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The Potato Canker And Colorado Beetle

Following is the address delivered before the Rotary Club Monday by Mr. S. G. Peppin Senior Potato Inspector:

A question which has frequently been asked both by farmers and business men here in the Maritimes is: "Do you think there is any possibility of raising the British embargo against our Canadian potatoes?" Some well directed representations by various organizations have been made along those lines to the British authorities.

The word embargo, of course, is used advisedly rather than in the true sense of the word. In fact it is not an embargo, but rather a prohibitory or protective quarantine measure having as its object the preservation of each country's farming interests. As you perhaps know, Canada prohibits the entry of British potatoes. In other words, each country has some noxious trouble, disease, or insect, in this particular case, which does not exist in the other, and is, therefore, anxious to prevent its introduction for apparently good and specific reasons.

Let us first take our own case, and why we have, since 1910, prohibited the entry of European potatoes into Canada. There is a very serious and destructive disease of potatoes prevalent all over Europe which is called Black Scab, wart disease, cauliflower disease or better and more properly known as Potato Canker or Cancer. This disease was first discovered in Hungary in 1896 and, although the seriousness of the disease was recognized, no systematic steps were taken by any country to prevent its spread, at least until it was scheduled as a notifiable disease by the Destructive Insect and Pest Order of 1908 in Great Britain. This "Act" rendered persons liable to prosecution and a heavy penalty for concealing the presence of Potato Wart Disease.

The disease first made its appearance in England in 1901, although it may have been present some years earlier, and, between that date and the introduction of the Destructive Insect and Pest Order just referred to it had spread from county to county until in 1908 some 244 cases were reported to the authorities. The disease, by 1910, was prevalent in England, Ireland, Scotland, Scandinavia, Germany, France, Italy and Hungary, which virtually means it had spread over the whole of Northern Europe in a matter of some 14 years.

Now for a brief description of the disease. It does not affect the potato tops to any extent, but attacks the underground parts, particularly the tubers. It takes the form of irregular outgrowths of dark reddish-brown to black warty tissue of varying size. This warty tissue is somewhat like cauliflower in appearance, except in colour, hence the name Wart or Cauliflower disease. The tubers become either partially or wholly replaced by this warty growth, and the final or most advanced stage reduces the tuber to a brownish-black mass which undergoes a soft rot and gives off an odour of decay or dries up. Potato Canker is spread by diseased tubers or by contaminated soil, manure, machinery, or by other crops, garden refuse, etc., gathered from where a disease crop has grown.

Potato Canker was discovered on this side of the Atlantic in October 1909 in Newfoundland by our present Dominion Botanist, Dr. H. T. Gussow. It no doubt, having been introduced there through importations of potatoes from Europe. The Dominion Department of Agriculture immediately took preventive measures by means of a special "Act" designed to prevent the introduction of this and other serious diseases and insect pests.

The "Act" was assented to on May 4, 1910, and was known as "The Destructive Insect and Pest Act." That Act is still in force, with revisions of course, and is the one under which we conduct our seed potato inspection and certification work. On August 20, 1912, by a similar official bill of Congress the United States also prohibited the importation of potatoes from Europe, Newfoundland, St. Pierre and Miquelon.

The year 1911 proved to be a rather poor one for the potato crop both in Canada and the United States. Consequently large quantities were imported into both countries from Europe, over 200,000 bushels were brought into Canada and during October 31st, and March 31st. During this period, a consignment of 600 bushels originating in Liverpool, England, which, by mistake, was sent to Montreal for the purpose of being sold in the Maritimes, was found to be heavily infected with Canker. This lot was immediately confiscated and destroyed by inspectors of the Department, and further and more stringent regulations put into force to prevent introduction of the disease into Canada. Fortunately the measures adopted have been entirely successful.

