

The Monetary Times

Trade Review and Insurance Chronicle

Vol. 45—No. 5.

Toronto, Canada, July 30th, 1910.

Ten Cents.

The Monetary Times OF CANADA

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY BY THE MONETARY TIMES
PRINTING COMPANY OF CANADA, LTD.

Editor—Fred W. Field.
Business Manager—James J. Salmond.
Advertising Manager—A. E. Jennings.

The Monetary Times was established in 1867, the year of Confederation. It absorbed in 1869, The Intercolonial Journal of Commerce, of Montreal; in 1870, The Trade Review, of Montreal; and The Toronto Journal of Commerce.

Terms of Subscription, payable in advance:			
Canada and Great Britain.		United States and other Countries.	
One Year	\$5.00	One Year	\$5.00
Six Months	2.75	Six Months	2.50
Three Months	1.50	Three Months	1.25

ADVERTISING RATES ON APPLICATION.

HEAD OFFICE: Corner Church and Court Streets, Toronto.

Telephone Main 7404, or Main 7405, branch exchange connecting all departments.

Western Canada Office: Room 404, Builders' Exchange Building. G. W. Goodall, Business and Editorial Representative. Telephone Main 7550.

Montreal Office: B33, Board of Trade Building. T. C. Allum, Editorial Representative. Telephone M. 1001.

London Office: 225 Outer Temple Strand. T. R. Clougher, Business and Editorial Representative. Telephone 527 Central.

All mailed papers are sent direct to Friday evening trains. Subscribers who receive them late will confer a favor by reporting to the circulation department.

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SOIL CONSERVATION.

The growth in the annual consumption of wheat and the ever-present possibility of crop failure are at least two factors which make the question of soil conservation of vital importance. The agriculturist in Canada, although having made progress in the matter of scientific wheat and grain growing, has yet much to learn. Upon today's methods will largely depend the wealth and results of the soil many years hence. The world's wheat demands in the near future will be large enough to absorb the prospective supply, even allowing for an increase in the production of Canada, Argentine and those other countries which are showing bigger figures year by year. According to a recent compilation, the bread countries of the world consume about three billion bushels annually, while the importing countries buy of the exporters 500,000,000 bushels every year. Since 1901 the world's consumption of wheat has increased approximately 100,000,000 bushels every year.

One authority places requirements for wheat in the United States at 500,000,000 bushels, which includes both bread and seed. After the relatively short crop of 1904 of 552,000,000 bushels, the exports for the fiscal year 1905 dropped to 44,000,000 bushels, but the much larger crop of 1905, amounting to 693,000,000 bushels, yielded for export only 97,000,000 bushels, and the bumper crop of 1906, exceeding 735,000,000 bushels, made an apparent contribution to the exports of the fiscal year 1907 of 147,000,000 bushels.

It would thus appear that 600,000,000 bushels a year come pretty near to being the sum of the United States' annual domestic requirements for wheat, and that, so far as a contribution to the world's supply is concerned, the question is how much can be spared after this limit

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of consumption is reached. The fact is to be noted that in the last ten years there has been no great addition to the acreage under wheat culture in the United States.

Canada can help to solve the problems which have arisen, or will arise, if it devotes attention to the question of soil conservation. Mr. W. J. Spillman, the agriculturist in charge of the office of farm management of the agriculture department at Washington, says that in order that the prairie country may not follow the descent of the east and south, it is necessary that intelligent and vigorous effort be made to farm correctly.

Renting of land on short leases for the purpose of growing grain for the market is one of the surest means of reducing the productive power of the soil. Well-managed pastures and rational systems of crop rotation are necessary to the development of permanent systems of profitable farming.

Landowners must realize this, and must take steps to improve renting methods by stocking their farms with a full complement of domestic animals, in case the renter is not able to do this for himself, and by giving longer leases, whereby the renter may reap the reward of intelligent management.

In view of the soil waste that has occurred, Mr. Spillman asserts, it is not surprising that values of farm products have risen to a marked degree in the last few years. This has affected other industries. City people are beginning to turn toward the land. The Agricultural Department receives many hundreds of letters annually from persons employed in manufacturing, mercantile and transportation industries asking for information that will enable them to become farmers.

Not only has the value of farm products increased, but exports, especially of breadstuffs, have fallen off in a marked degree. Comparing the five-year period ending