

Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

Of the large body of organized farmers those of Manitoba and Alberta have now definitely taken the stand that they will not ask for a fixed price on wheat. The decision for Alberta which was made at Edmonton where there were 715 voting delegates representing a membership of nearly 1,800 was unanimous, though when the discussion opened there were eight resolutions on the order paper asking for the price to be fixed. These had been sent in by local unions, and it seems that while the resolutions had been sent in, no delegate from the local union had been absolutely pledged to vote for a fixed price. The main arguments brought against the fixed price were that as the farmers were asking for the removal of the tariff, that it was inconsistent of them at the same time to ask for their product to be protected. In connection with this argument some delegated pointed out that while they were asking for the abolition of the tariff on farm implements, they had no assurance that they were going to get it, and that until such time as they had, this argument against asking for a fixed price did not apply. Another statement which was made and which evidently carried much weight with the convention, was that while the United States had fixed the price for the 1919 crop, the condition was not analogous, as the United States consumes 75 per cent of her product, also that she could prevent wheat from outside being shipped in at her high fixed price, and therefore her loss would be the difference between the market price and the fixed price mainly on what she exported, while Canada must export 75 per cent of her product, and the loss to the country between the possible fixed price and the market price created by supply and demand would be a serious one, and that it would have to be met by taxation, and that farmers would therefore, stand to lose as much as they would gain through a fixed price. Another argument which was brought forward was, that during the war the price had been fixed to keep it from advancing to a price prohibitive to consumers, but that any fixing of the price now would be for the purpose of keeping it up and would give occasion for the enemy, in the person of the Canadian manufacturer, to blaspheme and accuse the farmer of profiteering. In the end the following resolution was passed without a dissenting vote.

"Whereas the fixing of the price of wheat was a war measure for the steadying of the market and the keeping down of the high cost of living;

"Whereas while we view with a large measure of concern the restoration of an open market that will make speculation possible in the handling of our chief food product, yet we realize that the continuation of a fixed price on wheat might unduly bear on the consumer, and"

"Whereas we, as producers, are willing that the prices of our products be governed by the law of supply and demand, but protest against scalpers and speculators taking toll which frequently amounts to more than the profits to the producer;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the U. F. A. in convention assembled demand that legislation be passed confining the dealing in all grain on exchanges or elsewhere to cash grain and sales for actual future delivery of grain and grain products, and that steps be taken to provide the necessary credit to finance all farmers who have grain for sale until such time as they desire to market same."

There is not wanting evidence that this action will not meet with the approval of the entire body of farmers, judging by the letters of protest that are coming in. Nevertheless, should the organized farmers of Saskatchewan, who meet next month, take the same stand, it will mean that between 90,000 and 100,000 farmers will be definitely pledged to the principle of not asking for a fixed price for their wheat of 1919.

The organized farmers of Manitoba and Alberta have endorsed the farmers' platform brought out by

the Canadian Council of Agriculture and both have decided on a method for political action, and there is no manner of doubt that either the main principles of the farmers' platform will be adopted and acted on by the present Government, or there will be an effort made to secure a new government that will put these into effect. The action taken along this line by the Alberta delegates at Edmonton is very significant.

After a preamble which declared the freedom of the organization from partisanism, in mobilization of thought and numerical strength and that their demand should be independent of any class or party they resolved as follows:

"We urge the locals in the various federal districts to take immediate steps looking toward the organization of district units for the purpose of holding at least one convention each year in each of such districts, such convention to continue one or more days as circumstances may require.

"The central U. F. A. office shall upon the request of ten per cent of locals in any district render whatever assistance it can in calling and arranging for such convention.

"The primary purpose of such convention shall be to discuss ways and means of taking independent political action and electing an independent candidate. The convention may, however, discuss and deal with any other district U. F. A. matters.

"Each convention shall be responsible for its actions in putting a candidate in the field, in financing and electing such candidate, but nothing in this resolution shall prevent any officer of the provincial organization giving what assistance he can when called upon.

"Men and women will both be eligible to participate in such convention, with equal privileges to such extent as the law allows.

"The several district conventions may make arrangements through a joint committee or through the central U. F. A. office for calling a provincial convention when and for whatsoever purpose they may deem necessary."

