

Experimental Farms.

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR.

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In submitting the tenth Annual Report of the Experimental Farms it seems fitting that some particulars should be presented indicating the progress of the work for the carrying on of which these institutions have been established. The value of enterprises in every sphere of labour is usually estimated by the results obtained, and while in undertakings which are largely educational in their character it is not always possible to demonstrate fully their value from results manifested, enough has been accomplished which can be cited to show that the Experimental Farms have already proved of great service to the farmers of the Dominion.

When in October, 1886, the first step was taken towards the organization of Experimental Farms in Canada by the appointment of the Director, the first work undertaken was a careful study of the climatic and other conditions which influence agriculture in different parts of the country, and to find out where the several farms which it was proposed to establish could be placed so as to confer the greatest benefit on the farmers. The intention was that the sites chosen for these institutions should be so located as to cover the more important climatic conditions prevailing in this country and at the same time minister to the needs of the existing agricultural population. Notwithstanding the keenness of rivalry between different districts contending for the location of these farms in their midst, the fact that no adverse criticism worthy of attention has been attempted, is sufficient evidence that the sites chosen have commended themselves to the judgment of the community.

From the outset every endeavour has been made to help farmers who were striving to gain that experience which would enable them to cope with difficulties, and to carry on their work to better advantage and with increased profits. Of late years the obstacles in the way of profitable farming have been multiplied owing to the low prices for produce and ever increasing competition; amid such pressing difficulties it was imperative that the larger proportion of any work undertaken for the benefit of the farmers of this country should be directed on the practical lines of better methods of farming, and the testing and introduction of such vigorous, productive and early maturing varieties of the more important cereals as would be likely to result in increased crops and higher quality in the product. To attain the object first named practical information has been given in regard to the best methods of maintaining the fertility of the soil and of renewing the cropping capabilities of land which has been partially exhausted. The proper care of barn-yard manure has been discussed and the