WHEAT CROP IS BEING HARVESTED

Progress is Good, But Labor Shortage Has Proved a Serious Handicap

The Canadian Northern Railway crop report for the last week in August shows cutting general over practically all Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, thrashing begun in the southern areas, and indicates that marketing of new wheat will begin within the next few days.

A majority of agents report the wheat berry plump and of excellent quality, and it may well be when the figures of yield are compiled there will be a surprisingly large total from the prairie provinces. There are isolated reports of slight damage from rust. Feed conditions are reported greatly improved in the south owing to recent rains. Oats in the north and barley generally appear to be excellent yields.

Average yields for districts tributary and not previously given are (wheat when not otherwise stated): Giroux, Man., 22-25 bushels to the acre; Elie, Man., wheat 18, oats 40, barley 30; Rossendale, Man., wheat 20, barley 35, oats 50-60; Rapid City, Man., 15; Clan William, wheat 20, oats 45, barley 35; Erickson, Man., wheat 25, oats 45, barley 35; Sandy Lake, Man., wheat 20, oats 40, barley 30; Montmartre, Sask., wheat 12, oats 25; Kendal, Sask., 15-20; Odessa, Sask., wheat 12, oats 25; Brooking, Sask., 15; Avonlea, Sask., 15; Mossbank, Sask., 12-20; Ethelbert, Man., 25-30; Girvin, Sask., 15; Kenaston, Sask., 15; Rosetown, Sask., 25; D'Arcy, Sask., 15; Carmel, Sask., 12-15; Kindersley, Sask., 10; Marengo, Sask., 3-12; Merid, Sask., 10; Alsask, Sask., 5-40; Morrin, Alberta, 20; Roundhill, Alberta, 10, oats 45-50; Haynes, Alberta, oats 25; Kelso, Sask., 12.

A need of additional harvest labor is shown from Gladstone, Man.; Hallboro, Man.; Rhein, Sask.; Hamton, Sask.; Carlyle, Sask.; Goodwater, Sask.; Colgate, Sask.; Ceylon, Sask.; Durmer, Sask.; Ettington, Sask., and in the districts surrounding Portage la Prairie some 250 men from that city are stooking grain in the fields.

Saskatoon District Short of Labor.

A correspondent of *The Monetary Times*, writing from Saskatoon, says:—

The crops in the immediate vicinity of Saskatoon are good, those north and north-east are very good. Harvesting is in full swing, but the shortage of labor appears to be serious. About 50 per cent. of the cutting is done, while the stooking is far behind this.

In conversation with different farmers, I find that the help is mostly alien, and incompetent. It is doubtful if much relief can be expected from the east, owing to conscription taking the surplus men from there. The writer was recently talking to a farmer who had 400 acres of crop ready to cut. Two sons—the only help he had—were conscripted, and he told the writer that he could not hire a man to drive the binder. He had to drive the binder himself and pay two Doukhobors $5 a day each to stook. You will see from these conditions that the harvesting and thrashing may be very late this year.

PRINCE RUPERT GETS CONTRACT FOR SHIPS

Contracts for the construction of five steel ships for the Norwegian government have been let and they will be constructed in Prince Rupert, B.C. Mr. John Little, of Pittsburg, head of the construction company, is expected in Prince Rupert this fall. Besides the construction of steel freighters much repair work will also be undertaken. It is expected that word will be received soon to commence grading at the site of the shipyards to be erected at Hays Creek.

At the annual meeting of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange on the 11th inst., the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Fred. J. Anderson; vice-president, J. E. Botterell; secretary-treasurer, Dr. Robert Magill. Members of council, W. R. Bawlf, T. Brodie, R. R. Dobell, Geo. Fisher, J. C. Gage, D. Horn, J. Stewart, Capel Tilt and W. A. Matheson.

INTERCOLONIAL RATES TOO LOW

So Sir Henry Drayton, Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners, Says in Ordering Increase

Were freight rates on the Intercolonial Railway equivalent to the average rate on all the Canadian railways, the revenue of the government-operated road, on the basis of the traffic of 1917, would have been $2,154,600, or 19 per cent. more than it was. That is the significant conclusion drawn by Sir Henry Drayton, chairman of the Railway Commission, in a judgment recently handed out by the Railway Board ordering an increase in the commodity rates on sugar, affecting principally the Maritime province refineries. In the course of the judgment Sir Henry goes at some length into the Intercolonial rates generally, comparing them with the rates charged on the other railway systems of Canada. "It is perfectly apparent," he concludes, "that the Intercolonial returns are abnormally low. Under the circumstances there is no question but that any rate reductions on the Intercolonial are really not made at the expense of that system, but are made at the expense of the Canadian taxpayers generally."

In view of the prospective nationalization of the Grand Trunk and Canadian Northern and their incorporation with the Intercolonial into one great government-operated transcontinental system, it would seem that unless the taxpayers of one part of the country are to continue paying taxes to meet the deficits on the low rates accorded the people of the Maritime Provinces, there will have to be a general revision upward on the Intercolonial system.

How Intercolonial Compares With Others.

Sir Henry finds from the railway statistics of 1917 that the ton miles on the Intercolonial amounted to 1,900,097,294 at an average rate per ton mile of 0.576, with a resultant total earning of $10,946,071. Had the Intercolonial carried freight at the average Canadian Northern Railway rate of 0.688, the earnings would have been $13,072,669. At the average Canadian Pacific Railway rate of 0.676 per ton mile, the earnings would have been $12,844,657. At the average Grand Trunk Railway rate of 0.738 per ton mile, the earnings would have been $14,022,718.

On the basis of its operating ratios in comparison with those of other lines, Sir Henry finds that the Intercolonial again suffers by comparison. The Intercolonial's operating ratio to revenue is 90.9, the Canadian Northern's is 71.7, the Canadian Pacific 65.7 and the Grand Trunk 71.9. The net freight operating receipts per mile of line are $637. At the Canadian Northern ratio they would be $2,051, at the Canadian Pacific $2,402, and at the Grand Trunk $2,037.

The chairman of the Railway Commission declares that with interest on only a 4 per cent. basis, at least 2 per cent. on the actual investment ought to be set aside by railways for renewal.

"Eliminating all question of interest charges and payment of past deficits," he says, "the necessity of such a reserve is easily shown by taking the cost per mile of the Intercolonial to the country. In 1899 the cost per mile was $37,957, in 1911 the cost per mile amounted to $57,419, and the cost per mile to-day on the mileage actually owned is over $79,000, the cost of the road to March 31st, 1917, being returned as $120,275,032.

"A percentage of this increase can undoubtedly be justified, but it is equally certain that a very large percentage of it cannot be justified on any basis of normal values and business accounting."

RAILROAD EARNINGS

The following are the earnings of Canada's transcontinental railways for the first week in September:—

	1917.	1918.	Inc. or dec.
Canadian Pacific Railway.			
Sept. 7	$2,666,000	$3,053,000	+ $387,000
Grand Trunk Railway.			
Sept. 7	$ 992,613	$1,346,536	+ $353,923
Canadian Northern Railway.			
Sept. 7	$ 715,800	$ 901,000	+ $185,200