COMMUNITY GROWING OF CROP VARIETIES.

CARL S. SCOFIELD,
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

In a recent number of this journal Mr. C. R. Ball comments favorably upon two papers by Cook and MacLachlan which present the needs and advantages of community action in the production of cotton. He then takes the rather advanced stand that similar if not equally good results are to be expected from community action in the production of pure strains of cereals and some other field crops. His attitude may be summarized in two of his sentences: "First, that the very idea of mixtures should be persistently discredited as being fundamentally wrong from the standpoint of good farming," and "Only in purity is there safety."

Is it not possible that in his enthusiasm over the case presented by Cook and MacLachlan Mr. Ball has gone too far in extending the community idea to the cereal crops, and in affording to others the occasion, if not the suggestion, to extend it even to the forage crops? How would it look to find some agricultural evangelist advocating that one community should grow only timothy, another clover, and another red top to insure purity in the hay crop, and because mixtures are fundamentally wrong from the standpoint of good farming?

Of course, it is unlikely that any well-informed person would go so far as to recommend purity in hay crops. Common experience has demonstrated too clearly the superior value of mixtures. But is it advisable to press the case even for the cereal crops?

To avoid unnecessary confusion it may be well to consider this matter first, from the standpoint of the farmer as an individual, and second, from the standpoint of the farmer as a member of the community.

From the standpoint of the farmer as an individual the direct question is: Should only one variety of the same crop be grown on the same farm or in the same field? For the sake of the farmer let us consider the evidence in the case. A cursory glance through the indexes of United States Experiment Station literature leaves the impression on the mind that this subject has been but little investigated. There are, of course, numerous experiments reported in which carefully selected varieties have been compared with the mixed parent