

PRODUCTION AND THRIFT

About the second week of April there appeared in the western press the first of a series of advertisements on "Production and Thrift," issued under the direction of the Dominion Departments of Agriculture and Finance. It contained the following advice:

"J. H. Grisdale, director, and the superintendents of the Dominion experimental farms, urge the following upon the farmers:

"Stubble land of first crop after fallow. Burn stubble thoroughly as soon as surface is dry. Fire about noon when steady wind is blowing. Cultivate at once about two inches deep, then sow the wheat and harrow immediately afterwards. If possible, where area is large, harrow first, then cultivate, seed and harrow again. In Eastern Saskatchewan sow 1½ bushels per acre; in Western Saskatchewan, 1½ bushels. On light soils and dry land sow 1 bushel less.

"Stubble land of second crop after fallow. Usually this land should be summer-fallowed, but this year much of it must be in crop. Burn stubble if possible. This may be helped by scattering straw freely over the field. Wrap old sacking about the end of a 4-foot stick. Dip in gasoline. Set on fire and shake on straw and stubble. Carry gasoline in open pail. If stubble is too light to burn then cultivate, harrow and seed a little lighter than above. Oats and barley will do better than wheat. If shoe drills are used, plow instead of cultivating. Plow, pack or roll, and then harrow, if land is grassy or weedy. In the drier sections at least one-third of all cropping land should be summer-fallowed every year.

"Stubble land of third crop after fallow. Do not sow to grain, but summer fallow. Better use your spring labor on other stubble land and thus make sure of crops in 1916 and 1917. Put your labor on land that is likely to give best returns."

Considerable comment appeared in the daily press concerning this advice. The objection was not that the statements made were incorrect, because any one carefully reading them and knowing whether they were suitable to local western conditions could no doubt use the ideas to good advantage, but that it was misleading to offer advice of this kind as applying to farm conditions generally throughout the three prairie provinces. To get authoritative advice on this important question The Guide obtained the opinions of several representative western agriculturalists. Extracts from some of the letters received follow. Regarding the proper cultural methods to follow, in Manitoba, the Hon. Valentine Winkler, minister of agriculture, says:

Battle Against Weeds

"To farm for the present alone seems at best a short-sighted policy. One of the most serious problems to overcome on an average farm is undoubtedly the weed problem. Close observation of the condition of farms receiving different methods of tillage impresses me that many of our most noxious weeds owe their first invasion to the too frequent practice of 'discing in' cereal crops. This practice is practically forsaken in Manitoba. Experience has demonstrated its fallacy as a method of crop production.

"'Production and Thrift' is an ideal motto to adopt at this time, if properly interpreted. If I understand our ideal in production, I would define it as an improved method of farm management capable of increasing the earning power of an acre of land. To adopt an inferior plan of soil tillage and decrease the yielding capacity of an acre would be the opposite teaching to production. Thrift embodies economical management and should lessen the cost of production. A large acreage this season, unless it is well tilled, cannot be accepted as assurance that Manitoba farmers will reap a paying crop.

Manitoba Farm Methods

"To advise the farmers of Manitoba to 'disc in' their crops without first of all giving due consideration to such factors as district requirements, quality and condition of soil, and having some accurate information regarding crops grown in the past, cannot be regarded as anything but a dangerous practice and may be productive of much harm if followed to any extent.

"For those in doubt as to the proper

course to follow, I would suggest seedling wheat on the best prepared land up to May 12. Plow thoroughly and prepare the balance for crop and seed to oats up to May 24, and seed to barley as late as the end of the first week in June. Oats and barley have a good commercial value, suffer less from frost, make good feed and have considerable in their favor as cleaning crops. The year 1914 was comparatively dry and many weed seeds failed to germinate on land that was in the process of fallowing; 1915 was a wet year and weeds germinated abundantly on fallow crops, as usual wild oats shelling considerably. Last fall, for diverse reasons, little fall cultivation took place, and the weed seeds are still in the soil awaiting spring conditions, when the life circle will again be set in motion. To disc land in this condition leaves no alternative but the production of a weedy crop of wheat. A still more serious consideration for the owner is the fact that his field will be a thousand-fold worse infested with weeds.

"Let us produce more this year if at all possible, and accomplish the task by using cleaner, plumper and purer seed. Seed only such fields as will ensure a paying crop with good tillage; co-operate with your neighbor wherever and whenever possible for the good of the community, lessen the cost of production to increase the net profits, and exercise the most stringent economy in every department of farm activity."

