

CROP ESTIMATE FOR 1918

Will Be About Seventy Per Cent. of Last Year—No
Province Has Total Failure

The Manitoba Free Press presented on the 4th inst. the 15th annual estimate of the crop of the three western provinces, compiled by the commercial and agricultural editor, together with the eighth consecutive report on the crop of the present season, the first report having been issued on Easter Saturday.

The estimate is based on observations made in almost five weeks of continuous travel by train and motor, as well as on the reports sent in by local correspondents, and is felt to be conservative. The figures for the three provinces are:—

	Bushels.
Wheat	149,844,000
Oats	183,045,000
Barley	41,957,000
Rye	724,000
Flax	5,056,300

Divided as to provinces the returns show:—

Manitoba.

	Bushels.
Wheat, 2,616,000 acres seeded, average yield 18—total	47,124,000
Oats, 1,500,000 acres seeded, average yield 40—total	60,000,000
Barley, 715,000 acres seeded, average yield 35—total	25,025,000
Rye, 50,000 acres seeded, average yield 15—total	750,000
Flax, 16,300 acres seeded, average yield 7—total	114,000

The average of 18 bushels is regarded for wheat as safely conservative in view of the enormous areas in the north that have up to the present writing escaped all damage from frost and where the average of yield is likely to be 30 bushels. The yield would have been still higher had it not been for some damage occasioned by black rust in the south and southwest. The plague came late and has done comparatively little damage, but it has done some. The statements from correspondents in the detailed report are the best information on this point. Manitoba has a wonderful barley crop and the estimate of 35 bushels is probably too low and certainly the government figures of acreage are too small. The difference is due to large areas of barley that were seeded on land that had been partially prepared for summer-fallow after the original estimate of acreage had been made. The acreage of flax is also absurdly small. There were over 6,000 acres seeded to fibre flax alone, to say nothing of the ordinary milling flax, but as they are government figures they have been used as the nearest guide obtainable.

A rough estimate of the value of the crop is:—

Wheat at \$2.05	\$ 96,604,200
Oats (will be mainly for seed) \$1	60,000,000
Barley at \$1	25,025,000
Rye at \$1.68	1,260,000
Flax at \$4	456,400

Or a total for the five cereal crops of \$183,345,600

This takes no account of the 10,000,000 bushels of potatoes, the wonderful hay crops, the roots, the sales of livestock and the tremendous returns from dairying, that will equal another hundred million at least. It looks as if Manitoba would be able to indulge liberally in Victory Bonds next month. There have been many disappointments. The crop has been expensive to produce, the harvest weather has been the coldest and wettest since 1899, but in spite of all these drawbacks Manitoba has a good paying crop and fully 80 per cent. of it is to-day beyond damage from frost, though not from continued wet weather.

Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan has been hard hit in many districts, first by drought and last by frost in July, but in view of the present prices, Saskatchewan has, as a whole, a paying crop:—

	Bushels.
Wheat seeded, 9,222,000 acres, average of yield 10—total	92,220,000
Oats seeded, 4,602,000 acres, average of yield 25—total	115,050,000
Barley seeded, 663,500 acres, average of yield 22—total	14,597,000
Rye seeded, 70,000 acres, average of yield 12—total	840,000
Flax seeded, 753,700 acres, average of yield 6—total	4,522,200

The value of this crop based on present prices is roughly:—

Wheat at \$2	\$184,440,000
Oats at 80 cents	92,040,000
Barley at \$1	14,597,000
Rye at \$1.68	1,411,200
Flax at \$4	18,088,800

Or a total for cereals

In common with Manitoba, Saskatchewan has heavy returns from livestock and dairying, though not from hay.

Alberta.

The freak season has hit sunny Alberta harder than either of her sisters. Extreme drought in the south and heavy July frost in the north have taken desperate toll of the crops, but even here there is not a total failure.

Wonderful recovery has been made in some of the districts of the south, since the rains came and the returns from the irrigation belts will be very large, and to some extent offset the lack on the dry lands.

The frosted districts in the north have made considerable recovery and it now seems pretty well assured that Alberta will have: Wheat, 10,500,000 bushels; oats, 7,995,000; barley, 2,335,000; rye, 134,000; and flax, 420,000, or a cash value at present prices of \$33,235,120.

Very inadequate returns for the areas seeded and the outlay for the same, but a very long way better than nothing.

The Free Press does not claim for these estimates that they are likely to be as accurate as usual, the season has been so extraordinary and the crop is so spotted that the threshing machine and the inspector's office will be the only absolute source of knowledge, but the feeling is strong that the estimate, if anything, errs on the side of caution.

The past few days and nights have been very cold and there is much late crop, but the degrees of frost reported from many districts where crop is late, are not sufficient to materially lessen the yield, though undoubtedly some toll will be taken off the grade. The province in most danger is Saskatchewan and the crop that will be likely to suffer as to yield will be the late oats, of which there are many fields.

Correspondents were especially asked to state the possibility of damage from frosts occurring before September 10th, that being felt to be the date by which even the latest crops should be ripe.

The chief matter of regret in the present crop is the small amount that will be available for overseas. At least 25,000,000 bushels must be retained for seed, but if Canadians were patriotic enough to deny themselves and reduce their bread ration to 4 bushels per capita, as might easily be done, there would be over 90,000,000 for export.

The Northern Trusts Company of Winnipeg have moved to new premises at 333 Main Street, adjoining the Bank of Montreal. The building will also be occupied by the Canadian Fire Insurance Company and the Northern Mortgage Company of Canada. After purchasing it some time ago the Northern Trusts Company had it entirely altered, making excellent office quarters. They were formerly in the Great-West Life Building.

Received business of the North American Life Assurance Company for August, 1918, amounted to \$1,240,620, being the largest amount received during any August since the inception of the company. A special effort is being made by the agency force to canvass old policyholders during September. The three leading personal producers of the North American Life for August were Miss M. L. Blake, Michigan; J. A. L. Robinson, Regina; and A. C. Lawrence, of Nelson, British Columbia.