ontario.

In Manitoba and the West, seeding operations though late in starting, have progressed very satisfactorily, and the 15th will see seeding practically finished in most of Manitoba. The increase in acreage is estimated at from 10 to 15 per cent. in excess of last year.

### Pure Seed Legislation

The Hon. Mr. Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, has given notice of a resolution in the House of Commons declaring that it is expedient to pass an act restricting the sale of seeds of cereals, grasses, clovers, or forage plants, sold for the purpose of seeding, containing the seeds of certain weeds; establishing a standard of timothy, red clover and alsike seeds, marked No. 1, or otherwise designated as being of first quality; providing for the inspection of such seeds, and making provisions for penalties for contravention of the act.

The investigations made by the Seed Division at Ottawa during the past two or three years show that legislation of some kind is needed to regulate the sale of seeds. Especially is this true of the smaller seeds, such as clover, timothy, alsike, etc., where impurities are not easily detected. An examination of Timothy seed, sold by local dealers in Ontario in 1902, showed about twenty species of weed seeds in varying numbers in the samples collected. One sample, which was said to have been imported from the United States, contained over 55,000 seeds of False Flax per pound. The weight of pure and germinable seed in 100 pounds of the samples taken at various points in Ontario, varied from about 63 to 98 pounds. The sample containing only 63 lbs. of pure seed in one hundred was sold for \$2.00 per bushel. It contain-

ed over 26,000 weed seeds per pound, making the actual cost of the pure, living seed \$3.12 per bushel. In Alsike an equally bad condition of things was shown. A sample taken in Quebec, which retailed at 18 cents a pound, contained no less than 20 species of weed seeds.

These examples, which have been duplicated many times over, by more recent examinations show the great need for some kind of legislation looking to the regulation of this trade. If the seedsmen will not undertake to protect their customers themselves, as is done in Great Britain, where responsible seed firms guarantee, not only the purity but also the vitality of the seeds they offer for sale, then the government must step in to protect the buyer. In our judgment, it will be in the best interests of reliable seed firms to heartily support legislation of this kind. There may be some difficulty at the beginning in complying with the terms of the act, but once the business is readjusted to meet the new conditions it will be better for both buyer and seller.

So far the seed merchants have opposed legislation affecting their business, but it must come sooner or later and it will be in the interest of seedsmen to help it along. We have strict laws regulating the packing and marking of fruit, preventing the adulteration of cheese and butter and other products which come from the farm, and it is only fair that the farmer, when he goes to buy seed, should receive some measure of protection as to its purity and power to reproduce itself. What is wanted is some guarantee that the farmer is getting what he pays for. If he is offered clover seed containing 50 per cent. of weed seeds, let the package containing it be so marked, or if only 75 per cent. of the seeds will grow, let it be so stated. There should be no hardship to anyone in selling things for what they really are.

To ask for pure seed legislation does not impute motives of dishonesty to legitimate seed merchants. As a class they are as honorable in business as those of any other calling. But unless protected, they are as liable to be deceived in the purchase of their supplies as the farmer. When it is known abroad that there is in force in Canada an act preventing the sale of impure seeds or compelling them to be sold for what they are, the quality of foreign seeds coming in will be greatly improved.

At present there is nothing to prevent impure seeds from coming into and being sold in Canada, and as the ultimate goal of all such seeds is the

soil, one can readily picture the result, if these contain a large percentage of injurious weed seeds. For this and other reasons there should be no serious opposition to legislation that will regulate this trade and place it on a basis where both buyer and seller will receive more protection.

### Cheap Wool and Sheep-raising

Our action in publishing Mr. Lloyd-Jones letter on the sheep question, in April 15th issue, has been criticised in some quarters as introducing politics into the discussion. A couple of months ago we asked for a full and free discussion of the reasons why sheep-raising in Canada is decreasing. Our request met with a liberal response, and a number of reasons was given by sheep breeders and others. Mr. Lloyd-Jones took a decidedly different stand from the others, and claimed that the decline of the sheep industry in Canada was due to wool being on the free list and the duty on sheep and lambs coming into Canada being too low. In merely publishing his reasons along with the others, THE FARMING WORLD can surely not be charged with trying to introduce politics into the discussion.

But, be that as it may, there is no doubt that sheep-rearing in Canada is not as prosperous as it once was. If Mr. Lloyd-Jones has given the true reasons why it is so, they should not be tabooed because, forthwith, a political bias might be given to the discussion. It is true that the woollen manufacturer gets his raw material in free. It is equally true that this same manufacturer is protected to the tune of 35 per cent. and is asking for more. Is this fair to the wool producer? Should he be compelled to produce wool at a loss, in order that the woollen manufacturer may be allowed to bring in wool from the ends of the earth free of duty? Politics or no politics, the arrangement seems to be very one-sided and it looks as if an important branch of agriculture were being jeopardized in order to help the manufacturer of woollens to build up his business.

### A Canadian Honored

Professor W. J. Kennedy of the Iowa Agricultural College, who, by the way, is a Canadian, and a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College, has been granted a year's leave of absence. He will spend the time abroad studying European methods of live stock breeding and feeding, having received a special commission from the United States Department of Agriculture to do so.