

The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization met this day at 10.30 a.m., Dr. Sproule, chairman, presiding.

The CHAIRMAN:—Mr. Fletcher, the entomologist and botanist of the experimental farms is before us this morning to give us information as to what is being done in his department. The question was raised at the last meeting about grasses. Mr. Fletcher has some specimens with him here. Perhaps it will be well to dispose of that subject before he makes a statement.

Mr. FLETCHER:—Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen: I am very glad of this opportunity to again appear before the Committee on Agriculture, as I believe it affords me an excellent opportunity of getting into touch and into correspondence with farmers throughout the country, through their representatives in Parliament, who come to Ottawa annually, and then are able to advise their constituents where to apply to for help whenever outbreaks of agricultural pests occur, and also to let them know of the work which is being done here. In attending meetings of Farmers' Institutes in different parts of the country, we find that, although the Dominion experimental farms are being carried on at large expense, for the benefit of the farmers, many are entirely ignorant, and others know very little indeed, of the nature of the work we are doing.

When, however, we can get farmers to visit the experimental farms, as a rule, they are satisfied with what is being done, and that what we are doing is for their benefit. They then take an interest in the work, which helps it very much. We often get suggestions from practical men as to important and useful lines of work, and we are always glad to receive suggestions from them.

FODDER GRASSES.

Without further introduction, sir, I shall now go straight to my subject, and shall, first of all, direct your attention to the subject of grasses, as I understand some gentlemen who are anxious to leave to catch the train, are desirous of hearing something about these important plants. First, with regard to the fodder grasses which are being grown at the farm, I will make the bare statement, which may surprise some of the members of the committee, that we have here at our Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa, the best grass garden in North America. This is acknowledged to be the case by specialists who have taken up this work. I need not waste time, sir, in explaining to the committee how important a place grass crops hold among farm crops, nor to the fact that we should pay great attention to this subject in our experimental work. The dairy industry is now being developed to such an extent in all parts of Canada, and has become of such magnitude, that it is necessary for all scientific agriculturists to do what they can to help on so important an industry, an industry which, I think, has been developed more during the last ten years than ever before. This being the case, the discovery of the best and cheapest foods for cattle becomes a matter of great moment; therefore, the necessity is shown of finding out as soon as possible the most suitable varieties of grass to grow in different districts and the best way to cultivate them.

We know now the great advantage to farmers of growing corn and feeding it as ensilage. In many districts, however, corn cannot be grown to advantage, and it is therefore desirable to pay more attention to the growth of grasses. In prosecuting this part of the work at the experimental farm, I have endeavoured to test all the different kinds of grasses that were available. Seeds were procured of all the varieties mentioned in seedmen's catalogues on this continent and in Europe, besides a few from India. These have all been tested. Moreover, whenever possible, I have