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## GOVERNMENT SEED DISTRIBUTION.

**T**HE Minister of Agriculture announces that a free distribution of superior sorts of grain and potatoes will be made during the coming winter and spring to Canadian farmers. The samples for general distribution will consist of spring wheat, white oats, barley and field peas. These will be sent out from Ottawa. A distribution of potatoes will be carried on from several of the experimental farms, the Central Farm at Ottawa supplying only the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Applicants must give particulars in regard to the soil on their farms, and some account of their experience with such kinds of grain (or potatoes) as they have grown, so that a promising sort for their conditions may be selected.

If these seeds reach the right farmers—those who are capable of appreciating the possibilities of good seeds suited to the soils of their farms, the distribution should be of great practical value to Canadian agriculture. In the United States the annual government distribution of seeds is said to be made with more regard to political exigencies than to the agricultural needs of the country. This is rather encouraged by allowing the members of Congress to make their own distribution among their constituents. The Canadian Department of Agriculture seems to be taking every precaution to make the distribution produce the best results to Canadian agriculture. It is announced, for instance, that the supply being limited the preference will always be given to those applicants who make the most thoughtful and explicit requests.

## BRITISH TAXATION OF CANADIAN INVESTMENTS.

**O**NE of the greatest objections to the Income Tax in Great Britain has always been the inquisitorial character of the process by which it is necessarily assessed. While nobody pretends that its incidence is just (although in principle it is the fairest and most reasonable of taxes) yet it is impossible to imagine the tax being levied with any approach whatever to justice without resort to inquisitorial methods. If there is any one thing upon which the average Briton is more "touchy" than another in public affairs it is in regard to the state pry-

ing into what he most jealously regards as his own private business. Under the Lloyd-George regime this kind of interference has become exasperating. According to the London Financial News, a number of Canadian Mortgage Companies have now received a request from the Inland Revenue Department for lists of people resident in England to whom they are paying in Canada interest and profits on Canadian investments. In other words, the companies are not only required to give the Government information about their own affairs but also about their customers' affairs. Having driven much British capital out of the United Kingdom by its increased taxation, the Government proposes to tax that capital or what amounts to the same thing, its profits, in Canada. To follow this up fairly and equally, or in other words, thoroughly, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to establish branch inquisitions in Canada. In this case the only escape for the British investor would be to send his money for investment in the United States or some other foreign country. The joke has been carried too far. A mild protest from the Dominion Government would probably be sufficient to prevent its being carried any further. We can hardly imagine Mr. Astor or Mr. Carnegie giving the Imperial Government information about their American investments. Why should the Imperial Government assume the right to discriminate against Canadian investments? What Mr. Lloyd George does not seem to realise is that there are natural limitations to the power of taxation, which have the force of nature's own inexorable laws.

## THE WAR AND THE DEMAND FOR COPPER.

**I**T is an ill wind that blows nobody good. It is estimated that the Balkan war has consumed from 20,000,000 to 25,000,000 pounds of copper. A general European war would be inaugurated by all the great powers laying in great supplies of copper as well as of food. Many copper mines on this continent which shut down on account of the low prices which prevailed for some years will no doubt resume work now that copper is selling at 17 1-2 cents a pound. It is estimated that the United States alone is actually consuming 900,000,000 pounds of copper a year without any war or prospect of war to stimulate the demand.