

ANNUAL MEETING WINNIPEG GRAIN EXCHANGE.

Interesting Address of the President.

The twelfth annual meeting of the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange was held Wednesday in the exchange building at 11 o'clock. W. L. Parrish, the retiring president, occupied the chair and read the following address:

To the members of the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange:

"Gentlemen—Following the example set by my predecessors, I now, at the close of one of the most successful years we have enjoyed in connection with the grain trade in Manitoba, have great pleasure in addressing you in connection with matters of interest which have arisen during the past year.

There has been harvested the largest and one of the most perfectly matured crops which it has been our privilege to handle during the comparatively few years in which Manitoba has been recognized as a grain producing province. Although slight frosts appeared in certain isolated portions of the province and the Territories, the inspection returns prove that the amount of grain affected was exceedingly small, being hardly 1 per cent of the total harvested, and I am pleased to be able to state definitely that a very great percentage of the wheat marketed has been inspected as of the grade of Manitoba No. 1 hard, even in face of the fact that the standard for that grade was made considerably higher by act of parliament last session than that required by law during many past years.

I am thankful to be able to say that comparatively little smut has appeared in the grain so far marketed, and I am satisfied that if farmers will use due caution in properly treating their seed and in the preparation of their land, that the smut evil will soon to a great extent disappear.

Early in the harvest season it was feared that we would have had a repetition of the previous year's trouble from wet weather, but although there was considerable rainfall farmers had stacked their grain in good condition, the weather turned out very favorably for the curing of grain, and consequently the quantity damaged was very light, all of which gave little necessity for the use of the drying plants which during the preceding year were operated so extensively.

We were favored with very propitious weather during seeding time, so that a large acreage was planted, the grain had an excellent growth and the crops were more free from weeds than has generally been the case, with the result that the shrinkage on grain shipped direct from the fields to the elevators was much less than usual.

The results of threshing proved somewhat disappointing in the matter of yield, as while earlier in the season indications pointed to an average yield of twenty bushels to the acre, threshers' reports place the actual yield at about eighteen bushels; this, however, I consider a very fair average, and the prices which have been paid have placed a large amount of cash in farmers' hands. Altogether I consider that

our province is in a most prosperous condition, and it is satisfactory to note that the value of the lands has advanced in all parts of the country.

One feature of the past year's climatic conditions was the continued mild weather of the autumn which was extended far beyond the ordinary. Indeed ploughing was fairly general till the 20th of November, and this allowed farmers to get ready a large acreage for cropping next spring. This, with much wild land broken up by new settlers and summer-fallowing leads me to expect that next season's acreage will be fully twenty-five per cent greater than that of 1899.

Our association has enjoyed a prosperous year. The finances, as you will learn from the treasurer's report, are again getting into excellent condition; our membership both active and associate has increased, and very considerable work has been done to further and secure the interests of our members. The council's report will give you details of what has been done.

Early in the year it was deemed advisable by the Exchange to make a strong effort to prevail on the Dominion government to secure by legislation permanent standards for the higher grades of Manitoba wheat, the extension of the Manitoba inspection division to Fort William, that all grain passing Winnipeg be inspected here and warehoused at points east hereof on the Winnipeg inspection, and that no straight certificates be issued for wheat shipped out in mixed cargoes. These matters were brought before the western members of the western grain standards board which was convened by the minister of inland revenue for that purpose at the request of the exchange, and through that board laid before the government at Ottawa, and by our united representations the desired results were secured. I am certain that the amendments made to the inspection act are proving of benefit to both producers and grain dealers throughout Manitoba and the Territories.

In connection with the changes made in the inspection act, the deputation from the standards board and this exchange when in Ottawa also secured the appointment of a board of survey whose duty it is to give final decisions on the grading of grain when disputes arise between the owner and the inspection officials as to the quality of grain. This board is working very satisfactorily, and has received the hearty approval of the trade.

The exchange took up the matter of the elevator charges at Fort William, and was successful in getting the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. to reduce their charge for the first term of storage of twenty days from three-quarters of a cent per bushel to one-half cent for the first fifteen day term as well that no charge be made for cleaning grain at Fort William. This certainly has effected a great saving to producers and shippers.

Some changes were made in the formation of the western grain standards board, and on action being taken by this exchange our association has now a fair representation in that body. The standards board was called together this year to select samples of the necessary commercial grades, and made standards for grades as follows: Nos. 3 hard and 1 and 2 frosted wheat.

The exchange was called upon by the railroads interested to designate the grades for which we would require bonded accommodation at the

ocean ports and it was decided that Nos. 1 hard, 2 hard and 3 hard wheat and Nos. 2 white and 2 mixed oats would cover all grain required to be exported of the year's crop.

We are yearly increasing our production of flax, and as we have not had any standard for its inspection it was deemed advisable to urge the government during the approaching session to include flax seed in the inspection act. This will likely be done so that all flax seed can be dealt with under the Winnipeg inspection.

The crop of oats was larger than in any previous year, and it is expected there will be a quantity for export.

Barley was also a good crop. Some has already been shipped for export, and it is expected further shipments will be made. I feel satisfied that it would pay the farmers well to be more careful in harvesting this grain, as the color has a great deal to do with determining the value.

The government statistics relating to the acreage and grain crops, which we are enabled to get at present only cover the province of Manitoba. The grain moved from the Northwest Territories is also practically all handled by the members of this exchange, and we are very much interested in the crop raised there, and it is to be hoped that the Northwest legislature will this year inaugurate a system of compiling statistics which will enable the grain trade to get full information regarding the acreage under cultivation and the quantity harvested.

The immigration into this province and the Territories has been large this year, and the harvest excursions, which have become an annual affair, brought several thousand people into the country, and I am informed that many have remained and signified their intention of becoming permanent settlers.

The different railway companies have united with the grain exchange in securing for all settlers the best means for procuring first-class seed grain, and a half rate is given on all shipments of grain intended for seed purposes between points on the different lines of railway in this province and the Northwest Territories.

We have numerous enquiries from North and South Dakota for seed wheat, and some is annually shipped to those states, and I feel satisfied we would supply them with large quantities if the customs duty were removed. I understood that this matter of the removal of duty from wheat intended for seed is now before congress.

There has been a considerable increase in the mileage added to the branch lines of railways. The Canadian Pacific extended their branches some eighty miles, with forty more under construction; the Northern Pacific, thirty miles, and more under construction; the Canadian Northern seventy-nine miles, and the Southeastern sixty-five miles of their road reaching towards Fort William, which it is to be hoped they will have in operation to move the crop of 1900.

The storage facilities throughout the province and the Northwest Territories on the different lines of railway have been increased by 700,000 bushels, making a total of nearly 21,000,000 bushels.

On account of the continued agitation regarding the mode of handling grain throughout Manitoba and the Northwest Territories the Dominion government appointed a royal commission to enquire into the whole matter, and their report is looked for with interest both by elevator