

INVENTORY OF FOREIGN SEEDS AND PLANTS.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

In the importation and distribution of a large number of samples of foreign seeds, the use of a series of numbers has been found necessary as the simplest means of designation in the frequent absence of English names. The publication of this list appears desirable in order to render the available data accessible for reference and to enable our correspondents to select to best advantage the seeds or plants with which they may desire to experiment.

When the work of this section was formally organized the Department was already in possession of a considerable quantity of seeds secured by Prof. Niels E. Hansen of the Agricultural College of South Dakota during a visit to Russia, central Asia, and Siberia. This long and arduous journey was undertaken under circumstances rendering extremely difficult the accumulation of detailed information. A large amount of territory was, however, covered and much valuable material secured. A portion of this was distributed last year, but many of the importations did not arrive until after the planting season had passed, so that they are as yet entirely untried in America. In many other cases correspondents have stated that their experiments were unsatisfactory on account of late planting, and another trial is therefore necessary. Although the numbers of varieties in some groups is formidable, it is hoped that through cooperation of experiment stations and private investigators the more valuable novelties may be experimentally separated from those not serviceable in the United States.

The repetition of identical names and data under successive numbers may appear to have been unnecessary unless it is explained that the typographical arrangement is expected to serve a second purpose in the form of printed labels to accompany the seeds. Efforts are being made to increase the amount and definiteness of the information to be furnished with later importations.

In addition to the importations of Professor Hansen, there have been numerous contributions from a variety of sources, as noted in each case. More recently there has arrived from France a large series of seeds and cuttings personally selected by Mr. Walter T. Swingle, agricultural explorer of this section. At an early date are expected invoices of cereals from Russia and Japan, specialists in such crops having visited