The recent announcement by the Canadian Manufacturers as to this being an inopportune time for changing the tariff would indicate that the breach between the East and the West is as wide as ever. It would be well, however, for the east, once and for all, to realize that the west will not back down on this question of the reduced tariff on the things which they have to buy for the prosecution of their work as farmers. They may differ about the question of a fixed price for their wheat and a dozen other things, but they are a solid unit on the question of the tariff, and the sooner the east realized that fact, the sooner it will be possible to make some basis of adjustment.

Conditions with regard to farmers in western Canada are extremely critical at the present time. The cessation of export movement in wheat, flour, bacon and beef is not only occasioning loss at the present moment, but it is creating very serious apprehension. While no definite figures have been officially announced, it is known, and very generally known, that a very large percentage of the ships which three months ago were designed for trade with Canada, have been switched to the Australian and South American routes. The recently announced reduction in ocean freight by Great Britain will be a staggering blow to the Canadian merchant marine and will put a crimp in shipbuilding, which will mean further complications at the coast, men out of work and their purchasing power reduced, while at the same time large shipments of New Zealand mutton and butter are arriving at the coast and lessening the market for products from the prairie farms.

A very large area of land has been prepared for seed at a very high cost, and as seed in many districts is scarce, farmers have been urged to procure seed, particularly oats, while available and they have paid a pretty high price for it. Livestock produc-

tion has been stimulated and there are large numbers of cattle and hogs that should come on the market within the next month or two, while at the same time the outlook for sale is not good. The fixing of the February price for hogs in the United States at \$17.50 has steadied the market here to some extent, but there is a feeling of unrest and apprehension on the part of the farming community and it would be difficult to forecast what the future of the next few months will be. In the cities and towns there is very great unrest on the part of the returned soldier with the regard to the finding of work for them and the displacing of the alien. The consuming public are looking for lower prices and certainly will not be satisfied if they do not get them. There are large stocks of bacon and hog products in cold storage and very heavy stocks of beef. Butter stocks are not excessive at all, in fact, had it not been for the extremely mild weather which has encouraged the creameries to operate more than is usual during the winter, there would have been an actual shortage of butter.

Dairy organizations are uniting to secure the co-operation of the organized farmers to protest against the continuation of the manufacture of oleomargarine in Canada and its importation from the United States. Very strong action along this line was taken at Edmonton and it is expected that at the coming dairy convention here next month and at the Saskatchewan dairy convention also to be held next month that strong protests will be sent in to the Government in connection with this matter. It is quite probable that the Alberta resolution which reads as follows will be used as the basis:

"Whereas your committee appointed by the executive to investigate the effect the bringing in of oleomargarine is having on the production and sale of butter in this province without any substantial benefits to other interests."

Therefore we recommend the following resolution:

"Resolved that the order-in-council admitting oleomargarine to Canada as a war measure be now repealed and its manufacture and sale be prohibited in this country."

PULP AND PAPER RETURNS FOR NOVEMBER.

Trade returns for November—the first to be affected by the cessation of war—show a jump of \$1,958,845 in the value of Canadian pulp and paper exports as compared with November, 1917. Of this amount \$1,325,999 is accounted for by increased export of chemically-prepared pulp. Trans-Pacific trade shows a considerable increase, Australia and New Zealand together taking 65,677 tons of printing paper, valued at \$236,131, and Japan taking 64,594 tons of chemical pulp valued at \$275,050. As cargo space becomes more available exports to these countries should show a considerable increase. The total value of the month's exports was \$8,166,466, made up as follows:

Month of November.	1917.	1918.
Paper and mfgs. of	\$3,227,242	\$3,956,992
Chem. pulp	1,617,295	2,943,294
Mech. pulp	512,221	399,851
	\$5,356,758	\$7,300,137
Pulpwood	850,863	866,329
	\$6,207,261	\$8,166,466

For the first eight months of the current fiscal year the total value of pulp and paper exports, including unmanufactured wood, amounted to \$65,411,601, as against \$48,578,974 for the corresponding period in 1917, an increase of \$16,832,627. Details for the eight months' period follow:

Eight months.	1916.	1917.	1918.
Paper and mfgs. of	\$15,526,243	\$24,140,074	\$29,495,873
Chem. pulp	8,384,840	13,072,335	21,760,738
Mech. pulp	4,164,567	5,036,802	3,308,126
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	\$28,075,650	\$42,249,211	\$54,564,737
Pulpwood	5,067,826	6,329,763	10,846,864
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	\$33,143,476	\$48,578,974	\$65,411,601