

INSECT PESTS, GRASSES AND WEEDS.

COMMITTEE ROOM 46,
HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Thursday, March 1, 1900.

The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization met here this day at 10.30 o'clock, a.m., Mr. McMillan, Chairman, presiding.

Dr. JAMES FLETCHER, Entomologist and Botanist of the Dominion Experimental Farms, was present by request and made the following statement:—

Mr. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—One of the pleasant events of my year's work is the opportunity of meeting the members of the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization. Not only is it pleasant but it is of very great value to me in carrying out the work of my department, because it brings me directly into contact with the representatives of the people from all parts of the country whom I have to serve officially. In my work it is a great benefit to learn promptly of the outbreaks of noxious insects and injurious weeds. This I do frequently through the good offices of gentlemen of this committee, and I am thus able to be of service to many who would not themselves have thought of applying for information and assistance, until the pests had made so much headway that remedial measures were too late, or at least much less effective than they might be. In no class of work is the value of prompt and definite advice of more service, than the subjects which have to be dealt with by the practical entomologist and botanist, where it frequently happens that much money may be saved by knowing what are the best steps to be taken on sudden and unexpected appearances, in large numbers, of some new agricultural pest.

As is naturally the case after many years' devotion to the study of these subjects, there is a large amount of accumulated knowledge recorded in the division, both from our own experience and from that of our many correspondents all over the Dominion, which can be utilized at short notice, to the advantage of applicants who may never previously have suffered from certain crop pests, which, although they may break out occasionally as serious enemies in certain localities, are not of regular occurrence, and, therefore, are not generally known by farmers. It is the duty of the officers of the Division of Entomology and Botany to be acquainted with these, or with the general principles founded upon their habits, by which they can advise promptly what should be done to avoid loss.

There is nothing very new in the development of the practical study of insects or plants during the last year, not already touched on or treated of in the reports of previous years; but every year there is an advance in our knowledge, not only from the accumulation of facts, as to the habits of insects and plants, but in the application of this knowledge for controlling pests. There is, I think, no branch of study in the science of agriculture towards which more attention has been directed of late years, or with more important results, than economic entomology. The practical investigation of the lives of insects which injure products of the farm, orchard and garden, with the object of discovering the best, cheapest and easiest, effective remedies.