

Conditions in the West

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(Special Correspondence).

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The feature of the present week has been the second crop report issued by the Manitoba Free Press, which came at an interval of three weeks from the first one of the season. The first one was more satisfactory than was anticipated, and the second more unsatisfactory than was hoped; the continued hard frosts throughout May, and absence of rain had made many apprehensive at the conditions in the country. It must not be thought that there is any very serious depreciation in the crop up to the present time, but there has been practically no rain in May, and many frosts.

Wheat that was 6 inches high was cut to the ground in a few places and there has been no rainfall to assist in its recovery. A good many fields of oats are frozen down, and some barley and some flax. Oats, barley and flax, once frozen to the ground have to be re-seeded. Fortunately the acreage of these grains that suffered in this way was comparatively small.

There is no lack of sub-surface moisture, but there is a very great lack of surface moisture which is essential to progress under existing conditions. Alberta is the only province which had anything like sufficient rain, and until a few days ago, Alberta has been abnormally cold. Within the last two days, Saskatchewan has had one or two good showers at local points, but nothing more. The weather has turned very warm, but is, fortunately, still; wind at this time would be a real disaster.

A good soaking rain, 24 or 36 hours, followed by warm weather, would reverse the whole situation, but unless rain comes within a week, there will be considerable curtailment of crop. The West needs rain, especially this year, owing to the large amount of crop that had to be put in on stubbled land. It is reported that 60 per cent of the wheat sown in Saskatchewan went in on stubble, and without an abundance of rain, a stubble crop is never a success.

ACREAGES.

The report referred to, deals with the increase of acreage in coarse grains. The indication being that the oat acreage has increased over a million, the total acreage being 8,060,112 acres. The increase in acreage in Manitoba is figured at 12 per cent, in Saskatchewan at 15 per cent, and in Alberta at 20 per cent. With regard to barley, Manitoba has an increase of 10 per cent, Saskatchewan, where there has never been a large acreage, 15 to possibly 20 per cent, while Alberta shows no increase in barley acreage. The total acreage for barley in the three provinces is a million and a half acres. Manitoba has no increase in flax; Saskatchewan has approximately a 10 per cent increase, and Alberta has no increase, this would give a total acreage in flax of 688,416 acres.

THE CROP OF 1916.

Figures on the crop of 1916 have been published and show that nearly all of the estimates were on the conservative side. Of course, the estimates were figured on the acreage available last September, since then the official census acreage has been issued, and shows that the acreage figures on the estimates were much too small. Up to the end of May 161,226,550 bushels had been inspected past Winnipeg. This, with the amounts that have been used for seed and home requirements, together with some 14,000,000 odd in the interior elevators the amount in transit and in farmers' hands, would indicate a crop of, roughly, 235 to 240,000,000 bushels. However, out of this must be deducted the 15,000,000 bushels in the farmers' hands of the crop of 1915. A small portion of this came forward as straight 1915 crop, and was tabulated as such, but the bulk of it was mixed with the new wheat. The inspectors report that very early in September cars began to arrive which showed the mixture of old and new wheat. This would indicate a crop for 1916 of about 224,000,000 bushels. My own estimate of yield was 12 bushels for Manitoba, 15 for Saskatchewan, and 25 for Alberta, and these yields, figured on the old acreage gave a return of 170,000,000 bushels odd; but figuring on the census acreage, would run just about 224,000,000 bushels.

Up to the end of May 77,000,000 bushels of oats were inspected against 81,000,000 for the previous year, which was not a great falling off. Barley inspection was only a little over 9,000,000 bushels, while for the previous year, it had been just under 10,000,000 bushels.

SCREENINGS.

Significant figures in the report of inspection are 333,000 bushels of screenings. Of these screenings, to the lake front, the farmers pay freight, they are cleaned out and the elevator companies sell them at good figures to the United States; in fact, there is a large elevator at Duluth with a marine leg which specializes on this business. In the meantime, western Canada farmers are feeding their stock oats that are worth around 80 cents a bushel and barley worth around \$1.25. Several efforts have been made to get the Federal Government to take up the question of getting these screenings back to the prairie farms for feed. There is a good deal of legislation in the prairie provinces to control the use of screenings for fear of propagating weeds, but there is no reason why these screenings should not be separated at Fort William, the dangerous part of them used as fuel for example and the wild oats clipped, and the buckwheat and broken wheat sent back to the prairies for feed, where it is certainly badly needed. This is a matter of course, for Federal legislation.

GRAIN COMMISSION.

There is nothing further that is definite with regard to the commission for the handling of the crop of 1917. The president and secretary of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange are still in Ottawa. The plan was well worked out for a commission to handle the matter with headquarters at Winnipeg, the farmers, the grain men, the railway and shipping interests to be represented, and it was learned that at least one of the cabinet members was keen on having a labor man on the commission. The order-in-council to appoint a commission was drafted, but the fuss about a coalition government has evidently sidetracked everything for the time being. In a dispatch received to-day from Toronto, Jas. Carruthers, of Jas. Carruthers Co., has evidently been giving an interview, and he talks about the commission placing somebody at Winnipeg to buy, but anything short of the complete control of the crop being centered at Winnipeg will be very unpopular, and any government, Borden or otherwise, will find it very difficult to get away with. The West is the place which produces the wheat, and the West is very sick and sore at eastern interference, and anything short of the control aimed at in the commission as first proposed, will be deeply resented.

LIVESTOCK.

