LATE FIELD MARSHAL LORD KITCHENER

Kitchener and Bobs

Two great names in the British Empire which have been immortalized in agriculture by two famous wheats which Seager Wheeler has produced.

By George F. Chipman

LATE FIELD MARSHAL EARL ROBERTS

The names of Lord Kitchener and Lord Roberts will be associated for all time with the highest and best traditions of the British and Anglo-Saxon people. It is quite fitting that they should also stand for the best in agriculture. Two new varieties of wheat which are full of great promise have been named after these two illustrious soldiers. It is particularly appropriate that these two wheats should be introduced to the farmers of Western Canada at the present time. It was due to the magnificient work and organization of these two great soldiers that the British armies have been able to hold off the enemy and save civilization from being overrun by the invader.

So acute has become the food situation that the farmer on his farm in Western Canada today is as important a factor in holding back the enemy as is the soldier in the trenches. The best authorities in the Empire declare without hesitation that the Allies will win if the food supply is sufficient, and that food supply must come from Canada and the United States. Wheat is the chief requirement, and whatever will tend to increase the wheat crop will tend to defeat the enemy. In producing two new heavier yielding wheats, Seager Wheeler has contributed more than any other farmer to the great work of holding back the enemy by increasing the food supply on the farms of Western Canada.

The Passing of Red Fife

Up until about six years ago Red Fife wheat was very largely, almost exclusively, grown throughout Western Canada. It is a splendid milling wheat but on account of its lateness in ripening the loss from frost and rust was enormous and the great demand among farmers was for an earlier ripening wheat. Dr. Saunders of the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa, produced Marquis wheat by crossing Red Fife with dark red Calcutta wheat. Marquis was as good as Fife in milling qualities and much earlier in ripening. It is frequently stated that Marquis moved the wheat belt one hundred miles north. At the present time Marquis wheat has displaced Red Fife wheat practically all over Western Canada. Not even ten per cent. of the wheat now grown is Red Fife. This remarkable change has been brought about in the short space of five years.

Many people have been endeavoring to improve Marquis wheat and bring about even an earlier date in ripening. No person has contributed more towards this splendid effort than Seager Wheeler of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, the world's most famous grain grower. Mr. Wheeler's prize winning record is known to every farmer. He has taken more prizes for growing grain than any man in the world and easily stands first as the champion grain grower of the present generation.

The two new wheats which Mr. Wheeler has developed, Red Bobs and Kitchener, bid fair to make a very considerable improvement on Marquis and to add very largely to the yield of wheat on the prairie farms and the income of the prairie farmers.

The Story of Red Bobs

The story of Red Bobs wheat is an extremely interesting one. In the year 1905 a man named W. Farrer, of New South Wales, Australia, sent a sample of wheat to Dr. Saunders at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. He called this wheat White Bobs and stated that it was obtained by cross breeding between an unnamed variety of wheat and a variety of hulless and beardless barley known as Nepaul. Whether this remarkable story is exact or not, the White Bobs wheat was absolutely beardless, in fact it is the only absolutely beardless wheat grown in Canada today.

Dr. Charles E. Saunders, son of the late Dr. Wm. Saunders, and at present Dominion Cerealist, tested the White Bobs wheat for a couple of years at the Experimental Farm. It was earlier in ripening than Marquis and in the milling test which Dr. Saunders made in 1907, it proved to have milling value equal to Marquis but it still remained a white wheat, although very hard and possessing a good straw and head, but being a white wheat it was impossible to grow it successfully in Canada on account of the deep prejudice against the white wheat and the discrimination against it in the Canada Grain Act.

In 1907, Dr. Saunders introduced White Bobs wheat along with Marquis wheat at the Experimental Farm at Indian Head, Saskatchewan. Seager Wheeler having read of this new Australian wheat, secured a ten pound sample from the Indian Head Experimental Farm and seeded it in the spring of 1908. It produced sixty bushels per acre on his plot. He found this to be considerably earlier than any other hard wheat he had been growing but it was absolutely white, hard and beardless. It was to Mr. Wheeler's mind, the nearest to the ideal wheat for the west but so long as it remained white it was hopeless to make it a success.

An Important Discovery

Mr. Wheeler continued to experiment with the White Bobs wheat. He always spends a great deal of his time in the growing season looking through his seed plots, investigating the qualities of the different plots he is growing. In 1909, while examining some heads in his White Bobs plot, he rubbed out one and found that the kernels were red, although the plant had all the characteristics of the White Bobs. Upon examination he found two or three of the heads in the plot similar in appearance to White Bobs, but with red kernels. He carefully preserved these heads when they were ripe and seeded them in a small plot the next year and anxiously watched to see if they would reproduce red seed. In most cases the progeny of the red seed came back red. Some of it was very early and some of it about the same as the ordinary wheat he was growing. The following year Mr. Wheeler had from 50 to 60 strains of the early ripening seed of what he has since called Red Bobs wheat. From these he has selected and reduced them until he has brought them down to two of the most promising strains, one of which he calls Supreme

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HEADS OF RED BOBS
Natural Size

RED BOBS AND KITCHENER GROWING ON THE FARM OF SEAGER WHEELER
Lower—A field of Kitchener Wheat, 1917, that yielded 48 bushels per acre. Note the solid heads. Upper—A field of Red Bobs Wheat that ripened 10 days in advance of Marquis sown alongside on the same date.

HEADS OF KITCHENER
Natural Size