

INVENTORY OF SEEDS AND PLANTS IMPORTED BY THE OFFICE OF FOREIGN SEED AND PLANT IN- TRODUCTION DURING THE PERIOD FROM APRIL 1 TO JUNE 30, 1922 (NO. 71; NOS. 54969 TO 55568).

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

The migrations of cultivated plants are slow when compared with the spread of ideas or inventions, but it would surprise anyone who has not paid much attention to the subject to learn of the steady flow of new varieties which is going on from the old to the new countries. This inventory represents the stream which is reaching America through the carefully supervised Government channel.

As we look over the immigrants which have arrived during the last three months we are struck with the fact that most of those which are coming in will require a long period of acclimatization, and many of them will need to be bred with those varieties which we already have before they will prove their full value to the country. Just as the human immigrants who arrive at Ellis Island are amalgamating slowly but surely with those who came years ago, so these plant immigrants, many of them at least, will be known by the particular characters which they have contributed to the cultivated plants already here to which they are related; for, like all other living things, the cultivated plants on which we subsist are continually changing under the hands of the plant breeders and through the unconscious process of selection which is always going on.

The fact that these plants which are introduced need to be selected and bred simply emphasizes the lamentable circumstance that there are too few plant breeders in America and too little encouragement is given to those few to carry on this painstaking long-time work of breeding and selecting plants.

The general public has scarcely begun to realize the self-sacrifice and lifelong devotion to its study which the successful plant breeder must give to any plant before he brings about any permanent improvement in it or the ease with which years of effort may be wiped out in a single season of unfortunate occurrences. Neither has the public appreciated that the emoluments which come to the plant breeder are rarely sufficient to cover even the expenses of cultivation and the care which the plants have required, so that at the end of a life of devotion to this work the breeder often finds himself impoverished by the expenses of the upkeep of his collections. It is this condition more than any other which is retarding the development of our cultivated plants to-day, and it is a condition which should be remedied.