Figures are out for the five months ending May 31st, and show that there passed through Winnipeg yards during the five months, 48,398 head of cattle, as against 23,516 in the same period of 1916; 18,354 in 1915, and 17,707 in 1914. Manitoba has been the heaviest contributor in each month. For May Manitoba cattle received were 5,838, while from Saskatchewan were received 4,237, and from Alberta only 955, making a total for the month of May, or 11,337. Of the May receipts 4,293 head were consumed locally, and 2,547 head of butchers cattle went east. It is the movement of stockers and feeders, however, which is of greatest interest. There were 3,396 head of stocker and feeder cattle received during the month of May and of these Manitoba took 787, Saskatchewan 510, Alberta 1,281, the east 272, while only 546 went south. In 1916 for the same month, the United States got 1,713 head of feeders and stockers, out of a total of 3,938. It is very gratifying to note that these cattle are now going back into our own land to be fed.

Movement of hogs shows a decrease for the five months, but an increase for the month of May. For the five months the receipts were 145,903, against 148,419 last year, but during the month of May the receipts were 34,615, against 23,333 last year. Of the hogs received in May, Manitoba contributed 9,605, Saskatchewan 15,833, and Alberta 9,175. Of these 18,759 were consumed locally, and 13,713 were sent east, 699 head went west, these were mainly brood hogs, and only 56 head went south; these latter for serum purposes.

GOVERNMENT NAMES COMMISSION FOR GRAIN CONTROL.

The Government has appointed the following to compose a commission to control the grain production of Canada: Dr. Magill, chairman; H. W. Woods, Alberta; S. K. Rathwell, Moose Jaw; T. A. Crerar, J. C. Gage, W. A. Bawlf, W. A. Matheson and C. A. Stewart, Winnipeg; Wm. A. Best, Ottawa; Controller Ainey, Montreal, and L. H. Clarke, Toronto.

CANADIAN BANK CLEARINGS.

The Canadian bank clearings for week ending June 7, showed a gain of 52,004,929, or 25.7 per cent over the corresponding period in 1916. Comparative figures follow:

	June 7, 1917.	Corresponding week, 1916.	Inc. %
Montreal	\$93,038,602	\$73,435,382	26.0
Toronto	58,788,191	51,892,167	13.3
Winnipeg	49,117,705	33,492,174	46.7
Vancouver	7,674,544	6,683,624	14.8
Ottawa	6,852,480	5,603,478	22.3
Calgary	6,642,495	4,281,518	65.1
Hamilton	4,843,675	3,847,833	25.9
Quebec	4,625,171	4,431,551	4.3
Regina	3,098,738	1,841,030	68.3
Halifax	2,751,392	2,805,860	1.9
Edmonton	2,627,227	2,072,759	26.7
London	2,338,580	316,931	15.6
St. John	2,136,216	2,136,436	0.1
Victoria	1,886,723	2,363,589	10.4
Saskatoon	1,613,223	1,011,813	59.4
Moose Jaw	1,104,349	812,224	35.9
Lethbridge	816,913	448,131	82.3
Fort William	747,896	554,921	34.8
Sherbrooke	764,479	653,391	17.0
Kitchener	764,620
Medicine Hat	523,463
Brandon	511,716
New Westminster	356,631	307,188
Total	\$254,236,146	\$202,231,217	25.7

CANADA'S FISHERIES NEED ADVERTISING.

The Fisheries constitute one of the most important industries of the country, says the editor of The Canadian Fisherman, and the Fishery resources of Canada are unequalled anywhere in the world, but we have to depend largely on an export market for getting rid of our catch. The amount of fish consumed in Canada is hardly worth mentioning, and is, indeed, nothing to brag about.

Other natural resources in the Dominion have been greatly assisted by means of Government advertising campaigns, but if any particular resource and industry needs advertising, it is our Fisheries.

When a glut of apples threatened to ruin the apple growers of Canada, the Government stepped in and advertised the food value of apples until the whole pack was sold at remunerative prices. Not only did this publicity benefit the apple men, but it helped the consumer as well, by bringing to his notice a palatable fruit which could be utilized in a dozen different ways as an economical food. One of the results of the campaign is that the now universal "Baked Apple" replaces grapefruit or oranges as a breakfast fruit.

Canada owes its existence to the Fisheries. It was the fishermen pioneers who first settled this country, and for over three hundred years the Fisheries have been one of the most important industries of the Dominion. At the present time, about 100,000 persons are employed, directly or indirectly, in the fishing industry. With a larger home market and careful attention to the building up of new export markets, there is absolutely no reason why double that number should not make a living out of the Fisheries alone.

The home market needs attention FIRST. The vast majority of the people of Canada know very little about fish as a food, and require to be educated.

Once a demand is stimulated, the other problems of transportation and supply will be easily adjusted. The fish can be got, and with increasing orders from inland centres, the railroads will take care of what will be a lucrative haul for them.

There is one thing to be remembered in connection with advertising fish. Once the demand is created it will remain for all time and will not be a mere "flash in the pan."

We might write in this strain for ever and produce absolutely no effect. Industries are popularly supposed to be looking for grants and subsidies all the time, but there is no industry where less has been spent for advertising and developing a home market than that of the Fisheries.

Of course, this is War Time, and we will be told to go easy in our demands for advertising appropriations from the Government, but this War Time, owing to the forced economies now the order of the day, is the psychological moment to impress upon the people the advantages of Canadian fish as an economical and healthful diet.