

## WESTERN CROPS ARE SETTING RAPID PACE.

### Railroads, Labor and Financial Facilities Are Taxed to the Limit. Review of the Situation.

The wheat and grain crop of Western Canada has increased at such a rapid pace that the resources of the various interests concerned with its movement have been taxed to the utmost. In 1908, for the first time, the banks found difficulty in financing the Western crop movement. A temporary arrangement was made between the Dominion Government and the bankers and an amendment of the Bank Act was passed, allowing the Canadian chartered banks special facilities during the crop season. From October 1st to January 31st each year they were given power to issue circulating notes in excess of paid-up capital to the extent of 15 per cent. of combined paid-up capital and reserve fund. These notes bear interest not exceeding 5 per cent. per annum, the interest being paid to the government as part of the general revenue of Canada. During the past season it has been found that despite the increased facilities, the available circulation has scarcely been sufficient to meet the crop demands. An agitation has already been commenced for an extension of what may be termed the emergency circulation period but it is doubtful, even were such an extension granted, if it would be adequate. This is one of the most important matters to be discussed when the Bank Act is revised.

#### Labor Problem Gives Anxiety.

Every year the labor question is also one of great anxiety as a crop movement factor. Although our immigration during the past decade has exceeded 1,500,000 souls, it does not seem to have solved the harvest labor problem. Many of the immigrants themselves have become tillers of the soil, thereby increasing the volume of the crop to be transported.

Capital and labor therefore, have had difficulty in keeping pace with the situation, and this year transportation facilities have failed. It was estimated that 160,000 cars would be required to move the Western crops. For several years there has been trouble caused by shortage of cars. This became rather acute several years ago and the subject was one that entered largely into the hearings conducted by the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into conditions of the grain trade of the country. The following figures show how many cars have been used by the railroads (Canadian Pacific, Canadian Northern, Grand Trunk Pacific, and Great Northern), to move the Western crop:—

Crop year	C.P.R.	C.N.R.	G.T.P.	G.N.R.	Total cars
1910 .....	61,895	30,675	6,968	1,199	100,737
1909 .....	72,658	32,799	5,451	4,080	114,997
1908 .....	60,751	21,851	1,819	3,536	87,957
1907 .....	46,027	16,532	.....	1,423	63,982
1906 .....	62,740	18,767	.....	.....	81,507
1905 .....	55,676	13,498	.....	.....	69,174
1904 .....	32,238	8,158	.....	.....	40,396
1903 .....	30,967	9,332	.....	.....	40,299
1902 .....	43,325	11,670	.....	.....	54,995
1901 .....	47,642	9,857	.....	.....	57,500

#### Growth of Railroads and Crops.

It is interesting to examine the growth of the railroad and of crop production. As was shown in a recent issue of The Monetary Times, the increase in Manitoba wheat area in the ten years since 1901 was 968,000 acres or 48 per cent.; in Saskatchewan, 4,235,000 acres, or 903 per cent.; in Alberta, 1,582,000 acres, or 4,647 per cent., and in the total wheat area of the Western provinces 6,784 acres or 269 per cent. The gain in the production in Manitoba since the same date has been 10,000,000 bushels, or 20 per cent.; in Saskatchewan, 86,000,000 bushels, or 781 per cent.; in Alberta, 35,286,000 bushels, or 4,117 per cent., and in the total Western production 117,000,000 bushels, or 185 per cent. These are remarkable increases. If the increase in the Western wheat area in the past ten years has been 269 per cent. and the gain in production, 185 per cent., what will be the wheat area and production at the end of the next decade? A recent conservative estimate of The Monetary Times gave a wheat crop in 1920 in Western Canada of 513,000,000 bushels grown on 34,321,000 acres. This is after allowing for a greater cultivation of mixed farming and for increased railroad mileage. Wheat is not the only crop to be considered. Flax is becoming an important crop in Saskatchewan, and this and other crops all help to tax railroad facilities.

The following table shows the field crop production in bushels in the three Western provinces:—

Bushels	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta
Fall wheat .....	85,000	758,000	8,011,000
Spring wheat ...	60,190,000	96,907,000	28,132,000
Oats .....	57,893,000	97,692,000	56,964,000
Barley .....	14,447,000	5,445,000	4,151,000
Rye .....	.....	.....	564,000
Flax .....	1,123,000	10,688,000	973,000
Potatoes .....	5,122,000	4,505,000	4,417,000
Turnips, etc. ...	1,579,000	2,841,000	3,827,000
	140,439,000	219,106,000	107,039,000
Tons.			
Hay and clover..	237,000	28,000	274,000
Fodder corn ....	63,000	.....	.....
Alfalfa .....	.....	1,500	18,400
Sugar beets .....	.....	.....	15,800
	300,000	29,500	307,400

#### Crops Have Doubled in Four Years.

Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, therefore, grew no less than 466,554,000 bushels and 636,900 tons of field crops last year, compared with 233,557,000 bushels and 395,000 tons in 1908. These figures give a slight indication of the rapidly increasing productive power of the Western agricultural lands, both bushels and tons having practically doubled in four years.

In 1847 there were only 16 miles of railroad in operation in Canada. Ten years later the mileage was 1,414; in 1887 this had increased to 12,184, and last year the mileage has increased 7,260 or 34 per cent. Here is a table showing the growth of railway mileage in the three Western provinces during the past five years:—

	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911
Manitoba .....	3,074	3,111	3,205	3,221	3,461
Saskatchewan ....	2,025	2,081	2,631	2,932	3,121
Alberta .....	1,323	1,323	1,321	1,488	1,494

The increase in Manitoba in the five years' period was 392 miles or 12.4 per cent.; in Saskatchewan, 1,096 miles or 54.1 per cent., and in Alberta, 171 miles or 12.8 per cent. It must be remembered that active railroad construction will proceed this year in Saskatchewan and Alberta and will likely do so for many years to come. Every mile of railroad in a good agricultural country opens up that country to settlement and consequently increases the agricultural freight.

#### Agriculture and Freight.

The products of agriculture last year accounted for 17.17 per cent. of the freight carried by Canadian railroads. Mines accounted for 35.87 per cent., the carriage of coal and coke to the extent of 20,000,000 tons being largely responsible for that proportion.

The following table shows the number of locomotives and freight cars in service in 1907 and 1911:—

	1907	1911
Locomotives .....	3,504	4,219
Freight cars .....	107,407	127,158

Here are the figures indicating the number of locomotives assigned to freight and switching services respectively:—

	1907	1911
Freight .....	2,206	2,659
Switching .....	334	435

None of the above railroad statistics appear to prove that railroad facilities are more than keeping pace with the crop movement despite the large orders for new rolling stock given to locomotive builders and foundries.

#### What the Grain Growers Say.

The Manitoba Grain Growers' Association have presented their views to the Dominion Government regarding the crop situation. The memorandum declares that competent judges estimate that 70,000,000 bushels of wheat alone are awaiting transportation, of which 8,000,000 bushels are damp or wet. The drying capacity of the Fort William elevators is about 30,000 bushels per day. Stringent weather conditions would probably cut this down 25 per cent. or more. Duluth dryers have a capacity that might be increased at once to 40,000