

## Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

May 31st, 1917.

The big spring delivery month of May, which came in under such exciting conditions was closed out today with one of the tamest markets the west has seen. It will be remembered that the first step, in what proved to be, the closing of May and July futures, occurred on April 27th, when the board of censors was established. On that day May wheat closed at \$2.63½, though it had sold considerably higher. May month opened with a dull day when May wheat dropped to \$2.54, but the following day it jumped to \$2.80½ and closed at that figure, on May 3rd it closed at \$2.94 and was never again opened for trading. On that day No. 1 Northern wheat at the close of the future market was \$2.95½, or in other words was selling at 1½ cents premium over May. When the agreement was arrived at between the principal longs and shorts, it was provided that the cash prices, day by day, should be recorded by a price committee. It was further stipulated that these prices must be fair and reasonable and the mills and the allied governments, while following their judgment in buying, must consider both market conditions generally and the prices being paid in other markets.

It is interesting to note that there has been an almost steady decline in these prices since trading was resumed on May 7th in the contract grades; when No. 1 Northern wheat, under this agreement, at the close of the trading day, namely \$1.15, was posted at \$2.86. The following day it went up 4 cents, on May 9th it was \$2.94; on May 10th it was the same price, May 11th it went up to \$3.00 and stayed there for two days. May 13th was a Sunday and May 14th a holiday. On the 15th the price was \$2.85; May 16th, 17th and 18th it was \$2.77; May 19th it went up to \$2.80 and on the 21st dropped back to \$2.78, from which date to the end of the month it has dropped from 4 to 5 cents daily until the 31st was reached. The price posted at the close of the day was \$2.33 for No. 1 Northern wheat; a decline from the 3rd of the month of 62½ cents, and a decline from the price of the futures on May 3rd of 61 cents. The decline of No. 2 and 3 was the same.

Ever since the future market in May and July was closed the trade has really been concentrated on clearing up the May contract, and this has been, on the whole, very successfully accomplished. The evening-up trade of the last day was heavy, but by 11.30 everything was cleaned up. Deliveries of wheat through the clearing house have been comparatively light. It was felt for a time that May oats would develop almost as acute a condition as May wheat had done, but as the weeks went by, this apprehension gradually disappeared, and for the last 10 days in the month the deliveries through the clearing house have been very heavy, and the final delivery amounted to 358,000 bushels. What was curious and unexplained was the fact that May oats, with apparently no keen demand for clearing up contracts, remained from 4 to 5 cents over the July. The high point for the month in May oats came about the 9th; between the 9th and 12th, inclusive, the prices ranged from 81¼ to 80%. Since that time, however, the prices have been fairly steady, the highest point being made on May 19th, when they sold up to 79½ cents. There is no doubt that the oats market here broke in sympathy with the south, where the enormous acreage seeded to oats has been featured from day to day. The cash price of 2 C. W. oats has followed very closely the May future prices. The tough oats, of which there was a very large quantity, have been mainly sent to the driers.

Flax in common with other grain has suffered a material decrease during the month and so has barley. A certain amount of these grains has been turned in daily through the clearing house.

### HANDLING THE 1917 CROP.

The east probably knows quite as much as the west about what the delegations to Ottawa have achieved with regard to a system for handling the crop of 1917. The amount of information which has leaked through, so far, indicates that Dr. Robert Magill, at present secretary of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, may be the head of the board of control for grain markets. This would be quite acceptable to the west, but the details of not only the control of grain but of other food control are very anxiously looked for.

The season is opening out here and very speedily the creameries and cheese factories will be in a posi-

tion to sell in car lots, and buyers are afraid to say what price will be paid, because they do not know to what extent government action may interfere with the matter. The serious depreciation of cheese prices in the east is already being reflected here, and if the British government is going to establish a lower price and adhere to it, it is only fair that producers and manufacturers should know it as speedily as possible.

In spite of the fact that the season has been late and the grass has made little progress, the creameries and cheese factories have done pretty well in the matter of milk and cream. Food prices for cows, however, are extremely high and if the price of cheese and butter is to be materially lowered, it will be at once reflected in the quantity of milk and cream available, as dairymen state that they cannot possibly produce milk for less than they are now receiving for it.

### MILK ADVANCES.

Milk in the city of Winnipeg is being advanced in price and will be 11½ cents per quart instead of

10 cents, the city milk handler having already agreed to pay the farmers a higher price for the milk. There has been some attempt made to prevent the slaughter of calves at the dairies, and to have these sent into the country to be raised, but the amount of saving along this line is small.

### FLOUR.

Flour has dropped twice during the past week and is now quoted at \$6.35 per sack of 98 pounds, for first grades. It ought to have dropped further in view of the decline in the price of cash wheat, but the millers announced to-day that they were making no further change.

