

CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM.

The land purchased for this important central station comprises in all 466 acres. It is very conveniently situated near the boundary line between the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, in the Township of Nepean, Carleton County, less than three miles from the Parliament Buildings, at Ottawa, and can be reached by good roads in several directions, also by water and by rail. The land lies high, being from forty to eighty feet above the adjacent rivers, and is so placed that part of it drains to the Rideau River and a part to the Ottawa River. The north front of the farm occupies a commanding position, overlooking the city of Ottawa, the highest point of land being thirty-two feet higher than the main entrance to the Government buildings. The land has that desirable variety of soil which will make it very suitable for the purposes of an experimental farm, including within its area every grade, from heavy clay to light sandy loam, much the larger part, however, is either a dark sandy loam of good quality, or a friable clay loam.

On taking possession of this farm, which comprised a number of small holdings, the dividing fences were found to be well packed with surface stone collected from the fields; there were also many heaps at different points and large boulders scattered over the surface. While this farm is much less stoney than most of the land in the immediate neighbourhood of Ottawa, nevertheless much labour and expense was entailed in clearing the fields of surface stone. These stones have been got together in piles, a part of them has already been used in improving the roads on the farm and the remainder will all be useful for a like purpose. In every field there were also many stumps, chiefly pine, either single or in groups, while at the rear end of the farm there were about 140 acres on which the pine stumps were very numerous and the greater part of this area was also covered with a second growth of poplar and birch. With the aid of dynamite which has been freely used, all these stumps—some four or five thousand in number—have been entirely removed, the second growth trees rooted up and burnt, and the whole of this heretofore waste land brought under the plough and it is now ready for crop.

Virgin Soil for Experimental Purposes.

As a result of this clearing the Central Experimental Farm will have the great advantage of a large quantity of virgin soil, on which experiments can be conducted to test the relative value of fertilizers on different sorts of crops, which will permit of important conclusions being reached, comparatively free from the errors which are necessarily associated, to a greater or less extent with all lands on which fertilizers have previously been used, or with soils more or less exhausted. This feature will add very much to the value and usefulness of this most important section of the work in experimental farming, for no knowledge is more eagerly sought or more highly appreciated by intelligent farmers than accurate information regarding the effect of different fertilizers on crops. This vantage ground will be at once taken up, and a series of experiments are being planned to be begun next spring, including tests with barnyard manure in different stages of decomposition, mineral phosphates both raw and manufactured, animal phosphates, wood ashes, nitrate of soda and various mixtures of fertilizing salts. These will be associated with similar plots on which the same crops will be grown without manure for the purposes of comparison. By continuing these experiments with the same crops on the same land for a number of years, the possibilities of error in the conclusions which may be reached regarding the usefulness of certain fertilizers as special food for particular crops will be reduced to a minimum.