In a lengthy statement, which space will not allow of use in full, Hon. W. R. Motherwell, minister of agriculture for Saskatchewan, says that "Western farmers should be advised to farm bet-

ter rather than to farm more. The average man is already spread over too many acres for best results. A full crop from both field and flock will keep the wheels of commerce going, will maintain our credit and enable us to finance the war, will keep our railways and labor busy, will improve municipal and governmental revenue, will liquidate some more of our tiresome debts, will maintain our grip of things and keep the pot boiling generally, but a full crop is required far more for the sake of this part of the Empire than it is needed for supplying any other particular country with bread, even in times like these.

"Regarding stubble burning, certain portions of Saskatchewan have practiced for many years, and to advantage, the sowing of burned fallow stubble land. But this is only in limited areas, and is being gradually discontinued owing to the consequent introduction and entrenchment of such perennial weeds as Canada thistles, sow thistles, quack grass and other perennial pests. But it is scarcely safe to advise any farmer with only limited experience to follow this practice. The best informed Saskatchewan farmers will put into wheat this spring what can be put in properly and in time. As the spring is a little late, a certain additional element of chance will have to be taken in the later districts, but there will be no disposition to go on blindly sowing wheat after the date when experience in each particular district has proven it to be unwise to do so. Nor will they sow to wheat or anything else third crop stubble or even much second crop stubble, but they will shallow plow such land, and if too late for wheat they will sow

with coarse grain, as the district and the particular farm or the farmer's inclination may suggest. After the sowing of all commercial grains has been completed, say June 1, indications point to the likelihood of a still further acreage being spring plowed and sown with oats for sheaf feed, should it not ripen fully, or for commercial use should the fall be open like last year and maturity ensue.

"Doubtless also in the flax growing areas, especially in Western Saskatchewan, where the fall frosts are usually later, this profitable crop will be more extensively sown than last year, notwithstanding its predisposition to be weedy, using spring plowed stubble rather than spring breaking and sowing up to the first week of June. If farmers who have been following a three-year rotation—two crops and then fallow—and this is the general practice on the open plains, adopt the advice of the Federal Government this year and sow a third crop on stubble, they will not only run the chance of reaping mighty scantily, but after putting all their land in crop they will have no land left to summer-fallow for next year's crop, and next year with its requirements will likely come around. Our fallow system must under no consideration be departed from, as this is the only known and well proven method whereby the fullest production can be secured and maintained."

Other opinions, largely along the same lines, have been received, but with the above statements to qualify the advice offered it is to be hoped that nothing but benefit will result from the department's advertising campaign.

Production and Thrift

"GAIN or no gain the cause before the farmers of Canada is as clear as it was last year—they must produce abundantly in order to meet the demands that may be made, and I believe this to be especially true in regard to live stock, the world's supply of which must be particularly affected in this vast struggle."—HON. MARTIN BURRELL, Minister of Agriculture.

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE BASED ON REPORTS CONTAINED IN "THE AGRICULTURAL WAR BOOK, 1916," PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, OTTAWA, ONT.

LIVE STOCK—The herds and flocks of Europe have been greatly reduced. When the war is over there will be a great demand for breeding stock. Canadian farmers should keep this in mind.

MEATS—In 1915 Great Britain imported 661,508 tons of beef, mutton and lamb, of which 364,245 tons came from without the Empire. Out of 430,420 tons of beef only 104,967 tons came from within the Empire.

The demands of the Allies for frozen beef, canned beef, bacon and hams will increase rather than diminish. Orders are coming to Canada. The decreasing tonnage space available will give Canada an advantage if we have the supplies.

DAIRYING—Home consumption of milk, butter and cheese has increased of late years. The war demands for cheese have been unlimited. The Canadian cheese exports from Montreal in 1915 were nearly \$6,500,000 over 1914. Prices at Montreal—Cheese: January 1915, 15¼ to 17 cents; January 1916, 18¼ to 18¾ cents. Butter: January 1915, 24 to 28¾ cents; January 1916, 32 to 33 cents.

EGGS—Canada produced \$30,000,000 worth of eggs in 1915 and helped out Great Britain in the shortage. Shippers as well as producers have a duty and an opportunity in holding a place in that market.

WRITE TO THE DOMINION DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND TO YOUR PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT FOR BULLETINS ON THESE SUBJECTS

Tens of thousands of Canada's food producers have enlisted and gone to the front. It is only fair to them that their home work shall be kept up as far as possible. The Empire needs all the food that we can produce in 1916.

PRODUCE MORE AND SAVE MORE SAVE MATERIALS FROM WASTE
MAKE LABOUR EFFICIENT SPEND MONEY WISELY

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE