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It was suggested on this page a month ago that those students of the Canadian position who have lately been proclaiming from the housetops the necessity of increased production might now not unprofitably insist that increased production does not necessarily mean the spreading of energies over a larger area. Our present methods of production are grossly wasteful and a vast increase of production could be made without seeding another acre of ground, or adding another machine to our plants, were more efficient methods followed and an end put to waste. This matter of an increase in production through an improvement in methods rather than by the seeding of larger areas of land, important as that may be in its way, is discussed at length by Mr. Vere C. Brown, superintendent of Central Western branches of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, in his annual review of conditions in the prairie provinces. There is no keener observer of the prairie provinces than Mr. Brown, and he places considerable stress upon the necessity for improved methods of production if the West's agricultural industry is to be placed permanently on a profitable footing.

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Agricultural production in the West, says Mr. Brown, has been adversely affected in a serious degree by indifferent farming methods. As is natural enough in a country settling so rapidly, the percentage of farmers possessing an inadequate knowledge of tillage is very large, while the number of really high-class farmers is extremely small. A large number of the settlers never farmed until they came to this country, and have no knowledge of the manner in which their land should be prepared in order to produce results. Under such circumstances, says Mr. Brown, some more effective means than now exist must be found of inducing the well-intentioned and industrious element of the farming community to adopt approved methods of tillage and to balance their operations with some stock raising in all districts suited to the latter industry. While there is an excellent system of government experimental

and demonstration farms in the West, it is beyond question, in Mr. Brown's view, that at present the work of these institutions effectively reaches only that small percentage of farmers who rank in the highest class and that there is crying need for an organization by means of which the practical information offered by our agricultural institutions may be made available to the farmers generally, and pressure brought to have it applied in some degree by every farmer possessed of the virtue of industry. If the great mass of mediocre farmers were set right as to the first principles of tillage, this alone would enormously increase production, and would suffice, in view of the fertility of our soil, to establish agriculture in Western Canada on a profitable footing.

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Not only is more efficient production required in the interests of a re-adjustment of our trade balance, but it will also, in Mr. Brown's opinion, help considerably towards the settlement of the political problems which are being raised by the spirit of growing antagonism between the western agricultural interests and the commercial East. The unsuccessful farmer attributes his non-success to conditions arising from the tariff, to high interest rates, high freight rates and high cost of what he has to buy—to anything at all but the underlying cause. While it will be agreed that the Western farmer cannot attain a satisfactory degree of prosperity until interest rates and the cost of all the goods and services which the farmer has to buy have been reduced, nevertheless, says Mr. Brown, as regards the material prosperity of Western farmers, the only underlying problem facing us is how to bring about most quickly a general adoption of efficient farming methods, and so increase the profitableness of farming on the producing side. This accomplished, losses through credit extended to unsuccessful farmers would be reduced to a minimum, and there would inevitably follow a lowering of all rates and costs to the farmer.

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The banks' recent experience is cited by Mr. Brown as an excellent illustration of the last point.
(Continued on p. 61.)