

BUSINESS IN THE WEST.

Final Figures of 1905 Crop Are a Good Record:
Cattle Have Summered Well.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

Winnipeg, Sept. 3, 1906.

The Grain Commission has held several sittings during the past week. Judging from the trend of the questions and the amount of verbiage already accumulated in the note books of the unlucky "Hansard" man deputed to attend upon their deliberations, it is very much of the order of other Commissions—a scandalous amount of talk with very little in it.

To the outsider it is rather an interesting study to drop in for half an hour and watch the contrast between the faces of the Commission and those of the business men and public officials that are called from time to time to give evidence. In ten minutes more foolish questions are asked by the chairman of the Commission than would be heard in any well-conducted business house in a week. Perhaps it is only human to put in time when you get \$15 a day and your expenses for doing it; but it is rather trying on business men, to whom time is money, to waste hours of valuable time answering pointless questions.

Almost the only really valuable information that has come to light so far was in the evidence of C. C. Castle, warehouse commissioner, given on Saturday morning. The question was asked, "What is the standing of our grain certificates in Great Britain?" Mr. Castle replied: "I am glad to be able to state officially that our grain certificates occupy a higher place on the London and Liverpool Corn Exchanges than those of any other country. In the days when there was seaboard as well as Fort William inspection this was not so, but now there is but one inspection our certificates are considered most satisfactory, as they represent to the British buyer what he values most, a continuous supply of cargoes of uniform quality."

The Commission has unintentionally performed one other meritorious act—it has emphasized the guardianship exercised by the Dominion Government over the farmer's interests for the sale of his wheat. It has also brought to light the fact that a good many of the grievances of the farmers are either imaginary or the result of their own carelessness in not making intelligent use of the means already provided for their protection.

Last Year's Wheat Crop.

The crop year of 1905-6 ended with the 31st of August, and the official returns are now available, showing the actual amount of wheat passing inspection at Winnipeg. The total is enormous, being 65,849,940 bushels, against 39,786,600 bushels in 1904-5. In addition to the amount passing inspection 6,800,000 bushels were milled west of Winnipeg and 9,250,000 bushels were used for seed.

This, with the amount still in farmers' hands and in interior elevators, brings the crop to rather over 83,000,000 bushels. The prices have been good all the year. A conservative estimate would be 63 cents per bushel to the farmers at their own station. For this one cereal alone the country has realized \$52,290,000, or more than \$11,000,000 over the returns of the previous year, when prices averaged at least 10 cents per bushel higher. Fully 80 per cent. of this wheat was of contract grade; that is, No. 1 or No. 2 Northern.

The oat crop was 75,000,000 bushels, and though but 6,921,000 bushels passed inspection fully 55,000,000 were marketed, as the interior consumption for railway construction, lumber camps, etc., was the heaviest in the history of the West. At the very low average of 25 cents a bushel this adds another \$8,250,000 to the income of the farmers.

To this must be added the returns for barley and flax, bringing crop returns alone to over \$61,000,000. The amount compared with the actual number of farmers in the West is startling.

Vagaries of Western Wheat Markets.

The finish of the old crop year and the beginning of the new is always rather an off time in wheat markets. The Winnipeg market during the past week was peculiar, to say the least of it. In spite of lower cables, lower American markets and the near approach of a rush of new wheat prices held firm, and even advanced from time to time. Prices are fully 1½ cents above export, and with the new crop coming on the market fully ten days earlier than last year it would seem reasonable that they should seek a lower level.

At present prices are so high that Chicago traders might hedge on this market with a very reasonable hope of profit, and, judging by orders received hither the last three days by brokers representing American houses, this is at least being attempted. One or two large local houses have been heavy buyers of wheat at the high figures, and some of their purchases were made as late as Friday. The remainder of the local wheat world are guessing as to whether they

have inside information or are merely taking chances on the continually reported shortages in Russia and on the Continent of Europe generally. The new wheat is arriving at the rate of about fifteen cars a day, and by the end of this week it will be fifty or sixty if the present fine threshing weather continues. Conditions are almost ideal for getting the crop on the market at an early date and in good shape.

Movement of Live Stock.

The C.P.R. stockyards have been a sea of waving horns and tails for more than two months past. The capacity of the yards is 6,000 head, and on many a day the yards have been full to overflowing and a couple of long trains of cattle standing on the track to unload.

