

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 21, 1896.

ONTARIO CROPS.

The final crop bulletin for the province of Ontario has been issued. The yield of fall wheat is about two bushels per acre less than last year, being placed at 17.2 bushels per acre, making a total crop of 15,078,000 bushels. This is about 1,000,000 bushels more than the total crop of last year, owing to the larger area of winter wheat harvested this year. The area was about 185,000 acres in excess of the previous crop.

Spring wheat is also about two bushels per acre under last year in yield, but the total crop is a little greater than that of 1895, owing to the increased area. As compared with the annual average area and yield for a series of years previous to 1896, there is a falling off in both spring and fall wheat this year. Previous to 1890 the area of spring wheat averaged 569,000 acres for nine years. It fell to 228,000 acres in 1895, and increased slightly in 1896. Spring wheat as a crop is practically out of the race in Ontario, the total crop for the past two years amounting to only about 8,500,000 bushels annually, or a total crop of winter and spring wheat of about 18,600,000 bushels for 1895. The area of winter wheat, though larger in 1896 than during the two previous years is still slightly under the annual average previous to 1891.

Barley, like spring wheat, is a much less important crop than it was a few years ago. The annual average area of barley for some years previous to 1890 was 761,000 acres. It fell to 462,000 acres in 1895, this being the smallest area reported since the decline began in 1890. The yield this year was 27.4 bushels per acre, being about two bushels per acre greater than last year, and the total crop of 12,669,000 bushels is about 575,000 bushels more than last year.

Last year the crop of oats in Ontario was very large, the crop of 81,697,000 bushels being the largest on record by about 10,000,000 bushels. This is due to increased area. The yield was 31.2 bushels per acre this year, which is an average yield compared with previous years, but $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per acre less than last year. The area sown to oats this year was the largest on record, being 2,425,000 acres or about 50,000 acres more than in 1895.

Of the minor crops, buckwheat, beans, rye, potatoes, roots, corn, etc., all show a steady increase in the area, and some of these are beginning to assume a position of considerable importance. Corn, for instance, is now a more important crop in Ontario than spring wheat, the area this year being 317,000 acres and the yield 24,071,000 bushels. Besides this 179,000 acres of corn were grown for green fodder. Corn will evidently soon lead barley in importance.

In point of area, peas come after oats and winter wheat only, among the grain crops, and last year the area of peas exceeded winter wheat. This year winter wheat slightly exceeds peas in area. The yield of peas this

year is placed at about 17,500,000 bushels, being about 2 bushels per acre greater than last year in yield.

Some 2,426,700 acres are given to hay and clover crops, yielding 93 of a ton per acre, compared with .73 last year and 1.95 as an average crop. This indicates a short hay crop for two years in succession.

The growing crop of fall wheat is described as promising and the area is larger than that harvested this year.

Regarding fruits the bulletin says. The crop of apples was enormous and thousands of barrels of good apples were going to waste. Prices paid to growers varied from 40 to 60c per barrel, for which the growers were expected to pick the fruit, board the packers, and haul the barrels to and from the railway points. Some preferred to feed the apples to live stock.

In live stock, the number and value of horses shows a considerable decrease in recent years. Cattle about hold their own in number. Sheep have dropped off about 200,000 as compared with the two previous years. Hogs are a little fewer than last year, but the lumber has increased steadily during recent years.

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

It is a matter for regret that so little interest is taken in municipal affairs in Winnipeg. The recent civic elections aroused very little interest in the city. The multiplicity of candidates for the position of mayor seemed rather to detract from the usual interest taken in the elections. Though there were five candidates in the field for mayor, the contest was really between ex-Alderman Hutchings and Alderman McCreary, and between these two it was quite close, as the result of the poll showed. Mr Hutchings had a strong and influential support, but the preponderance of the labor vote in favor of Mr. McCreary, gave him the victory.

The mayor-elect has been accused of playing rather too much to the gallery in the past, in his position as alderman. This is perhaps excusable if he had in view, (as doubtless he did) the attainment of the higher honor of the mayoralty chair. He has now secured this honor, and it is quite possible that he may surprise his opponents in the manner in which he will fill the position. He is not without considerable ability, and he certainly has plenty of energy and ambition. There is ample room for the display of all these qualifications in the management of the affairs of the city. The need of ability and energy is apparent to all. As regards ambition, we do not mean mere personal ambition, but the ambition to conduct the affairs of the city so successfully as to give satisfaction to the citizens. Mr. McCreary is perhaps in a position to devote more time and attention to civic affairs than a business man with heavy personal responsibilities upon his shoulders could do. Mr. McCreary was not the choice of The Commercial, but if he will get down to business and succeed in introducing the reforms so urgently needed in our

civic affairs, we will promise him support for second term.

The three by-laws, to provide for the construction of a new system of water-works, gas works and electric lighting, were all defeated, not because the city is not urgently in need of at least a new water-works system, but because of the feeling of mistrust in the way civic affairs are handled. The water-works question is certainly a very urgent matter, and it is to be hoped the new council will take hold of this matter energetically and place it before the citizens in such a shape that it will meet with their approval.

BANK OF OTTAWA.

A very full report of the recent annual meeting of the Bank of Ottawa will be found on another page. The financial statement shows that the bank has enjoyed a satisfactory year's business, notwithstanding the unfavorable commercial conditions which have prevailed during the past twelve months. The net profits of the bank for the year, after full allowance had been made for bad and doubtful debts, were about \$200,000. The usual dividends were paid to stockholders, the rest account was increased by \$65,000, and a balance to the good of about \$45,000 was carried over. The slight decrease in the earnings of the bank, as compared with last year, was stated by the president to be due to lower interest rates and a larger allowance for doubtful debts. The president refers in his address to an important suit which was decided favorable to the bank during the past year, involving the right of the bank to hold property on which advances had been made, as against the general creditors of an estate. This is a matter which is of interest to merchants, and particularly to jobbers.

Mr. J. R. Monk, manager of the branch of the Bank of Ottawa in Winnipeg, reports that the bank has enjoyed a very satisfactory business in the West this year. The business of the bank has steadily expanded here, and this year has exceeded any previous one in the volume of business, while payments have been very satisfactory.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

WHEAT is not nearly as important a crop in the United States as many people apparently think it is. It is exceeded in value by corn, hay and cotton, the value of the corn crop being more than double that of wheat, while the value of the hay crop is also very much greater. When live stock is taken into account, wheat takes the seventh place as a farm product, being exceeded in value by cattle, horses and milch cows, according to official statistics for 1895. The importance of wheat is vastly over-estimated on account of the fact that wheat is a great speculative commodity. The speculative sales of wheat are vastly in excess of the actual quantity of the commodity handled.

SOME of the western papers have devoted considerable attention of late to the question of Indian education. It is certainly very necessary that attention should be paid to the education of the Indians, but there are