

Agriculture and Colonization.

The utmost pains are taken to avoid errors, and if any are made to correct them as soon as they are discovered; also to point out the defects as well as the merits of everything tested, the object being to examine into everything thoroughly and to present the results of the work in a plain straightforward way for the guidance of those who seek information. It is very gratifying to know that the work is most thoroughly appreciated and that the farmers everywhere are feeling the benefits of it.

THE GREAT VALUE OF SEED TESTING.

Among the branches of work now being carried on and one to which I will briefly refer is seed testing. It is a very important item of the farm work which is undertaken from year to year and it is important this season particularly for the province of Manitoba. In that province the harvest weather of 1891 was exceedingly unfavourable, and much of the grain remained in stacks and in stook all through the winter, was threshed in the spring of 1892, and some of it was held over for seed. A large number of samples have been sent to the experimental farm by farmers to have them tested as to their vitality and they have been found to be exceedingly deficient, so much so, that there is scarcely a single sample of such grain which is fit for seed.

The vitality of these samples have ranged from 15 or 16 up to 30 per cent, instead of giving, as good wheat will usually do, from 90 to 95 per cent. The importance to farmers holding such grain for seed, of knowing exactly what that grain will do, can readily be understood. More than 1,600 samples have already been tested this season, and every mail brings additional specimens.

FREE DISTRIBUTION OF SEED GRAIN, IN 1892.

The distribution of seed is another important work which is being carried on successfully, and which is appreciated very much by the farmers who share in it. Many farmers residing in the outlying districts of the several provinces and territories of this Dominion are not yet in a position to ascertain for themselves much about the best and most useful varieties of grain for them to sow. Many do not even take an agricultural periodical so that they might be informed, and such information as they have they gather mainly from their neighbours. It is partly to reach that class, that this experimental work of distributing seeds is carried on, and I am sure you will be gratified to know the extent to which farmers have availed themselves of the privilege which this distribution affords them. None of these samples are sent out except on request. A very large number of individual requests come in every year, and to these are added requests from members of the House during the sessions, who send to us lists of names of farmers who they know would be interested in undertaking such work.

PARTICULARS OF DISTRIBUTION—KINDS AND QUANTITIES.

Last year the number of samples distributed was 16,905. These samples were of three pounds each, amounting in all to 24½ tons of grain, which went through the mails to different parts of the Dominion in connection with this work. Amongst these were 5,384 samples of oats, 3,954 samples of wheat, 3,989 of barley, 719 of pease, 36 of rye, 1,545 of Indian corn and 1,278 samples of potatoes.

DISTRIBUTION BY PROVINCES.

It may be interesting to you to know how these were distributed by provinces. The figures are: Prince Edward Island, 304; Nova Scotia, 1,020; New Brunswick, 1,225; Ontario, 3,634; Quebec, 8,517; Manitoba, 706; North-west Territories, 933, and British Columbia, 566. That was the number of sample bags sent to each of the provinces. The number of individual farmers which this distribution reached was 9,114.