LABORATORY INSTRUCTION IN FIELD CROPS AT
KANSAS STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

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After Dr. Etheridge asked me to present (in a brief way) some of our Kansas ideas on this subject, I looked through the proceedings of the Society and the volumes of the Journal to refresh my memory as to what had been said and written on the same subject. I found relatively few published reports bearing directly on the subject of laboratory courses in field crops. The increased attention being given to farm crops teaching by this Society as evidenced by the conference held last August at Urbana, Illinois, and by the setting aside of a half day at this meeting for the symposium on the improvement of agronomy teaching is certainly a hopeful sign. The committee appointed to study the possibilities of standardizing courses in field crops has certainly done splendid work and has at least caused farm crops teachers to "think on these things," and to express themselves either for or against the proposed plan.

This committee has devoted most of its attention to the classroom or lecture phases of the problem; however, and I think that I am correct in saying that no very definite proposals have yet been made to this Society concerning the improvement of laboratory instruction in field crops. The committee of which the leader of this symposium is chairman at one time made the statement that "most laboratory courses in field crops are superficial and scarcely deserving of collegiate standing," or words to that effect. Speaking for Kansas, and I hope and believe for a number of our larger and stronger agricultural colleges and universities, I must take exception to this statement, and endeavor to convince you that such is not the case "out where the west begins."

About ten years ago, Prof. M. L. Fisher (2) of Purdue University called attention to the fact that many of our crops courses were neither uniform nor well organized and emphasized the need of using carefully prepared laboratory outlines, of giving definite assignments, and of requiring neat and fairly complete reports. I would like to emphasize one of Professor Fisher's (3) proposals, namely, that every instructor be urged to insist that the laboratory reports of his students be neatly written and properly paragraphed, and that the students make a sincere effort to improve their work.

1 Contribution No. 145 from the Kansas State Agricultural College, Department of Agronomy, Manhattan, Kansas. Read at the meeting of the Society held at Washington, D. C., November 21, 1922.
2 Professor of Crop Improvement.
3 Reference by number is to "Literature cited," p. 54.