In 1918 the disease was discovered in the coal mining districts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland. One writer in Pennsylvania attributes the presence of Potato Wart to the importations of 1911 and 1912 when the acute shortage was felt particularly in these mining centres. A quarantine was immediately placed around the affected areas which comprised two counties in West Virginia, the north west corner of Maryland and eleven counties in Pennsylvania. In those counties of Pennsylvania there were 813 gardens in 58 towns and villages known to have Wart. The total area of these infected gardens amounted to 100 acres.

The eradication of Wart, while theoretically possible, has such practical difficulties that success is very doubtful except over a long period of years. Potato varieties differ in their susceptibility to the disease, some contracting it in its most virulent forms whereas others are entirely immune. Just what characters the immune varieties possess is not known. For your information I might say that the varieties grown here for certification, Irish Cobblers, Green Mountains and Spaulding Roses are immune. The Dakota Red also is immune, whereas the McIntyre is very susceptible. We cooperated with the officials of the United States Department of Agriculture in providing samples for tests for immunity or susceptibility.

Great strides have been made particularly by British scientists, in the breeding of immune varieties. That work is continuing with considerable success. Meanwhile, the menace is still there, hence the reason for continuing the regulations prohibiting importations of potatoes from affected countries.

Now let us consider for a few moments the British side of the question. They prohibit the entry of Canadian and United States potatoes on account of the presence here of the well-known Colorado beetle or potato bug. It is not found at present in Great Britain. I was rather surprised last month to read a despatch emanating from France, to the effect that the potato bug is present there and that they have been fighting it for several years. It is presumed it was introduced there during the years of rehabilitation after the Great War. It was reported in thirty Departments or Counties and they have spent considerable sums in an endeavour to eradicate it. That being the case, it is possibly just a question of time when it will cross the Straits of Dover and invade England. The distance is not so very much greater than our own straits.

The life history of the insect is interesting. Originally it was native of a strip of country just east of the Rocky Mountain range and including eastern Colorado. First reported in 1866 in its native state it fed upon the wild weeds of the potato family, chiefly the Sandbar. In the year 1889, it began to infest the potato fields of the settlers in that region. Having acquired the habit of feeding on potato plants it began its march eastward across the continent. In 1891 it was found in Kansas, 1892 in Iowa and Wisconsin. It crossed the Mississippi in 1894 and was found in Michigan and Indiana in 1897, Ohio in 1898, Pennsylvania in 1870. It moved eastward at the rate of about fifty miles in a year for a number of years, but later it travelled more rapidly. It is reported to have reached the Atlantic Coast about 1874 and Nova Scotia in 1882. When it reached the Atlantic Coast it had travelled 1,500 miles in 16 years, and nearly 1,000 miles more in its march to Nova Scotia. No doubt, there are quite a number now living in the province who remember well its arrival here which is variously placed at from 1884 to 1880 when it was found floating in near our shores on seaweed.

The mature beetle hibernates over winters in the ground at a depth of about six or eight inches and emerges ready to fly in the spring. As soon as the first leaves appear the beetles fly to them and lay their masses of eggs on the underside of the leaves. From 200 to 1000 eggs may be laid by one female, the egg-laying period lasting from four to eight weeks. The eggs hatch out in about a week or ten days, depending on weather conditions. The larvae or young bugs or slugs, as they are sometimes called are voracious eaters and soon strip the plants of all foliage unless controlled. They become fully developed in about three weeks, when they enter the ground and pupate. In about ten days they emerge as a fully developed adult. Usually we have only one brood in a year, but I have occasionally seen two. In any event, it is a serious pest, and we cannot blame authorities of countries, where it does not at present exist, for taking measures to keep it permanently out.

The life-history of the insect, however, practically precludes the possibility of any being found in our potatoes at time of shipping. I have yet to see any beetles in our potato bins in the fall, although we often see them in the fields at harvest time. Most, if not all, of these would be killed in the handling of the tubers. The Department at Ottawa still has the matter under advisement and will, no doubt, do everything possible to induce the British authorities to accept our potatoes.