### WEATHER.

The weather throughout the week has been unsatisfactory, having been extremely cold with heavy frosts at many points, and one or two points in Alberta reported frost of 16 degrees on May 30th, and frost of from 8 to 10 degrees was quite common. This is most unusual at this season of the year, though it has occurred before. It is likely that in some places oats and barley may have to be re-seeded; wheat is not likely to have suffered any permanent damage, excepting perhaps in limited areas where poor or weak seed had been used. There has been no rain yet this season and this probably helped, as had the surface of the ground been wet, the frost damage would undoubtedly have been greater.

## National Foresight and Preparedness

By E. ST. JOHN WILEMAN.

There is a real danger that war time exigencies will not only crowd into the background, but almost exclude from public consciousness, vital problems of future welfare for which far reaching preparations are immediately needed, if the new birth on the battlefield is to be translated into the transformed citizen of after the war. Far from minimising the pressing necessity for furthering and safeguarding extensive economic and industrial expansion to meet fierce commercial competition in the future, there are yet other vital issues of fundamental importance which must be squarely met. They are the cleansing and humanizing of the conditions under which labour of all kinds, moves, works and has its being; and the marriage of capital and labour to avert what will be otherwise inevitable, their menacing divorce.

To effect these uplifting values, so potent with promise and fruitfulness, past hostile grouping must be merged into co-operative effort, the spirit of suspicious antagonism must give way to more sane estimates of attributes on both sides, the unselfish devotion and comradeship of the battlefield will supervene among all classes.

Nowhere is this new attitude more crucially needed than in Canada, with its heterogeneous population, wide unhabited areas, and struggling infant industries both agricultural and industrial, if the nation's growth is not to be retarded by chronic hostility and friction. A mighty impulse and conscience must take shape to build up a nation wide co-ordinated, co-operative welding together of the dynamic forces of all public authorities and individuals capable of useful concentration on the solution of after war problems, first for the whole nation's weal and then for individual benefit and prosperity.

The tests and examples of more developed nations serve as practical guides to younger communities. Striking illustrations of the utility and practical value of Government National Labour Bureaux systems is afforded by the findings respectively of the International Congress for Combatting Unemployment, held in Belgium in 1913, and of the final reports of the U.S.A. Industrial Relations Commission, the latter followed by prompt national organization on the part of the American Government. The example of two such dissimilar countries as the Argentine Republic and New Zealand show that their Government Labour Bureaux systems can be effectively used, not only for dealing with domestic labour conditions, but also for satisfactorily handling immigration problems. Great Britain affords a pertinent war time lesson by her attitude towards the demobilization of her troops and transference of her war equipment workers to normal occupations.

Before his death Lord Kitchener had arranged far reaching plans with the British Labour Exchanges Department for replacing soldiers in civilian employment. The present minister of labour, a strong labour man, has arranged to increase the number of

British Labour Exchange offices to 800, to meet the great strain of dealing with returned soldiers and war equipment workers, all seeking suitable employment. He also is arranging for the sanction of Parliament to a central board, empowered to co-operate with all public authorities and bodies of employers and workpeople in assisting the British Labour Exchanges to carry out their gigantic task.

Canada, to avert bitter feelings and a tragic debacle after the war, must concentrate upon securing the establishment of a permanent non-partisan commission, with a representative personnel, empowered to organize and administrate a system of free public Labour Bureaux from coast to coast, authorized in the fulfilment of its duties to co-operate with federal, Provincial and municipal authorities, bodies of employers and workpeople and other useful public organizations; (particularly the postoffice, in the franking of letters and distribution of Labour Bureaux literature); necessary decentralization being provided for by full co-operation with all Provincial Governments, and the establishment of small local boards of districts where Labour Bureaux are organized, composed of representatives of the city council, employers and labour; effecting too, far reaching co-operation with education authorities, to stimulate technical and vocational training of children in the public schools of country, to develop efficient citizens and to qualify each boy and girl for earning a livelihood; the just claims too, being met of the increasing number of women workers, for public recognition and representation; the efficient staffing of the system being safeguarded by the examination as to business efficiency and vocational fitness of every candidate for office under the system, by a board of competent examiners.

It is, of course, a sine qua non that the National Labour Bureaux system will not interfere in arrangements come to by bodies of employers and workpeople, or terms agreed upon between them.

The paramount duty of the commission when established will be to take a searching inventory of all public works, whether government, municipal or individual, and arrange that all of a non-essential nature be held over until the close of the war, to assist in forming a great reserve supply to fall back upon to meet the huge demand when peace is declared, and to prepare for absorption of able bodied returned soldiers and dislocated labour.

After the establishment of an efficient Dominion Labour Bureaux system, the door will be open to gigantic, vital, Imperial reforms for standardizing and co-ordinating labour and immigration conditions throughout the Empire, and the abolition of baneful commercial elements which have created such injurious problems in the past, as detrimental to nations as to individuals. Every Canadian is urged to do his active, energetic, bit publicly, in hastening this great consummation.