

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, AUGUST 25, 1890.

## CANADA THE FAVORED LAND.

Canada is the favored country of America this year, if not of the world, from an agricultural standpoint. While later advice from Great Britain and Europe are more favorable than those received earlier in the year, the season has not been a desirable one for the farmers of the Old World. In the United States it is now well known that the present year will be known as a short crop year all around. Practically every important crop is below an average in that country. Wheat, though more favored than other cereals, is a light crop. The corn and oat crops are very poor, potatoes are so short that very high prices are certain to prevail for this necessary article, while prices for canned and dried fruits and vegetables have already advanced sharply on account of light crops.

Turning to Canada exactly the opposite picture is presented. Crops all around are more than good. In Manitoba every variety of agriculture has been most successful this year. Wheat, oats, barley, potatoes and other vegetables are all producing remarkably heavy crops. All the different crops grown here are so good that no distinction can be made between them. Severe damage was done by storm in a limited area of country, but though causing heavy individual loss, the result is not serious enough to be felt in the total. The province will have a large surplus of wheat, oats, barley, potatoes and flax seed for export, and this in a year when high prices for everything is practically assured. Within the next few months a good many millions of dollars will find their way into this province and into the pockets of our western pioneers. In the agricultural districts of the Territories westward from Manitoba the crops are equally as good, while the large amount of railway work going on in the western prairie region will further increase the general prosperity which will follow good crops. In British Columbia all accounts agree that the season has been a most favorable one for the farmers.

In eastern Canada as a rule crop reports are very favorable, though a limited area in the north-east portion of Quebec is reported a failure. In Ontario the grain harvest is now about completed there, under favorable conditions. In fall wheat there is some decrease in the acreage, but this will be made up by the yield, which runs from fifteen to forty bushels per acre. It is estimated that the average for the province will not be far from 25 bushels per acre. There is a large increase in the acreage of spring wheat, and an abundant crop. Barley, peas and roots are reported to be a good crop. The least favored crop is that of oats, which according to all reports will be below an average, on an acreage about the same as last year. The Ontario fruit crop is generally considered to be below an average, though later reports are more favorable as to the apple crop, which it is now said will be better than last year.

Last year, however, was a very poor season for apples, and the crop will require to be a great deal better than last year to come up to an average, therefore the apple crop may be considered as light.

Though not so universally favorable as in the West, the crops in Eastern Canada will be abundant, and will aggregate more than an average. It is evident from this that a year of general prosperity is before this favored Dominion. A leading agricultural paper in the United States has been figuring it out that though the crops are very short, the high prices which will rule will recoup the grower to a considerable extent for the light yield. If this is the case concerning the United States farmer, what a happy position the Canadian farmer occupies, with big crops and high prices falling to his lot at the same time.

## THE FRUIT CROP.

This is a short crop year in America, speaking generally, and the shortage applies quite as much to fruits as to anything else. Green fruits have commanded high prices this season, and in the United States there has been a regular "boom" in prices of canned and dried fruits. One authority says the crop will be the smallest in many years. The peach crop in New Jersey, Delaware and other eastern States is said to be almost a total failure. This is true of all parts of the country except California. The failure of peaches is due to frost last spring, which destroyed the fruit in the bud. Pears suffered at the same time, and this fruit is also a very poor crop. Small fruits are all short, and these are supposed to have been injured by the open winter and late frosts. Apples will give a light yield throughout the United States. California is turning out a good crop of fruits, but California cannot make up for shortage elsewhere, especially when the rapidly growing demand for fruits is considered.

In Ontario fruits are generally understood to be a light crop. Small fruits are short. Apples, according to latest reports, are turning out a little better than expected, but they will still be a short crop. This will make two short apple crops in succession in Ontario. In British Columbia, where fruit growing is becoming quite an industry, the crop of later fruits, such as plums, pears, apples, etc., is turning out very good. The industry in British Columbia, however, is not yet sufficiently developed to go far in making up the shortage elsewhere.

Manitoba has no cultivated fruits to speak of. Small fruits, such as strawberries, currants, etc., have produced heavily this year, but they are grown only to a very limited extent. The wild fruit crop, however, is an important item. Native Manitoba wild fruits have been an immense crop, and many tons of native fruits have been handled in the Winnipeg market this year. The varieties most largely handled were blueberries, saskatoons, raspberries and gooseberries. Later varieties of wild fruits, such as currants, cranberries, plums, etc., are now being gathered. Immense quantities of these fruits are being prepared for winter use by the housewives all over the country, and this prolific crop of wild fruits will, no doubt, greatly curtail the consumption of dried and canned fruits during the coming winter and spring.

## POTATOES.

Not the least important consideration in the matter of crops is that of potatoes. It is now understood that the potato crop in the United States will be a very light one. The last monthly report of the United States department of agriculture showed a decline of twenty points in the condition of potatoes. The report says that "this important crop will be very light." Potatoes are already bringing high prices. It is estimated by those posted that the crop will be one-third short of an average. The importance of the shortage in potatoes is increased by the knowledge that all other vegetables and garden truck are giving a small return this year. The scarcity of other vegetables will increase the demand for potatoes, and very high prices for the latter article will naturally increase the consumption of flour. Some authorities even go so far as to claim that the scarcity of potatoes and other vegetables will so increase the consumption of bread as to leave no wheat or flour for export from the United States.

So much attention is given to two or three of the leading crops, such as corn and wheat, that the public are apt to lose sight of other crops altogether. These other crops, however, are quite as important in themselves as the leading cereals so frequently referred to. A wholesale reduction in the crop of garden stuff is certain to greatly increase the consumption of bread, and perhaps even to the extent as to entirely wipe out the reduced surplus of wheat and flour which, under average conditions, the United States would have for export this year. A Chicago paper says that potatoes are selling in that city at four times the price which they brought a year ago, and other vegetables nearly as high proportionately.

While on the subject of potatoes it may be noted that the potato crop in Ireland is turning out a failure. The destructive potato blight, which caused such misery in that country years ago, has spread over several counties. Where this disease attacks the tubers, the crop is a total failure. If the destruction is wide-spread the consumption of bread will be further increased.

Coming to our own country, the potato crop in Ontario is one of the poorest on the list. While most crops there are good, potatoes are not expected to turn out as well as the general average. Prices are high in eastern markets.

Manitoba is an exception to the general rule, the potato crop here being very heavy this year. The potatoes have attained very large size, and the yield will be heavy. Unfortunately, however, the area planted to potatoes in Manitoba has been reduced this year. According to the official crop report, the total area given to this crop is 10,812 acres, this being a reduction of 1,129 acres as compared with last year. Even allowing for increased consumption and reduced area, Manitoba will have some potatoes for export, and a good price may be expected for whatever surplus we will have to dispose of.

## ENGINEERING A BOOM.

During the past two or three weeks rumors have been floating around Winnipeg of American speculators being in the city, who can command