

Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

ASSINIBOIA, Sask., Aug. 22.

I wrote you last from Virden, Manitoba; I spent the balance of last week in north-western Manitoba and on the Portage la Prairie plains, and found conditions in these sections very good indeed. Crop of wheat is well matured, heads long and filled to the top; kernels full and color bright. It will be a most satisfactory crop to handle.

Business and professional men in the small towns are closing their places of business at 4.30 daily, and going out to the country and stooking until dark. This is to prevent the farmers having to pay \$3.50 and \$4.00 a day for stookers, the prices which our French-Canadian friends from Quebec and our Austrian friends at home have the nerve to ask.

The last three days I have spent in southwestern Saskatchewan, cutting across country just about midway between the International boundary and the main line of the C. P. R. This is one of the big wheat areas. Conditions as to crop are very mixed. Wherever wheat was put in on well cultivated land the crop is good, much of it having from 25 to 35 bushels per acre. Large areas, however, were put in on stubble, without further cultivation, and these are short, thin and desperately weedy, and much of it will not go over 8 bushels to the acre.

Striking the Soo line at Weyburn, the conditions are much better, though where anything was put in on stubble is poor. Oats, however, are a better crop.

Leaving Weyburn for the West, there is a long stretch of light land which has been very dry and

much of this has simply been mowed down for what feed there is on it. In this territory there is considerable late flax, which is very short, but a heavy rain which fell yesterday will help this materially, and it may yet yield a fair return. Any flax that is mature at the present date is a very light crop, with a small bright seed.

In all the country around since my last letter there are many bunches of good cattle and hundreds of young feeders. All are sleek and fat. In view of the shortage of hay, a larger percentage than usual will be marketed right off the stubble. Experienced stockmen, however, do not anticipate the usual fall drop in prices. Packing houses, especially Western houses are persistent buyers, and are even trying to contract ahead in the country. Winnipeg market has held steady and continued to advance in face of unusually heavy receipts for the time of year.

Hogs are strong and conditions in the country indicate that they have been very closely marketed. Demand from Eastern Canadian packers is very insistent, and prices are nothing short of prohibitive to the ordinary consumer. Price as well as patriotism will make meatless days so far as bacon is concerned.

WOOL.

The wool crop of the west is pretty well marketed, and all the provinces have done remarkably well. Manitoba fell considerably below Alberta, mainly because Alberta has a larger percentage of the fine grades.

Root valley. The southern part of Idaho will have about 2,200 cars and the Lewiston district 250 cars. These figures show a total crop for the Northwest States of about 21,500 cars. This is just a shade less than the final crop last year.

Michigan.—The State of Michigan does not expect more than 40 per cent of a normal apple crop. Weather conditions have been very unfavorable. Early apples give better promise than the fall and winter varieties. Baldwins are particularly light.

New York State.—The apple crop in western New York is expected to be the smallest in years. The shortage is due to the light crop of Baldwins which is the principal variety in this section. The total crop will not greatly exceed 50 per cent of last year.

GENERAL NOTES.

During the afternoon of August 10 a very severe wind storm, approaching almost to a tornado, swept through the Annapolis valley. Trees were twisted, branches torn off, and much fruit blown to the ground. It has been difficult to secure an accurate estimate of the damage caused. In some exposed orchards as much as from 40 to 50 per cent of the crop was destroyed, while in protected areas comparatively little damage was caused. The most general report seems to be that the total crop in the valley was reduced between 20 and 25 per cent. This represents a loss of about 200,000 barrels. The storm also did some damage in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

The Secretary of the Colonial Office in London has notified the Canadian High Commissioner's office that "the Board of Customs and Excise have decided to admit, under the general license issued to them, all dried fruits of British origin in respect of what any satisfactory evidence of such origin is produced to the collector at the port of arrival in the United Kingdom, and will not insist upon certificates of origin in the case of dried fruits imported from Canada, if your Government would prefer not to issue such certificates."

Several reports received from California state the orange crop there is almost a failure. It is generally estimated at between 5 and 7½ per cent of normal. Failure of the crop was due to excessive heat during the blossoming period, accompanied by a hot wind which shrivelled up the blossoms in nearly all sections. This means that there will be practically no California oranges in the markets next winter, and consequently an increased demand for apples in Canada and the United States. The effect will be important and will no doubt offset the increased supply of Canadian apples brought about by the British embargo, and also considerably lessen the quantity of apples imported from the United States.

Telegraphic reports are now being published at the office of the Fruit Commissioner, Ottawa, every Tuesday and Friday. These reports contain the very latest information from producing centres, and also quote wholesale prices in the leading Canadian markets. Any one not receiving these can do so upon application. Should any growers be willing to wire information (collect) regarding conditions in their district, such reports will be gladly received and published if it is considered accurate and valuable information.

PRICES AND MARKETS.

So far as the fruit season has advanced, prices have been exceptionally high, and it is generally supposed that they will be maintained at a satisfactory level. Raspberries and currants have commanded record prices. Consequently there should be no fear as to prices, so far as producers are concerned.

