Miles of Cars Used to Ship Weed Seed

According to the chief grain inspector at Winnipeg, Man., enough weed seed to fill a freight train 48 miles long was shipped out of the three Prairie Provinces during the last three years. This at a time when the cost of production of crops was at its highest point; seed, implements and farm help were high; yet the farmers grew this weed seed, harvested it, threshed it, at a cost proportionate to that of the highest quality of grain, afterwards shipping and paying the freight on it to market, where, owing to the presence of the weed seed, the grade of the wheat was lowered. Further, when these 48 miles of grain cars were being used to ship weed seed there was an almost universal demand for cars which could not be satisfied. Clean seed, cultivation to kill the weeds, and the cleaning of grain before shipment will overcome such waste

Rural Electric Supply Should be Extended

The supply of electrical energy to the smaller villages and to farmers has recently been commanding special study. Such questions as adequate charges and other details relating to the construction and upkeep of the special transmission lines necessary, have been given closer study with very satisfactory results. In most cases, it has been found that to supply only one or two consumers, relatively long lines and individual transformers are required. In urban centres, these are made to supply hundreds of householders. This difficulty has been overcome in various ways, such as the farmer paying for the portion of the line used for himself alone, or paying a special fixed charge covering the cost of same.

Where water-powers are abundant, rapid progress along the above lines is to be noted, but extensions could also be provided on systems supplied from large steam power plants. The greater portion of the prosperous farming communities of the Prairie Provinces requires to be supplied with electric energy derived from large steam power plants, and rural lines there would prove a great boon, both for convenience and increased production.

The experience of a steam plant in England may be cited in this connection. The plant had never been successful financially until its activities were extended to rural distribution. This greatly increased its output, the plant was placed on a sound basis, and its lines now cover a radius of from 12 to 15 miles in all directions. The load is reported to be steadily increasing in lighting, appliances and small motors for farm use. It is interesting to note that under somewhat unfavourable circumstances electrical service has been extended to cover a large farming community and that the enterprise has succeeded.—*L. G. Denis.*

Important Forest Trees of Canada

White Pine

(*Pinus Strobus*)

White pine was once the premier lumber tree of Canada, but the effects of wasteful cutting and of fire are being reflected in decreasing cuts and increasing prices. The production of white pine lumber in Ontario has been reduced by two-thirds in the last twenty years. Throughout the Dominion, white pine has fallen far behind spruce in quantity cut and is almost equalled by that of Douglas fir. It is still, however, and doubtless will continue to be, the highest priced softwood.

The distribution of white pine is confined to the region lying south of a line running approximately from the southeast corner of lake Winnipeg, through lake Nipigon, along the height of land north of lake Timiskaming, through lake St. John to Point des Monts on the St. Lawrence, and Cape Breton Island. The Ottawa valley was, perhaps, the most important centre of white pine production, and the history of the district is intimately associated with that of the lumbering operations conducted principally for the taking out of this valuable wood.

In the early days of lumbering in eastern Canada, white pine was considered the main, if not the only, tree of value in the forests, and in the old timber leases the right to cut the pine was all that was granted. The reason for this preference over the other species is the superior quality of the wood and the larger size of the trees.

Though no reliable data as to the remaining supply of white pine are available as yet, it is doubtful if more than fifty billion board feet is left. The annual cut is now approximately three-quarter billion board feet.

White pine reproduces readily and grows fast under favourable conditions, but it requires more light than many of its associates, such as spruce and the hardwoods; in competition with these species it is at a decided disadvantage.

Though it will usually reproduce well after one light fire, repeated fires have resulted in its practical extermination in many regions where it was once abundant. There is no reason, however, why our once famous pineries should not be increasingly productive, provided they are protected from fire and the competing species are taken out at the same time to give the young growth a chance.

Though white pine blister rust has done serious damage to the young pine, especially in plantations, its planting should be encouraged, as it offers larger returns per acre than perhaps any other species. In Massachusetts, from records of a number of white pine plantations, it was found that a growth of 25,000 b.f. per acre had been made in 40 years, 35,000 b.f. in 50 years and 44,000 b.f. in 60 years.

