

CROP OUTLOOK IN ALBERTA

Seeding Now Complete—Outlook is Favorable—Lethbridge and Southern District—Edmonton Second

(Staff Correspondence.)

Edmonton, May 30, 1919.

CROP conditions in Alberta are favorable and the outlook from the farmers' point of view at the time of writing is good. Rains fell a short time ago and the recent dry spell has not seriously affected the crops so far.

Edmonton District

In this district and throughout northern Alberta good rains are needed at time of writing. Generally, however, the crops are in excellent shape. In discussing conditions as to loaning this spring, and the outlook generally, with *The Monetary Times'* representative, Mr. F. A. Beddard, local manager of the Huron and Erie Mortgage Corporation and the Canada Trust Co., at Edmonton, reports a steady demand for loans on improved farms in this province, also repayments are exceedingly good, notwithstanding the loss suffered last July by a freak frost, the like of which was not known by any of the old timers in the province.

It has become more apparent every year that the central and northern portions of the province are developing more into mixed farming. Large herds of stock last fall were moved from the southern to the northern portion of the province, on account of feed shortage, this benefiting the latter districts. Farm land values have also increased generally, and a steady demand exists.

Mr. Beddard has closely followed conditions in Alberta for nearly twenty years, having resided in and travelled the greater portion of the province, and he states never has the crops got away under so favorable conditions as this spring, due to late April and early May rains, and nearly everywhere the farmer has a smile on his face.

In conclusion, an optimistic feeling exists, that a gradual return to pre-war-time conditions has set in, and this is warranted by the large number of farm land sales at increased prices, and the large turnover in Edmonton city property this year.

Official Report for Province

According to a report recently issued by the Provincial Department of Agriculture, the spring survey of crop conditions and prospects is wholly favorable in the province. A rather slow and backward condition of weather at the close of March indicated delayed operations for seeding in April in central and northern Alberta, but this was broken by a prompt change to a week's real spring temperature in early April. The warmth made operations immediately possible, as there was less of cold saturation of land than usual on the heavy lands of the central part of the province, owing to light moisture last year and moderate snowfall last winter. There was no condition of lush moisture any place. When the warmth came, other conditions were favorable to active and uninterrupted seeding work.

In the southern part of the province it is commonly possible to get actively into seeding operations in March, and this was the case this year, but open land and open weather alone do not furnish the total of conditions favorable to the planting of seed. There was still a condition of scant moisture in the soil from last year's drought that did not promise any gain from quick planting, but rather slow and uneven germination if any. Snows and rains in April, however, gave an impetus to operations. There was enough moisture to put the land into condition for cultivation and at least for germinating grain. The result in seasonal conditions has been favorable to general seeding operations in good time. It is estimated that at the middle of May, 85 per cent. of the seeding for grain is completed, including practically all of the wheat and 75 per cent. of the oats. There will still be considerable land sown to oats for green feed.

Crop Area

Breaking in 1918 is estimated at about a million and a half acres. There were limitations to the breaking in the south. In places it was too dry to operate. On the other hand there was a large increase in farm power in the use of tractors and this extended to the most northerly sections of the province. One of the best uses of the tractor is the turning over of a wide furrow in brush land of sufficient depth to furnish a good top working of soil, and the tractor has been made good use of to this end. The breaking of last year stands for a large increase in crop area this year. The use of tractors is being considerably increased this year. Twenty-two new tractors are working in the immediate neighborhood of Lacombe and a similar increase has taken place everywhere. There will be considerable seeding of oats for green feed on new breaking in the central and northern parts of the province this year.

The increase in crop acreage over the five years, 1914-1918 inclusive, was five million acres, or a doubling of the total area in 1913, and necessarily the expansion was not the addition of a million each year, but of much larger areas in the last couple of years of the five-year period. The impulse to production is not slackening with the termination of the war. Farmers are not looking for any very large reduction in grain prices before thrashing time in 1920. They are now equipped to produce, and labor will be increased some with the return of the soldiers. A million and a half is a conservative estimate of the increase in acreage for 1919. This will consist of wheat in the south and oats in the centre and north chiefly, but rye will double and barley will be considerably increased also. Flax may be increased by the new breaking. The total increase will be 18 or 20 per cent. of last year's area. This is a normal increase in the conditions of available land, progress in the potentialities of new power and machinery, and better labor conditions.

The following table indicates generally the progress in acreage:—

	1918. Acres.	1919. Acres.
Wheat	3,892,489	4,293,000
Oats	2,651,548	3,500,000
Greenfeed	750,000	850,000
Barley	470,073	570,000
Rye	47,877	98,000
Mixed grains	27,989	40,000
Flax	95,920	100,000
	7,935,896	9,451,000

WHAT WAR COST WORLD'S NATIONS

In the semi-monthly letter of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, some interesting comparisons are given regarding the cost of the war to the leading nations engaged, taken from a review by Representative Cordell Hull, of the Committee of Ways and Means. The following are the figures of the leading nations:—

Germany	\$45,500,000,000
Great Britain	40,640,000,000
United States	30,205,000,000
France	23,400,000,000
Italy	16,000,000,000
Canada	2,000,000,000

According to Mr. Hull, exclusive of losses in property and materials, which will probably never be known, the war will cost about \$200,000,000,000.

The British government will shortly commence the construction at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars of a helium plant near Lethbridge, Alta., on the main line of the Canadian Western Natural Gas Co. This is the result of experiments carried out for the British government by Prof. J. C. MacLennan.