The question of marketing narrows itself down to a problem to be settled by Nova Scotia. British Columbia will not be able to supply the demand in the prairies. Ontario will cater to those markets to some extent, but her crop is very small. Quebec cannot pack enough apples to meet local needs. Consequently the crop in Nova Scotia, which cannot be exported on account of the British embargo, will have to be distributed in such a way that the markets ordinarily fed by Ontario will receive their usual quota, or as nearly so as possible. Cities as far west as Regina and Saskatoon will undoubtedly receive Annapolis valley apples this year and large quantities will be marketed in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and other eastern cities.

There is no cause for any panic. We strongly reiterate what we said in our last report, that there will be a fair market in Canada for all our apples. If adequate distribution is arranged we have every reason to believe that prices will be satisfactory and growers should not be stampeded into accepting unreasonably low returns.

Fruit Crop Report

Department of Agriculture --- Food Commissioner's Branch

OTTAWA, August 21, 1917.

WEATHER CONDITIONS.

In eastern Canada there was a prolonged season of hot, dry weather during July and the early part of August, following immediately upon the continued wet weather which was mentioned in our last report. About a week ago local showers in nearly all fruit-producing areas relieved the situation, and conditions are now favorable. In Nova Scotia rain fell almost continuously for forty-eight hours after the severe wind storm of August 10.

Conditions have been generally unfavorable in British Columbia, especially in irrigated sections, where the lack of water has been the cause of many complaints. The trees have suffered and the fruit is considerably smaller in size than at this time in ordinary years.

APPLES.

Since our last report was issued, prospects have fallen off slightly in British Columbia and remained about the same in Ontario and Quebec. The Annapolis Valley early in August estimated the crop at nearly one million barrels, which was 20 per cent larger than our July report indicated. A wind storm on August 10 brought the crop down 20 per cent. Estimates now being received vary considerably, but 750,000 barrels is probably about correct. In Ontario and Quebec the common slogan is "Scarce and scabby," and that about covers the situation in most sections so far as winter varieties are concerned. Early apples are better. British Columbia will have just as many apples as last year, but on account of small size may not pack as many boxes. The fruit and trees have suffered considerably on account of a scarcity of water for irrigation.

PEACHES.

Conditions have not materially changed in Niagara since our last report was published. The best reports have been received from the district bordering on the Niagara river, where a good average crop is expected in some orchards. St. Catharines and Winona estimate the crop at 40 per cent and at Beamsville only 25 per cent is expected, which is less favorable than anywhere else in the peninsula. Our July estimate of a 50 per cent crop in Niagara remains about correct. Admiral Dewey, Alexander, Early Rivers, and Triumph, are expected to move freely about August 24.

The crop is light in Lambton and Kent, and a failure in Essex. So far as Lambton is concerned, the entire crop is confined to orchards bordering on Lake Huron, where there is a 50 per cent crop. Elsewhere in the county the crop is a failure. A fair crop is expected in the Okanagan valley.

GRAPES.

The Niagara grape crop gives promise for about 60 per cent of a normal yield. The crop has been somewhat reduced by mildew around St. Catharines. Concord and Worden are later than usual, but give favorable promise. The demand is apparently going to be very strong. A very good crop is reported in Essex county.

PEARS.

The estimates in Niagara remain the same as in our last reports. Bartlett, Anjou, Duchess and Clargau light to medium; Keiffers, medium to fair; Giffords are expected to move on August 20. Other reports have been received from Ontario as follows: Lambton, 25 per cent; Essex, light; Georgian Bay, very light; Burlington, very light except Keiffers; Middlesex, failure; Eastern Ontario, medium. There is a poor crop in the Annapolis valley. British Columbia reports a medium to full crop in the Okanagan valley with a light crop in the Kootenays.

PLUMS.

There has been a heavy dropping in Niagara, especially of European varieties, and rot is serious. Prospects are therefore not so favorable as last month. Abundance, Washington, Greengage and Burbank are now moving. Prunes and Damsons give the best promise at Winona. The crop is light in the Georgian Bay district, in Essex county and Nova Scotia. East of Toronto the crop is fair. Lambton estimates the crop from 30 to 35 per cent. The Burlington district has a fair crop of Japanese varieties but others are light. The crop is fair in the Kootenay valley, but less favorable in the Okanagan.

TOMATOES.

The general condition of the tomato crop is none too satisfactory. In many sections of eastern Canada heavy rains in early July did much damage and the prolonged dry weather since then has kept the fruit small, especially early varieties. Later varieties have been much helped by recent showers. In practically all sections the crop is later than usual. Yields are reported good in British Columbia, Nova Scotia and western Ontario. Niagara and Essex will have a fair crop of late varieties, but early varieties are light. Severe injury by rotting is reported from Burlington.

UNITED STATES PROSPECTS.

Northwest States.—The Washington crop is estimated at about 16,000 cars. Of this total the Yakima-Wenatchee district will furnish 15,000 cars and the balance will be divided between Walla Walla and Spokane districts. In Oregon, the Hood River crop is estimated at 1,200 cars and the Rogue River Valley district is expected to produce 1,500. The Montanā crop is reported to be 500 cars, all in the Bitter