It is more than four years since there was such an early movement of range cattle. The winter of 1905-6 was a favorable one on the ranges. It was followed by abundant spring rains and luxuriant pasturage. As early as June 15th bunches of fine, fat steers appeared in the Winnipeg yards on their way to the sea, and with every week since the number has increased, until by the end of August 35,000 head have gone forward against 40,000 odd for the whole of last season.

Not only has the movement been so early and so heavy, but the cattle have been in better shape than for a number of years. Indeed, they were better fleshed in June this year than in the August of 1905. The C.P.R. has given an excellent service, all things considered, which has prevented the usual shrink, and cattle have killed out well. Consequently, though prices have not been high on the British market, the returns to the ranchers have been larger, and a feeling of satisfaction seems to be general among live stock men.

Absorption of Produce.

Receipts of dairy produce and eggs have been dwindling for some weeks and prices are very high. The explanation is the enormous consumption in the country by harvest hands and heavy purchases at country points by representatives of railway contractors and lumbermen. The growing of wheat is so absorbing and so profitable that the Western farmers are loath to come down to the painstaking that alone makes dairying pay; and hence the production along these lines is not as large as it should be for the farming population.

The quality shows marked improvement this year, and Western dairy butter has brought good prices in Montreal, where a number of cars were shipped early in the season. It rather looks now as if the West might have to import butter from the East before the winter is over. As for eggs, the West has never yet met her own needs in the matter of hen fruit. In mid-July new-laid eggs were 35 cents per dozen on the Winnipeg market, and hard to get at that.

Cheese is another line in which the local demand continually outruns the local supply, and 12½ cents factories has been paid now for several weeks.

Developing Industries.

There is hardly a week but adds some new industry to the West, and Winnipeg is fast developing into a manufacturing centre. No one manufacture at the present time can be considered very large. Judged from the standpoint of the numbers employed, outside the C.P.R. shops, it is doubtful if there is an industry employing more than 200 hands, but there are several score that employ from 50 to 100 men, and, as was said before, their number grows daily.

Malting is one of the latest added to the list—malting apart from brewing. The Western breweries have all malt houses of their own. Last year the Canada Malting Co., Limited, decided to come in, and secured a very valuable site between the C.P.R. and C.N.R. tracks, and erected a malt house with a capacity of 24,000 bushels and an elevator with a capacity of 250,000 bushels.

This has stimulated the barley production, and this year the barley crop will be the largest in the history of the West; and prices also promise well. In addition to what they malt here the company will send to their Eastern houses 750,000 to 1,000,000 bushels. One of the striking things about Winnipeg industries is their up-to-dateness. The latest city to go in for manufacturing, she has the advantage of every new thing in machinery, and can claim the most modern malting plant on the continent and the most modern and best-equipped flour mill (The Western Canada Flour Mills, Limited), in the world.

In the Realm of Finance.

The city of Winnipeg has still on hand \$1,600,000 of last issue of debentures. These bear interest at 4 per cent., and run all the way from seven to thirty years. Probably the larger proportion run twenty-five to thirty years.

With the opening of a new school year there has been a general closing up of school loans. The number of new school districts opening and the large number of new schools built throughout the West has made the sale of school debentures unusually large this year. Where the loan is under \$2,000 the debentures are usually bought by the Provincial Government at par and carry 6 per cent. interest. For large

other property in the proven the president of the company taken to retire the 1,200,000 sury, as the development of able that the directors believe an best be directed exclusively further prospecting of their

virtue of Crown Patents, 846 the mineral district of Cobalt, in eighteen months of actual th of silver-cobalt-nickel ore property, at a total expense (in- ment) of less than \$200,000 to of the property over \$1,200, was distributed before the quired the property in April ly dividend of three per cent. there are now over \$600,000 process of liquidation.

USE RETURNS.

es of the Canadian Clearing with 6th September, 30th er, 1905:—

Aug. 30th.	Sept. 7th, '05
\$26,322,287	\$21,037,782
18,426,527	17,129,634
8,204,575	7,033,855
1,587,863	1,665,922
1,324,448	1,177,455
1,142,198	945,773
2,521,781	1,891,531
1,003,342	561,258
1,665,212	1,658,188
891,999	840,072
2,185,637	2,314,662

\$65,275,770 \$56,856,137

Pacific Railway will con- sherton and Southampton. e Bell Telephone Company's e Ottawa City Council, but turned out 17,865 tons of record output for twenty-

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