Another point is this: In the fall of 1924 and spring of 1925 we shipped 64 separate consignments of table potatoes to Great Britain, which, by the way, they would not accept without a certificate stating they were inspected and certified free of wart disease. These shipments comprising some 146,559 bushels were just as liable then to contain Colorado beetles as any shipments we might send now. The fact that none were transported in those shipments, I think, is sufficient proof that the possibility today is just as remote.

The foregoing briefly constitutes the reason why prohibitory measures have been taken by Great Britain and Canada. They might say, "Take off your restrictions and we will lift ours also." The question in my mind however, is this: Would the occasional opportunity to ship our potatoes to Great Britain be offset by the possible introduction of so serious a disease as Potato Canker into our country? It must be remembered in discussing this question that the finding of even one potato affected with Canker in Prince Edward Island would result in all other countries immediately placing prohibitory or restrictive measures against us. It would undoubtedly result in the complete loss of both our seed and table stock trade. It would mean the changing over of our farming schedule, to say nothing of the possibility of reduced land values. We can only ship potatoes to Cuba, the West Indies and South American points on the strength of a certificate by which we certify that the potatoes are actually free of Potato Canker, even when we have notified these governments that the disease does not exist in Canada.

Now finally a word particularly to those who occasionally visit Europe: "Do not under any consideration attempt to bring back potatoes of any kind; in the first place it is against the law, and in the second, and even more important, it endangers the future welfare of our province.

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Mrs. Heber Schurman and little daughter, Joyce spent Friday in Cape Traverse.

Mr. Claude Delaney has returned to his home in Albany Village.

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest L. Paynter, and Mr. George Campbell of Free-town spent Sunday in Albany the guest of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Burns.

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Miss Hazel Paynter and Miss Verna Mayne, Emerald spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. John Lewis, West Royalty.

Heartiest congratulations are being extended to Mr. and Mrs. Wright Leard, Central Bedouque on the birth of a bonnie baby girl.

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SANTA CLAUS HEADQUARTERS

IN MEMORIAM

MRS. JOHN BEER

There passed peacefully away at Argyle Shore, November 5th at the home of her son-in-law, John W. McDougall, Elizabeth, widow of the late John Beer, DeSable at the age of 82 years, after a prolonged illness of five years and some months, due to a paralytic stroke; yet all was patiently borne because she believed in a God who makes all things work together for good to those who put their trust and confidence in Him. She leaves to mourn one daughter with whom she resided, two grandchildren, also one brother, Duncan of DeSable.

Forty Deaf Heard Sounds First Time

CHICAGO, Dec. 2.—Forty little children, deaf since infancy, heard human voices and musical tones for the first time through radio hearing aids in an experiment made at the Beldier public school, where dental classes are conducted. The excited and incoherent mumbling and cries from the children

Mayor Walker Pleads Pardon For Mooney

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., Dec. 2.—Mayor James J. Walker of New York today appeared before his friend, Governor Rolph of California, and pleaded for a pardon for Tom Mooney. The hearing lasted four hours. No decision is expected immediately. The result may not be known for weeks or even months.

The Mayor submitted that the man once sentenced to hang after conviction on a murder charge in connection with the bombing of a parade in San Francisco, July 22, 1916, is innocent and did not have a fair trial. Walker told the Governor and his advisors that in his opinion Mooney did not have a fair trial and was convicted as the result of perjured testimony.

Walker pointed out to the Governor that the sentencing Judge, the nine living members of the jury, and today Charles M. Flockert, prosecutor of Mooney as District Attorney in 1916 thought Mooney should be pardoned.

"This is not a proper perfect case to present to Your Excellency for the exercise of the pardon power then counsel is at a loss to imagine," he said.

and their rhythmic swaying as musical programs were being received over the radio showed plain by the experiment was successful, Mrs. Louis Felton, chairman of the hearing aids committee of the Chicago Women's Aid, said.

It is planned to attach microphones to the radio for use by the teachers so they may talk to the children.

