

Winnipeg Grain Exchange.

The address of President E. W. Thompson, at the annual meeting of the Winnipeg grain exchange, is well worth a careful perusal. Following is the address in full:

Gentlemen,—Following the custom of my predecessors in the chair, before retiring, I will touch briefly on some of the matters which have come before the exchange during the past year, as well as refer to a few other subjects, which I hope may be of general interest to the members. Probably one of the most important matters entrusted to the care of the present council at your last annual meeting, was that relating to incorporation. As you are all aware, this movement has been successfully carried through, and now we are incorporated under charter from the Provincial Legislature. It is needless for me to refer to the many benefits accruing, and to accrue in the future, from this step. Apart from the recognition it brings to us from other similar bodies, the power of legally holding and acquiring property for the benefit of the exchange is now settled. The securing of this charter has also brought about important amendments to our constitution for the general benefit of members. As the grain business in this country is rapidly expanding, the need for some suitable building where the trade generally can be more centralized, will become an important matter for your consideration in the near future. Steps were taken last year by your council to test the practicability of securing such a building. Subscriptions for the bonds of the exchange to the extent \$18,000 were signed, but here the matter rested, as this amount was found insufficient towards acquiring any one of the proposed sights. It was felt if a sufficient sum was subscribed for the bonds of the exchange to buy the property; some responsible financial institutions could be found to lend the money for a building upon the security of the land, and the rentals from office rooms, etc., would net a satisfactory margin over cost of operating the building, interest, etc., to pay off the greater part of the loan in a reasonable number of years. I would strongly recommend that this matter be again taken up and more fully considered.

FARMING.

The system of farming in this country should I think, engage in a greater measure the attention of this exchange, and any practical suggestions, based on our experience in the handling of cereals, tending to improved methods whereby better results in the quality of grain produced might obtain, will undoubtedly be well received by our farmers. The temptation in a prairie country, where the land is easy of cultivation, for producers to raise a large quantity of grain, without due regard to its quality, is, without question, frequently followed by unsatisfactory results, and not infrequently the country is made to suffer from the want of a proper understanding of the causes underlying individual cases of failure. The same rule will apply to farming as in business, in so far as a man's ability to operate within his means. It does not necessarily follow that a man's profits in trade are greater, proportionately, for the reason that he is doing a larger business than his more conservative neighbor; so, with farming, there should be more of a spirit of rivalry in the quality of grain produced from the soil; and after having acquired the best possible results in this respect, as his means enable him to extend operations, quantity will follow with the successful farmer, in the natural order of things, to his more permanent good. It must always be borne in mind, that in a year of great plenty the world over, the lower grades of grain are difficult of sale unless at a heavy depreciation. Fortunately for our farmers, the shortage in foreign countries this year, has enabled them to realize better prices than usual on the lower grades. We have therefore every reason to feel thankful with the result of our harvest as a whole. While great praise is due to the Canadian Pacific Railway Co., and others, for the efforts and

special inducements offered in bringing in outside help to assist our farmers with the present harvest, yet I think it rather unreasonable to expect that extra labor of this kind can always be depended upon as waiting for such contingencies. We quite naturally feel a desire to advertise our large production, but value does not always follow quantity, and it is well for us to bear in mind that the value of a piece of land in the older settled countries is largely regulated by the quality of its product rather than the quantity; hence the necessity for our farmers using the very best of seed, and putting under crop such quantity of land as can both in seedling and harvest, be properly taken care of. Threshing from the stook is an evil arising out of excessively large farming. Grain should be stacked and allowed to sweat properly. It is a question of but a very short time when buyers must discriminate against wheat threshed from the stook as being uncertain for storage. Such grain is very liable to sweat after getting into a bin, thereby causing heating, which results in great depreciation of value. Another regrettable result caused by the leaving of wheat in the stook, is that fall ploughing cannot but otherwise be seriously interfered with, a circumstance which is to be deplored, as giving rise to careless and indifferent farming. In the keenly contested markets of the world a good article will always obtain a full market value, while on the contrary with inferior qualities, the fluctuations are uncertain and extreme. The prevalence of smut in this country has become a troublesome feature in handling the crop. The chief cause for this no doubt arises from the sowing of poor seed. With proper care this could be overcome, as much depends on the care and judgment exercised by each individual farmer in the selection of his seed. I feel that I cannot do better than quote from authorities who have given the question of smut every attention. It is necessary that there should be a note of warning in time, and our farmers will do well to refrain from sowing impure and smutty seed. Through the medium of the exchange, samples of various seed weeds, smut, etc., common to this country, taken from mill cleaners working on this year's crop, were sent to Ottawa for identification. Referring to smut, Professor Saunders writes the secretary:—

"The smutty grain you sent is a very bad example of the bunt or stinking smut. This can be got rid of to a very large extent by treating the grain before sowing. From experiments carried on at Indian Head this year, we are able to submit the following results: When very smutty grain was sown about one-half the crop was smutted. The same grain treated in the proportion of a pound of bluestone dissolved in water and sprinkled on ten bushels of wheat the proportion of smutty grain did not exceed 5 per cent. When one pound of bluestone was used to 5 bushels the grain was almost entirely free from smut."

