

THE SUCCESS OF IRRIGATION

Dry Year Proves the Great Value of Irrigation in Western Canada

(Staff Correspondence)

In an interview with the representative of the "Monetary Times," Mr. Robt. J. C. Stead, of the Publicity Branch of the Department of Natural Resources of the C.P.R., asked as to the success of irrigation farming in Alberta this year, said:—

"With each succeeding year, as this province becomes more and more settled, it is increasingly obvious that in the irrigated areas in the southern part, Alberta has one of the strongest pillars of its future prosperity. This year their value has been particularly emphasized because less rainfall than is usually expected during the growing season has fallen, with the result that crops on non-irrigable lands have been more or less seriously impaired. But where irrigation has been intelligently employed a different story can be told. On these lands farmers have thrashed crops of wheat that have averaged from thirty to forty bushels and more to the acre, of oats of upwards of eighty bushels, and of flax from fifteen to twenty bushels. Many of the grain crops have not yet been thrashed, and a final estimate is not possible now, but it can be said with certainty that the wealth of farmers in southern Alberta has been increased by hundreds of thousands of dollars this year by the use of irrigation.

"A drive through the country tributary to Brooks, Alberta, would convince the most pronounced doubter of the value of artificial application of water to this land. Brooks is a small town on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, lying between Medicine Hat and Calgary, and one hundred and three miles east of the latter city. That the soil in this district is exceedingly fertile has been proved in past years on dry land. In years when the rainfall was above the average abundant crops were harvested, as was the case in 1915, but when the rainfall was below the average the crop yields were correspondingly reduced. With the water supply at the control of the individual farmers, to use when it is most likely to be beneficial to the growth of crops, its value is not difficult to imagine.

Still Plenty of Vacant Land

"With the exception of the Duke of Sutherland's farm, on which, by the way, three thousand acres of irrigable land were sown to wheat this year—probably the largest single area of wheat ever put under irrigation—most of the irrigated land that is at present being cultivated in the district is in the hands of small farmers, the majority of whom have settled there during the last two years, and north of Brooks, and adjoining the little town of Duchess, there is a compact but ever growing colony of enterprising settlers whose grain crops have brought them each returns of from \$5,000 to \$10,000 this season. From the edge of this country one has a view of the actual and potential wealth of the country. On the one side, as far as the eye can see, are miles and miles of arable prairie land, untouched by the plow, on which herds of antelopes still roam; on the other, similar land cultivated, and with the aid of water creating wealth for its holder and bringing prosperity to the province.

"Not only grain crops have been grown. Coming from various parts of the republic to the south—from Philadelphia, from Washington, Nebraska, Oregon, and many other states—settlers have attempted, and have grown with surprising success, most of the crops they had been accustomed to grow in their old home gardens, such as watermelons, cantaloupes, pumpkins, squash, peppers, in addition to the many useful roots and vegetables—potatoes, carrots, turnips, cabbage, cauliflower, etc., for which Western Canada has long been justly famed.

Mixed Farming on Increase

"Because of the urgent need for wheat, and also because most of the settlers coming to Western Canada have but little capital, and wheat brings the quickest returns, most of the land is first sown to this crop. But wheat is by no means the only, nor perhaps the most profitable crop that

can be grown on the irrigable lands of southern Alberta. Alfalfa is very successful, and on the irrigable lands near Lethbridge more of this valuable fodder is grown than anywhere else in Canada. Two cuttings a year are generally obtained, which yield an average of three to four tons to the acre for the season. Farmers have been obtaining from \$25 to \$30 a ton for their alfalfa hay in the stack, and as this crop does not require seeding every year, and needs much less labor at harvesting than grain, besides leaving the land in a better condition afterwards than before it was sown, it is easy to see in which direction the efforts of farmers with irrigable land will be diverted when the call for wheat grows less insistent. Various other fodders, such as clovers, vetches and tame grasses, grow in abundance, and millions of live stock can be supported. Peas have proved a great success, giving yields that are almost unbelievable to growers in other districts, while during the year an experiment of growing tomatoes on a commercial scale in the open resulted in a return of more than five thousand dollars during the months of August and September to a farmer who planted two acres to this crop on his farm near Lethbridge.

"Capable of growing such diversified crops as they are, and with uniform yields year after year, a brilliant future awaits the irrigated areas of southern Alberta, which will in time contain some of the most prosperous communities on the continent. The results of the past season will do much to hasten this desirable prospect."

MERIT RATING IN WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION

The Workmen's Compensation Board of Ontario has put into effect a tentative claim for merit rating of different forms in the same class with a view to bringing additional pressure to bear upon individual firms for the prevention of accidents. A provision to this effect was added to the Workmen's Compensation Act in 1917, and this is now being carried out in an experimental way. The plan is based upon the employer's actual accident experience, a merit or deed merit being assigned when the cost of accidents falls 10 per cent. below or goes 10 per cent. above the amount of assessment. The provisions are as follows:—

1. Every employer whose total cost of compensation and medical aid is more than 110 per cent. of his assessment shall be charged for each 1 per cent. above 110 per cent. one-fiftieth of 20 per cent. of his assessment, not, however, to exceed in any case 20 per cent. of such assessment.

2. Every employer whose total cost of compensation and medical aid is less than 90 per cent. of his assessment shall be refunded for each 1 per cent. below 90 per cent. one-fiftieth of the following percentage of the assessment, namely:—

Where the assessment is under \$200, 5 per cent., and where the assessment is \$200 or over, 5 per cent. increased by 1 per cent. for each \$200 of assessment, but not to exceed 25 per cent. in any case.

3. No charge or refund less than \$2 shall be made in any case.

Example 1. An employer's accident cost is \$1,600 and his assessment \$1,200. \$1,600 is 133 (taking the nearest whole number) per cent. of \$1,200; 133 per cent. is 23 above 110 per cent.; $23/50$ of 20 per cent. of \$1,200 = \$110.40 to be charged employer.

Example 2. An employer's accident cost is \$2,100 and his assessment \$3,600. \$2,100 is 58 per cent. of \$3,600; 58 per cent. is 32 below 90 per cent. $32/50$ of the maximum refund applicable to a \$3,600 assessment is therefore to be refunded; this maximum refund is 5 per cent. plus 1 per cent. for each \$200 in \$3,600 = 23 per cent.; $32/50$ of 23 per cent. of \$3,600 = \$529.92 to be refunded employer.

The Windsor Clearing House Association, at its first annual meeting, elected George Mair, manager of the Royal Bank, as chairman; A. E. Taylor, of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, vice-chairman, and George Carruthers, manager and secretary for 1919.