SEEDING COMMENCED IN MANITOBA

Outlook is Promising in Brandon District—Demand for Farm Lands—Wholesale Trade Conditions

(Staff Correspondence.)

Brandon, April 21st, 1919.

THE spring season is opening up favorably in Western Canada, and by the end of the week seeding operations will be in full swing. The Brandon district, one of the most prosperous in the west, is out for big things this year. The acreage seeded will be approximately about the same as last year, and weather conditions at the present time are ideal. In Brandon City all lines of business, with the exception of building, is good and the prospects are that quite a lot of building in the way of public works will be done this year; a hospital, building for mounted police, and new post office among them. There is a shortage of houses to rent, and good houses are at a premium.

Mr. Williard Hughes, a business man with large interests in Brandon, interviewed by *The Monetary Times*, said: "Brandon's enlistment in men and contributions to all the various war funds has been heavy, standing higher on the per capita basis than probably any other city in the Dominion. During the last two years of the war there was somewhat of a restriction in business conditions, but a few months following the armistice finds a marked improvement in conditions generally. Citizens are looking forward confidently to a resumption of the steady, substantial growth so characteristic of this conservatively managed city. One of the best evidences of Brandon's solidarity is the high credit standing she enjoys in financial circles.

"A very healthy improvement in conditions during the past few months is found in the increasing demand for housing accommodation, and any vacant properties heretofore available are being occupied rapidly. Owing to the fine weather prevailing this year building operations have proceeded all through the winter. The A. E. McKenzie Company building, a seven-story fireproof structure, the home of a large seed house, was increased in space by the addition of five stories on the rear section, and additional equipment installed of the most modern type. New store premises have been erected for the McCulloch Drug Company with doctors' offices above. The Coco Cola Company secured a site on trackage and their building is well under way and will soon be ready for occupancy. By reason of increasing business the Tungland Creamery Company have secured larger premises. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company also enlarged their freight sheds."

Brandon as a distributing centre is growing in importance. In discussing the outlook Mr. J. H. Rankin, president of the board of trade, pointed out that Brandon had 26 wholesale houses with 468 employees and 100 salesmen; the yearly payroll of these 26 houses being $605,000, and the annual turnover $13,230,000. Mr. Rankin was very well satisfied with trade conditions, and the outlook, he thinks, is very bright. Collections, he states, are good, better, in fact, than at any time in the past four years. Business in Mr. Rankin's own line, wholesale grocery, shows a 25 per cent. increase so far this year. The Brandon Board of Trade has been reorganized on a broad scale, and is out to double the population of the city in the next ten years. The Board of Trade is in communication with a number of manufacturing concerns looking to the location of plants at Brandon. One of the proposed new industries is a packing house.

New Tax Rate Probable

Mr. A. R. McDiarmid, the new mayor of Brandon, is optimistic regarding the future outlook for the city. Brandon is having its own internal troubles with labor, wage increases, etc., and a mistake that it has made in the past of shutting its eyes to mounting costs of administration and not making proper provision for them is now having to be faced; the tax levy for 1919, now being considered, will in all probability have to be advanced from 25 mills last year to somewhere in the vicinity of 28 mills. The taxes on outside properties are not being collected, which is the case in many of the western cities. The present overdraft at the bank is roughly $400,000. The percentage of 1918 taxes collected, with business tax, reached 68.7; without business tax, 67.5; the percentages of total taxes paid during the year to 1918 levy, with business tax was 95.4; without business tax, 94.8.

The Brandon Street Railway, operated by the city, showed a deficit last year of $2,000, mainly caused, said Mayor McDiarmid, by the "flu" epidemic, and he looks this year for it to show something to the good.

Demand for Farm Lands

There is an active demand for farm lands in Manitoba, said Mr. Geo. Williamson, of Brandon, to *The Monetary Times*. "Farm lands and ranches are in stronger demand than in my 15 years past experience, with prices ranging from $20 an acre for scrub land to $150 an acre for improved farms. There is a reason," said Mr. Williamson; "cereals of all kinds are worth about double what they used to be; a farmer can realize over $3,000 for a car of cattle. This makes the demand. Never in the past have cattle sales brought as much money, one sale just recently bringing over $90,000 in an afternoon, averaging a minute and a half to each sale for cash."

Mr. Williamson stated that 90 per cent. of his enquirers for land want to go north in Manitoba, and he says there is a reason here also, the rain-fall being 36 inches in last 30 years. Mr. Williamson says his last sales have been in the vicinity of Fork River, near Lake Winnipegosis; he has just sold a 15,000-acre ranch in that district, stocked complete.

One man whom Mr. Williamson mentioned sold over $7,000 worth of grain near Gilbert Plains from 160 acres, then he sold the land for $6,000, making a total revenue of $13,000 in about 12 months. Mr. Williamson says he is aspiring to do one thing, or be the first man to do it; he intends to ride in an aeroplane from Dauphin to Brandon dropping his literature on the way.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ASSUR. CORP., LTD.

The 1918 statement of the Employers' Liability Assurance Corporation, Limited, which appears in detail in this issue, shows a very substantial increase in business. The total income as shown by the revenue account was $38,394,-275 as compared with $26,507,118, in 1917, an increase of close to fifty per cent. The premium income in 1918 was $25,476,505, and in 1917 it was $16,983,153, an increase of over fifty per cent. Payments under policies, including medical and legal expenses, were $10,343,910, an increase of $2,600,000. The insurance fund shows corresponding increases. A balance of $3,750,085 was transferred from the revenue account to the profit and loss account. There was also over $700,000 received from interest and rents making a total in the profit and loss account of $4,472,440. After paying taxes, dividends, etc., $1,250,000 was transferred to the special reserve for excess profits taxes, and $1,433,325 to the general reserve fund. The balance sheet now shows assets of over $30,000,000 compared with $21,379,580 last year. Outside of balance due from branches and agencies, cash on hand, etc., practically all the funds are invested in government, municipal and railroad securities.

The company has been doing business in Canada for about thirty years and now writes Employers' Liability, Workmen's Compensation, Fire, Hail, Personal Accident, Sickness, Fidelity Guarantee Bonds, Burglary and Automobile Insurance, (including Liability, Property Damage, Collision, Fire and Theft). Mr. C. W. I. Woodland is the general manager for Canada and Newfoundland. Mr. John Jenkins is the Fire manager. The total premium income in Canada for the year was $1,846,354, compared with $1,423,963 for 1917.