

for milling purposes. While every farmer is anxious to grow hard red Fyfe wheat, it is found by experience that in some sections of the North-West it is impossible to grow that variety of wheat, as it takes, probably, longer to ripen than any other variety. I was a little amused to hear the remarks of the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, when he stated that wheat that was cut before it was ripe would make first-class flour, but would not make good seed. I have had a little experience in both farming and milling, and I am under the impression that the hon. gentleman ought to serve his time on one of these experimental farms. I know no wheat that has not matured sufficiently to grow again, that will make good flour, and I can assure him that it will not.

Mr. MILLS. I do not propose to oppose the proposition of the hon. gentleman, but I think it is not in the public interest that such a policy should be pursued. I think that the line of distinction between the functions of the Administration here and the Administration in the different Provinces, is very clearly drawn, and I do not believe that it would be for the interest of the Provinces of the Dominion and certainly not in the interest of the Treasury, that experimental farms should be established all over this Dominion. I do not think it would be possible for the Government to exercise effective control over them. I can well understand how an experimental farm in any one of the Provinces might be properly conducted by a local Administration. The Local Government would know that the institution was supported out of the revenues of the Province, and care would be taken to administer it economically, and fair results might be obtained for the work done. There may be something said, also, for the establishment of experimental farms in the North-West Territories, if we did not know what were the conditions of the country. But we have there a fair population who are carrying on farming operations in their own particular way, and who will not, for many years to come, be able to avail themselves of any high order of scientific farming, who, in a great measure, must make use of their limited resources and avail themselves of the most advantageous circumstances in their locality. I confess I do not see in what way the hon. gentleman is going to confer any advantage upon the agricultural population of this country by his proposal. We have in Ontario and, I suppose there are in the other Provinces, agricultural colleges; there are experiments carried on at these institutions at the public expense. There are professors who have done something for the organisation of farmers institutes, and have discussed the various means employed to ascertain the best results which can be obtained from the capital and labor applied to agriculture. The hon. gentleman may establish other farmers institutes, but they will simply be doing work already done by those institutes. He may employ other professors of agriculture, but if he does they will do the same work and give the public the same results they now obtain. Looking at the circumstances, looking at the functions of this Government and at the functions of the Local Governments, at the sphere in which their respective operations are being carried on, it seems to me that the proposal of the hon. gentleman, while it may place some burden upon the public Treasury, is not going to be of any particular advantage to the agriculturist. I think there are other means of promoting the interests of the farmers, of protecting them against mischievous effects in their business other than those which the hon. gentleman has proposed. It seems to me, therefore, that if the Government were to propose to establish institutions of this sort, and place them under the control of the Local Legislatures and local Administrations, that of itself would certainly be a better proposal than that of the hon. gentleman. I will mention this case: Suppose the hon. gentleman was to establish an experimental farm

Mr. WATSON,

in British Columbia, does he think it is possible to exercise that supervision over it; to see to its operations; to profit by the work done to the same extent as if it were carried on under the control of the Government of the Province? Does he not think the Government of British Columbia would be in a better position to watch the operations of the farmers; would not the Ministers and all the parties connected with the Government and Legislature be better prepared to exercise an efficient supervision over it, and obtain more useful results, than a Government 4,000 miles away would be able to accomplish? Such an experiment tried in British Columbia—and I do not say but that such an institution might not do much good in that Province—an institution established under the control of the Department here, would be no more under its real control than if the establishment were at Simla, at the base of the Himalaya Mountains.

Mr. HESSON. I sympathise with the movement now before the House, and I think every hon. member should do so. I feel it is one of the most important measures before the House this Session. There is no industry in which we are all so deeply interested as that of agriculture, and we feel that everything which can be done for the farmers should be done by this Parliament. The hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) would be glad to shirk the responsibility devolving on members of this House and throw it back on members of the various Provincial Governments. We know perfectly well from experience that, with the single exception of Ontario, nothing in that direction has been done.

Some hon. MEMBERS. No.

Mr. HESSON. We have, at all events, heard very little of any other enterprise of that kind, and a long time would have to elapse before anything of that sort would be done by Provincial Governments in the North-West and British Columbia. I will take the hon. gentleman's own words. He said that farmers there will not for many years to come engage largely in experiments, or enter upon what might be called scientific farming. That of itself is a reason why the undertaking should not be delayed, and why we should not shirk the responsibility of endeavoring, as far as possible, to make those experiments for the poor farmers who are unable to do so and who have to take the chance of the results of experiments made in their own behalf. It is the duty of the Government to do this. If the farmers' interests are worth protecting, preserving and encouraging, it becomes the duty of this Government, above all others, to enable them as far as possible to reach that high state of perfection to which they desire to attain. The movement suggested by the Minister of Agriculture is in the right direction. A great deal possibly is still to be considered as to how far we should go in the way of training up young farmers scientifically. I quite agree with what was said by the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wallace), that the best training young men could have was probably to be put practically to work with a skilled farmer, and experiment in the way in which the farmer himself has to experiment. What is more particularly required on the part of the Government is to see that various kinds of seed, plants, trees, shrubs, fruits of all kinds, are so tested and so experimented with that the farmers will realise the advantage of experiment and experience without having to meet the disappointments which must inevitably result from time to time from making experiments. We know that very many well intentioned farmers with probably limited means desire to make some advance in that direction, but if they make one or two failures they are deterred from making other attempts; whereas the Government might go on experimenting under the same circumstances, in the same country, with the same climate and soil and make trials in the interest of all. I quite understand