As we are now approaching the period of corn planting, it is well to call the attention of the public to the loss which may occur through the use of poor seed, and also indicate some methods by which the quality of the seed used can be improved.

Last year, as published before, we determined the fact that in our trials the kiln drying of seed corn increased greatly its value and certainty for seed purposes. Other experiments at that time indicated a larger germinating quality in corn that was kiln dried than in the best selected corn of the same variety from the crib.

This spring, experiments in the same line have not indicated the same difference in germinative properties, the seed having been dried only immediately preceding the trial, but what is more important, they have indicated the greater vigor of the plant which is grown from the kiln-dried seed. While in germination, in one trial, the vitality as expressed in per cents was precisely the same as between two lots of 500 seeds each, the one corn from the crib, and the other thoroughly dried over a radiator, viz. 94 per cent., yet when this same corn was planted in the earth the difference became very marked, the
corn from the crib giving but twenty per cent. vegetation, and the
same corn kiln dried giving 80 per cent. vegetation. The difference
was even more marked in the growth, the corn from the crib only
attaining a height of three inches, while that from the kiln dried seed
had reached the height of five inches in the same time.

While it is not safe to generalize from single instances or from
few trials, yet these results are sufficiently striking to justify us in
calling the attention of farmers to this point, as there is always a large
loss in practical farming arising from the non-germination of seed
and vacant spaces which would have been filled provided the seed had
been of the best quality.

The advice so frequently given in our press of selecting seed corn
is very proper, as selection is one of the most important agencies we
have toward improving the quality of our cereals and vegetables, but it
is an experience of ours whose truth cannot be questioned, that as be-
tween two samples of equally fresh seed preserved under different cir-
cumstances there may be a very wide difference in germinative and
vegetative properties, and that freshness of seed alone and careful selec-
tion alone is not sufficient in every case to furnish the best results. In
addition, the method of preserving the seed must be considered as of im-
portance, for our trials with seeds of primarily equally good quality in-
dicate that seed which is most carefully preserved and kept over will
not only retain its vitality longer but will also give better results in
planting. It is certainly good advice, and advice which it is well for
the farmer to heed, to select carefully his seed corn from his bin, or
better still, from the field, and to carefully keep over to the next sea-
son in a warm and dry place. At the present time the advice is cer-
tainly justified, by the facts at our command, for the farmer to select
his seed corn by taking the best ears, and after shelling to put in a
warm place and allow to thoroughly dry before using in the spring.

Seed corn when planted too early is often destroyed in the ground.
This destruction does not come from the cold, as often assumed, but
from other conditions, the most important of which is the slow germi-
nation of the seed and a vitality which cannot endure this circum-
stance, and also the action of mold, which grows rapidly at a lower
temperature than will suffice for the corn. It therefore holds good in
practice that to those who plant early the very best of seed is of great
importance; and what adds value to this reflection is, that, so far as
our data warrants, we can state with considerable certainty that early
planted corn will usually yield a larger crop than will the same vari-
ety planted at a late period.

E. LEWIS STURTEVANT, Director.