Many instances have occurred this year where the grain marketed was so smutted as to be unsalable, unless at a very heavy depreciation, and when it is so easy to prevent the occurrence of such cases, it is to be regretted that farmers should neglect to take the necessary precautions. Authorities agree that if the treatment of seed grain could be made general over the province for say three or four years, this disease might be almost eradicated. Among the various weeds common in this country wild buckwheat is one of the most prolific. Being an annual weed, we are assured this can be got rid of by summer fallowing and clean cultivation. Professor Saunders writes:

"The seed of this plant begins to ripen a considerable time before the wheat is ready to cut, and a large part of the ripe seed will fall to the ground before the harvesting, so that only a part of it is separated and got rid of by the subsequent cleaning of the grain. If farmers would take trouble to summer fallow, they could get rid of this seed."

Probably the most dangerous weed is the giant rag weed, better known to farmers as hen weed. It is a large coarse plant, and matures a great deal of seed, and is troublesome and exhaustive when growing amongst cereal crops. Professor Fletcher, of the Central Experimental farm, Ottawa, referring to the weed, writes:

"In the Southern States it has been allowed to increase to such an extent that it has entirely taken possession of several fields and in July and August is a characteristic feature of the landscape. It frequently grows ten to twelve feet in height in favorable localities."

Professor Fletcher further adds that he has seen it 3 feet in height along the banks of the Red river. In my experience in the milling business we have found it necessary to refuse wheat containing this seed, no matter how inviting was the quality of the wheat in itself; the seed being practically of the same size and weight as a kernel of wheat, renders its separation in cleaning impossible. Being an annual plant, clean cultivation and persistent attention for a few years will certainly eradicate it, which fact should receive at once the consideration and cause action on the part of those farmers on lands more immediately tributary to the Red river.

The other samples of weeds submitted comprised lamb's quarters, pepper grass, hemp, nettle, stinking weed, (better known as French weed), wild sunflower, Canada thistle, Manitoba thistle, and black mustard. The subject of eradicating weeds in Manitoba and the Northwest is a very important one, and special attention should be directed to the necessity of farmers being more particular in following methods of cleaner cultivation. I am sure the usefulness of the exchange can be materially increased by careful attention and consideration of such subjects as these. Being an active body and its members coming in contact with all the conditions of trade in the successful handling and selling of grain, I see no reason why the knowledge resulting from our experience should not be disseminated among our farmers for mutual benefit. It is pleasing to notice that the farmers of Manitoba are turning their attention more each year to mixed farming.

I understand this year's shipment of cattle from Manitoba exceeded those from the celebrated ranges of Alberta, by about 30 per cent. As our exchange has a general produce branch, apart from that of grain, we will, as members, gladly bail the day, when as a result of mixed farming, pork, lard, etc., will be marketed throughout Manitoba in sufficient quantities to enable trading in these products to take place on our call board floor.

LAND UNDER CULTIVATION.

By the Provincial Government crop returns we find the increase in the quantity of land under cultivation this past season to be largely in excess of that of any previous year.

The acreage of wheat, in the Province of Manitoba, the past year, is stated to have been 916,664 acres, yielding 23,191,000 bushel; an average of 25.3 bushels per acre. Oats covered 305,614 acres with an average yield of 48.3 bushels per acre; and barley 89,923 acres, with an average yield of 35.6 bushels per acre. Doubtless these figures will be found to be rather under than in excess of the actual results, as there is a large amount of threshing to be done yet, and individual yields of 40 to 50 bushels per acre are not by any means an uncommon thing this past season, as all of you are personally aware. It must also be noticed that in the compilation of the government reports on yield only about one-third of the correspondents sent in their returns. The remainder calls to our attention the necessity of urging upon the Provincial Department of Agriculture the adoption of more perfect methods of acquiring information. Ours is an agricultural country, almost entirely at present, at any rate, the main fundamental basis of our whole commercial structure is the production and handling of grain, and it is most important, in the interest of the general trade of the country, not only here but throughout the whole of Canada, that the most complete and reliable information be obtained each season and at more frequent intervals of time. While we appreciate the action of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture in the past, in providing us with information, the collection and distribution of a more extended system of reliable reports in this respect, will soon make the statistical branch of the department one of the most important