Albany and Vicinity

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President Attacks Waterways Project

BY KEN CLARK
Canadian Press Staff Writer.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 1.—The Canadian-American joint engineering board will convene in the immediate future at some centre yet to be decided upon to discuss plans for the St. Lawrence waterway. The basis of their discussions will be the 1926 report wherein United States and Canadian sections differed as to the advisability of building one or two dams in the international rapids section.

Officials tonight denied reports current today that the U. S. Government had made new proposals to the Canadian Government and the Canadian negotiators had revised the original suggestions of their engineering board that one of the two dams proposed should be built at Ogdon Island. It was pointed out that in a report of the Canadian section post-dating the joint report it had been suggested the site of the dam should be shifted from Ogdon to Chrysler Island about six miles down the river.

World's Billiard Championship

PHILADELPHIA, Pa., Dec. 2.—Four former champions scored first victories in the world's pocket billiard championships yesterday.

Ralph Greenleaf, Bennie Allen, Johnny Layton and Frank Taberski disposed of opponents in easy fashion to join Erwin Rudolph, defending champion and Onofrio Lauri, as leaders.

Want Imperial Conference Earlier Than Next July

LONDON, Dec. 2.—(Canadian Press Cable)—Plans for the Imperial Conference to be held in Ottawa will be speeded up, says the Daily Express today. The National Government the paper says, hopes arrangements will be made permitting the conference to open earlier than July, the date mentioned for some time.

Discussions are progressing between the British Government and those of the Dominions in regard to arrangement for the conference. The presence in London of Prime Minister R. B. Bennett of Canada and his help to complete the preliminary work is being discussed.

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Woman Now Known As A Person

TORONTO, Ont., Dec. 2.—(By The Canadian Press)—Gratification at the improvement brought to woman's status by recent legislation was expressed today by Mrs. E. C. Guyitt, as she recalled, while presenting a report on citizenship to the United Farm Women of Ontario, that the naturalization act had been changed to give a Canadian woman marrying a foreigner the right to retain her own nationality.

"We are glad to note too," she said, "that at last a woman is considered a 'person'."

THE PROPAGATION OF SHRUBS

(Experimental Farms Note) Most shrubs are easily propagated, the usual methods being by seeds, rooted suckers, cuttings, layering, grafting and budding. Seed is often used to increase certain shrubs such as barberry and caragana. Many evergreens are so difficult to propagate that other means must be employed.

Another method, and a simple one, is to dig up rooted suckers that come up around the old plant. Lilacs may be propagated in this way. One must be sure the named varieties are on their own roots and not budded or grafted, otherwise the suckers will be the same as the stock.

The most common method, and the one employed chiefly at the Charlottetown Experimental Station, is by hardwood cuttings. Almost all the best known shrubs may be increased in this way. The cuttings are taken in the fall from well-ripened wood of the past season's growth. They are cut from six to eight inches long, preferably at a node or eye, and tied together in small bundles with the tops all one way. They may then be put in moist sand and stored in a cool cellar, or buried upside down in sand below the frost line. Early in the spring the cuttings

which will have callused, are taken up and planted in a nursery row. Evergreen cuttings are usually taken with a small portion of the parent stem attached to the base and planted in sand in a cold frame, covered with a sash and protected with a straw or leaves.

Layering is another means often employed to increase certain varieties. Simple and mound layering are both used extensively. With simple layering the tops are bent over and fastened to the ground with a light covering of soil near the tip, but with a few inches protruding. To hasten rooting the stems are usually cut through the cambium layer on the lower side of the part of the stem to be covered. Mound layering is useful in propagating short-stemmed and stiff branched shrubs. With this method the shoots at the base of the plant are covered quite deeply with soil. Plants to be multiplied in this way are often severely cut back causing the production of numerous shoots which are ready for layering the following autumn or spring. In some cases layers are made of immature, or growing wood.

Budding and grafting are more difficult operations and practical only in special cases. For further information on these or other phases of plant propagation, write the Superintendent, Experimental Station, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

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