

## Types of Wheat

In the matter of type, to take but a few instances, it would be unwise to regard an increase or decrease of production in Australia as affecting the market for Western Canadian wheat exactly as similar fluctuations in production in the Argentine Republic. Australian wheat is a soft white grain, and cannot be used everywhere and at all times to replace the hard red grain of Western Canada, while Argentine grain competes very closely with ours. Similarly, the major part of the wheat production of the United States is winter grain; in turn, this is divided into three main types—ordinary soft wheat, comparable with the winter wheat of Ontario; Pacific white winter wheat, comparable with Australian grain; and the hard red winter wheat of Western Kansas and Nebraska. In addition, in the Dakotas and Montana, there is grown a hard spring wheat closely resembling Western Canadian grain. It is obvious that the figures for the total production of wheat in the United States in any year will not, by simple comparison with the figures for another year, indicate the true effect of United States competition for foreign markets. In the present season, for example, with a total United States crop of almost record size, there is a definite shortage of types of wheat similar to our hard spring grain, and at the moment the Chicago futures market does not reflect the true price of this type of wheat, for which a large premium is being paid. On the other hand, it is equally mistaken to believe that this question of type imposes rigid regulation on the use of wheat. Within limits, one type can and will be substituted for another if the difference in price becomes sufficiently great.

## Considerations of Quality

In the case of quality, similar conditions appear. Wet or dry seasons, early or late coming of frosts, disease of plants, even minor changes of weather during harvest, will affect the availability of wheat for various uses. It is believed that in the present season France must import more wheat than the figures of the domestic production would indicate, as a result of serious deterioration in quality. It is alleged that the current Russian crop has suffered seriously in quality during harvesting and post-harvest handling. As in the case of types, price and general economic conditions will limit the effect of quality on the use of wheat. A country which might, in normal economic circumstances, import wheat to improve the flour produced from a low-grade crop, may try to avoid this purchase if in difficult circumstances.

## Differing Effect of Variations in Production in Various Areas.

The effect on world trade of fluctuations in production in various countries differs. Spain, for example, reports a crop this season considerably smaller than last season, but the report is accompanied by the comment that the deficiency will be made up from reserves. Spain normally does not export wheat when production is above immediate requirements, and only imports in any quantity when very real shortage exists. On the other hand, Argentina, for example, grows wheat specifically for export, and any alteration in the Argentine production will directly increase or decrease the wheat readily available for international commerce. Or, to take another case, Germany and France both produce a considerable proportion of their requirements of wheat, and import the balance. Yet alterations in the production in the two countries require to be weighed differently. Rye is, in Germany, the main bread grain crop, and wheat far less important, while French rye production is insignificant as compared with wheat. Thus increase or decrease in French domestic

production of wheat is directly significant in its bearing on French import requirements, while in the case of Germany consideration must be given to the rye situation in assessing the effect of alteration in the production of domestic wheat on the market for imported grain. Even in a single country the effect of variations in domestic production on the international trade in grain may depend on the district in which the variations occur. Recently a rumour that Russia had purchased two cargoes of Australian wheat was interpreted as proving that Russian supplies were insufficient for domestic needs. The cargoes in question were to be shipped to Vladivostok, and when it is remembered that transcontinental communication in Russia is limited to a single railway, it will be seen that the alleged incident might readily be exaggerated in importance as an indication of wheat conditions in the Ukraine, whence most of the Russian wheat comes.

## Per Capita Consumption in Various Countries

With regard to the question of per capita consumption of wheat in various countries there is much misconception of facts, and misunderstanding of implications. Mr. J. G. S. Broomhall, in the annual editions of his excellent "Corn Trade Year Book", gives the annual per capita consumption of wheat in various countries, ranging from .9 bushels in Japan—he does not list China, for which dependable statistics are lacking—to 7.5 bushels in France. To appreciate the complete reasons for this great variation it is necessary to make a very thorough survey of the agricultural customs, the dietary habits, and the general economic condition of the countries to be considered. It would be impossible to accomplish this in anything less than a series of large volumes, but we may be able to give a few illustrative remarks which will at least indicate the complexity of the question. In Japan, for example, we find a combination of reasons for the low per capita use of wheat in the facts that rice is the main domestic grain crop and that the general standard of living is low. India, which uses 1.0 bushel per capita, is affected by the same general conditions. Poland, which uses 1.3 bushels per capita, produces and consumes rye as the chief bread grain. Rumania, with a per capita consumption of 4.2 bushels, probably has a dietetic standard similar to that of Poland. Germany, with a per capita wheat use of 2.5 bushels, uses more rye than wheat, but more of all bread grains—probably—than either Poland or Rumania, as a result of a generally higher standard of living. France, with a standard of living generally similar to that of Germany, uses 7.5 bushels of wheat per capita because of a very small use of rye. Across the Channel Great Britain uses 5.7 bushels per capita, and little or no other bread grains. Yet the standard of living in Great Britain is—in the matter of the average dietetic indulgence of the people—certainly no lower than in France. Great Britain consumes more meat, cheese, butter and other animal food per capita than does France. Similarly, the United States, with 4.8 bushels consumption per capita, and Canada, with 4.5, are users of wheat almost entirely as bread grain, and have still higher dietetic standards than Great Britain—the explanation lying in their still greater variation of diet. In this complex situation it is necessary to use the greatest care in making deductions from calculations based on assumed per capita consumption. A country with large production of potatoes may, if unable to buy wheat cheaply, turn to the tubers quite readily; another country may be unable to do this, and may be forced to purchase wheat or go in want of food. It has been common recently to hear it suggested that we might decide how much wheat Russia would have for export by dividing the population into the wheat