

Lessons From Summer Field Meetings

NO. 1.

The summer field meetings, held in the seed producing centres of the province during June have been very satisfactory. The interest in weeds and their destruction has never been keener. The hints the delegates have been able to give have proved helpful. Wherever meetings were held samples of the weeds found in the district were brought to the meeting and their characteristics, with methods for getting rid of them, were discussed. For instance, a sample of the perennial sow thistle, which is the weed that is spreading most rapidly in this province at present, would be presented along with some of the underground root stem. It would be shown how it was necessary to weaken the stored up energy in this underground stem by leaving it in the ground undisturbed instead of plowing it up, and by killing all the growth of young plants it sends up before they have a chance to use their lungs (leaves) in storing up material for future use.

All the weeds are said to belong to one of three classes, annuals, biennials or perennials. There are two classes of annuals, the simple annuals and the winter annuals. The former germinate from a seed but are unable to stand frost. The latter may germinate and make some growth but the frost does not kill them. They both complete their life history in one year. The biennials spend the first year in storing up material in the roots to draw on the second year in producing seed. The perennials may also be divided into two classes, viz., those with underground root stalks and those with the simple top or fibrous ones. Both classes produce plants which go to seed annually and so long as the roots remain in the ground they will continue their work.

DESTROYING WEEDS

To get rid of the annuals early cultivation directly the harvest is off, is the best time to fight them, by getting the seeds sprouted and afterwards killing the plants. By preparing the corn ground, if possible, a week before the planting is done would allow of the sprouting of the small seeds in the soil, which could easily be killed while tender by a stroke of the harrow or weeder as soon as the corn was planted. This would necessitate the use of tested seed corn. The harrowing is most serviceable when the sun is out good and strong and the ground is dry.

A short rotation of crops is also a useful means of fending annuals in check. Not too short, as fall wheat and clover, for this would perpetuate some of the winter annuals, but such a rotation as would bring in the hoe crop, clover as well as grain crops. For the destruction of all classes of weeds, a three or four year rotation is the most effectual. One great trouble is that so many farmers are working more land than they can handle and do it well.

Biennials are most troublesome along roadsides, fence corners, and in unbroken pasture lands. The ground gets full of seeds and while the plants die at the end of the second year, multitudes of plants are still coming on. They may all be killed effectually if they are spudded below the crown of the root about the blossoming stage, and they will be prevented from producing seed when this is done.

The perennials are the hardest class to deal with, especially those with the root stem system.

THE CANADA THISTLE

is no longer the menace it used to be, as by growing clover, two cuttings in the one season, seem to do it up. The perennial sow thistle must be greatly weakened by the same method. If Canada thistles are allowed to grow on a fallow until they are about to bloom and then plowed under and the surface afterwards is kept well cultivated, but few thistles will ever appear afterwards. The same might be said about couch or twitch grass, which is unquestionably a weed which is giving farmers a great deal of trouble and extra labor. It is a weed which flourishes in a large constituency, and to some farmers it is not an unmissed evil. The thorough cultivation required for its eradication also makes available large quantities of plant food and moisture. In wet seasons it is impossible to fight it successfully. It may be fought by a dry time after harvest, by getting the roots on the surface and drying them, by ribbing up the land late in the fall and getting the frost to help, and by following this with a crop of buckwheat or clover, which allows of thorough cultivation until July 1st, and which may be termed a smothering crop.

SMALL SEED CROPS

In order to produce good, clean, strong grass and clover seeds, it was made apparent that the seed should be grown on live crop ground or summer fallow, where weeds had been successfully dealt with. Unless quite weedy the hoe crop ground should not be plowed after the crop is taken off, as plowing, unless very shallow, would turn up a lot of weed seeds which would otherwise be left to sleep for some time. They would not at any rate be found to trouble the seed crop. If seed is produced after pasture it is a good practice to run the mower over on shutting out the stock, unless they have done a good job themselves. The best red clover seed is produced in this way. Some years of good early growth, it pays to pasture or clip both mammoth and alsike about June 1st, but the grower's judgment must be exercised in this matter. One thing is certainly sure, and that is, that all the weeds growing on the killed out places in the fields should be cut before seeds are produced, which may be done with a scythe, the curled dock should be pulled and carried off, and other weeds, such as rib grass or buckhorn, night-flowering catchfly, false flax and Canada thistle, should be pulled or spudded out. Plants of rib grass should be looked after in about a week after the crop is coming on the second time. It can easily be seen then, but later the clover would obscure much of it. Any thin portions of the crop, if so weedy that it would not pay to pull, should be cut for hay and not mixed in the seed crop. The necessity of producing good pure seed is now more necessary since the Seed Control Act has come in force. The seedsmen are prepared to discriminate in favor of pure seed, enough to pay the producer to look after his crop in the field where the noxious weed seeds can be removed the easiest and cheapest. The plants which should be look-

ed after most closely are rib grass, night-flowering catchfly, Canada thistle, curled dock bladder campion, false flax, oxeye daisy, wild mustard, ragweed and foxtail. Timothy should be kept out of alsike seed as well. The timothy seed is very hard to separate from alsike, in fact, impossible, and for the export trade bars its sale.

SOME NEW WEEDS

Pennycress, sliakweed, or French weed, as it is called, is making its appearance here and there over the province. It is too bad that this weed seed should be added to our already overly large list of seed impurities. It will be a hard one to remove from red clover.

The flour and feed men are having shipped quantities of wheat screenings with orders of flour from points in our Northwest. These screenings are mostly used for chicken feed, and in this way some of the weed seeds, among them pennycress seeds, get into the stable manure, which some farmers buy and haul on their fields. In this way the seeds get on the farms. Then an exchange of seed grain widens its constituency. Some of the mill feeds partly produced from cracking Western wheat screenings, are doubtless another source from which such plants spring. It would be well for farmers to examine feeds or seeds so bought to feed to see if such seeds are still vital.

The spirit of co-operation is in the air. There is a growing tendency for producer, dealer and retailer in seeds to get together more closely, in order to prevent, as well as destroy, the many forms of weed life for which farmers are yearly paying a large toll.

T. G. RAYSON.

The Late Wm. Hendrie

On June 27th there passed away one of the most historical figures on the Canadian turf. When the Ontario Jockey Club was organized in 1881 he became one of its directors. He was president of the club from November, 1900, until his death, succeeding the late Sir Frank Smith. Mr. Hendrie was owner of one of the largest racing stables in America. He twice captured the Queen's Plate, with Butter Scotch and Lyddite, and was the only Canadian who ever had the distinction of winning the Futurity, the richest two-year-old stake in America, which he captured with Martimas. He also won the Brighton and Spencer Handicaps, with the great mare Laverock.

He was a man of sterling honesty. He never bet on his horses, no matter how well he thought of their chances. He was in the game for the love of it, and was one of the old school of genuine sportsmen, who are all too few in these modern days. He was the first Canadian to be made a member of the English Jockey Club. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1831, coming to Canada in 1854.

A certain man who was much troubled by a braying mule was advised that the mule could be kept silent by tying a weight to his tail. It was some two months after this advice was given that the man was seen again. He looked like a person who had thoughtlessly toyed with a cyclone and barely escaped with his life. "How did that experiment work with the mule?" he was asked. "As a theory," he answered, "it may be all right, but in practice it is a blamed failure."