White pines can most readily be distinguished from other pines by the fact that they have five needles in a bunch. Three other white pines are indigenous to Canada. The limber pine and white bark pine are confined to the high mountainous situations in British Columbia and Alberta and are of little commercial value, but the western white pine, which occurs in the more favourable sites in Southern British Columbia, is a splendid tree, resembling its eastern relative in the quality of the wood. As there are only about 2,700 million board feet of western white pine in British Columbia, it will not be a serious rival of the eastern white pine.

Forest Revenues

Revenues from Crown forests are playing an increasingly important part in the several provinces. In New Brunswick, for the fiscal year ending October 31, 1920, the forest revenues to the provincial treasury aggregated $1,387,005, or more than double those of the previous year. This increase was due partly to an increased cut, partly to increased stumpage dues, and partly to a closer scale.

In Quebec, for year ending June 30, 1920, the forest revenue amounts to $2,604,456.26, or 28.6 per cent greater than during the previous year. It is estimated that during the current fiscal year the forest revenue to the provincial treasury will aggregate around $3,000,000, which may be increased to $3,500,000 during the fiscal year following.

In Ontario, for fiscal year ending October 31, 1920, the forest revenue was $2,684,843, an increase of nearly 50 per cent over the previous year.

During the calendar year 1919, the British Columbia Government received in forest revenue a total of $2,755,739.

The importance of perpetuating these revenues, to say nothing of increasing them, is obviously so great that all of the provinces would be amply justified in expending larger sums than at present upon the protection of the forests from fire, insects and disease, upon reforestation, and upon an administration calculated to ensure cut-over areas being left in the best condition to produce continued crops of the more valuable tree species, so far as that may be consistent with the economics of the situation.—*Clyde Leavitt.*

The farm home of John Logan, southwest of Moose Jaw, was destroyed by fire, due to a dog upsetting a lantern that had not been hung up. This should be a warning to others.

Census of Fur Farming

An analysis of the preliminary fur-farming statistics for 191 , recently published by the Bureau of Statistics, throws some interesting sidelights on the industry.

That fur farming, at present, is practically synonymous with fox farming is shown by the fact, on December 31, 1919, there were on the fur farms of Canada a total of 7,966 foxes, 77 minks and 9 raccoons. The foxes were divided as follows: silver, 6,878; patch or cross, 831; red, 255; blue, 1; gray, 1.

One question on which fox farmers are somewhat reticent is the number of pups raised to maturity. The returns throw some light on this matter. Taking silver black pups only, the number born during 1919 was 4,877 and purchased, 296, a total of 5,173. The number sold was 1,144 and killed for pelts, 918, a total of 2,062. There is thus a difference between those disposed of and acquired of 3,111. The number reported as being on the farms at the end of the year was 1,111. This leaves 2,000 unaccounted for and, if we presume this number to have died, the mortality was over 40 per cent of the number born. Some ranchers probably included pups as adults in making their returns of stock on hand at the end of the year, as they would then be about 9 months old. Allowance should be made for this but, even so, the figures indicate that there is great room for improvement in methods of management on some ranches.

Turning now to the foxes bought and sold and again taking account of silvers only, we observe that the numbers sold greatly exceed the numbers purchased. It may be assumed that the difference represents the number exported or sold to new ranches. The figures are: sold, 1,504; purchased, 487; difference, 1,017.

The U. S. Commerce Reports of Jan. 12, 1921, show that 594 live silver foxes were exported to the United States from Prince Edward Island in 1919, having an average value of $358.

The average values of silver foxes as determined from the figures of the Bureau of Statistics are: of animals purchased, $428; sold, $329; on farm, Dec. 31, 1919, $438. The fact that the animals purchased averaged considerably higher in price than the animals sold indicates that the ranchers are not usually disposing of their best stock but, on the contrary, are acquiring better stock whenever possible.

The silver pelts sold numbered 2,028, valued at $481,824, an average of $237 per skin. Fox pelts of all kinds numbered 2,490 and the average price realized was $204. The average value of mink pelts sold was $18 and of raccoon, $15.

Maskakee Lake, Sask., is being developed for epsom salts, glauber salts, magnesium carbonate, sodium chloride and potassium salts