

Anxious About Wheat Control

High Winds Did Only Slight Damage to This Year's Wheat
—How Rural Credits Are Working—The Question of
Controlling all Coarse Grains Including Wheat

By E. CORA HIND.

Winnipeg, May 10th.—Conditions of crop continue to occupy the centre of the stage. Heavy winds in the latter part of May caused much anxiety. The damage in Manitoba is very slight but in Saskatchewan is rather more pronounced, in a few districts running as high as 25 per cent. In Alberta wind damage has been slight. All the west with the exception of some very limited areas in Alberta have had copious rains, weather has been cool and grain has stood remarkably well. Seeding of barley, oats and flax has been somewhat delayed by the rains and probably not much more than 60 per cent of flax is yet seeded and there is of course the danger that people will seed flax too late and get caught with frost at the other end; however, that is something about which it is impossible to teach even experienced farmers.

The Grasshopper Situation

The grasshopper plague is a serious menace in a very considerable area both in south western Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The heavy rains, however, have been in favor of checking it and as previously reported the Provincial Governments have the matter well in hand. They are receiving excellent co-operation from Municipal councils and citizens generally are helping to spread the poison under proper supervision. The C.P.R. is having all its road allowances in the infected areas poisoned, the material being supplied at cost by the Provincial Governments and the work done by the railway foremen. To date the Canadian National Railway has not announced a similar policy but will probably follow suit. At present it is impossible to say how the tide will turn in the matter, but certainly a most vigorous fight is being waged and no time has been lost.

In Manitoba wheat is 5 to 6 inches high, in Saskatchewan 4 to 5 and in Alberta 3 to 4 inches.

Some alarm was occasioned during the week by reports of grasshoppers in the more northern sections of the province of Manitoba, where none were last year, but prompt investigation has shown that these hoppers are the ordinary green variety and will do no harm. Every report is being promptly looked into and no methods of checking the plague overlooked. The governments are wisely assuming that every grasshopper is guilty until proved innocent.

Altogether the crop outlook is very favorable and the backward seeding has to a considerable extent been made up by the rapid growth and abundant moisture.

The Scotch Co-Operative Society

Directors and officials of the Scotch Co-Operative Society have been in the city for some days and have left to make an inspection of the 20 grain elevators of the company situated along the line of the G.T.P. and the Elrose branch of the C.N.R., and also the company's ten thousand acre farm at Hughton, Sask. It is probable the farming operations of the company will be increased in the near future as in spite of drought during the past seasons they are satisfied with what their Canadian Superintendent has been able to accomplish.

They are visiting the coast looking into fruit conditions and also examining into the Panama Canal with a view to shipments of both grain and fruit by that route.

How Rural Credits are Working.

The first deposit in the Provincial Government savings bank which is to provide funds for the credit scheme was made this morning. At pre-

sent the bank is in the Parliament buildings, but it will shortly be moved down to the business section of the city and in a few weeks branches will be opened at a number of points in Manitoba.

In the meantime the work of the rural credit societies has been going forward, steadily, the Government furnishing the necessary money at the old rate which the chartered banks refused to meet. During the two months that have elapsed since the Government started doing the loaning themselves \$845,000 have gone out in loans. It is expected that before the year closes the loans will amount to \$1,500,000 possibly more. A number of new societies have been formed, the limit of amount to be loaned any one society is \$60,000.

The Government banking scheme is being watched with a very jealous eye by the banks and it is probable it will come in for considerable criticism during the approaching election campaign. The interest which the Government is charging while nominally 7 per cent is really slightly less, possibly one half of one per cent, due to the difference in the manner in which notes are drawn and interest computed.

Government Control of Wheat.

The grain trade of the west continues to be much exercised over the prospect of continued control of the selling of wheat for at least another year.

Dr. Magill, secretary of the Winnipeg Exchange who has been in Ottawa for some weeks watching matters on behalf of the trade, pretty well set the heather on fire the other day by wiring his opinion that if the Wheat Board was continued it would be made to include coarse grains as well as wheat.

This morning the Canadian press carried a resolution passed by the Canadian Council of Agriculture re-affirming their stand of last January, that control is necessary for the handling of the crop of 1920, if Government buying is continued overseas, and urging the Government to take the necessary steps to continue the board.

While officially the organized farmers adopted these resolutions it is problematic if the same resolution would have carried had the vote been by ballot instead of by show of hands, but since then the announcement of the value of the participation certificates has put a different complexion on the whole matter.

Credit Due to Head of Wheat Board.

There is very little doubt that the value of the participation certificates is due to the shrewdness and patience of the head of the wheat board in the matter of marketing. It is an open question that he is personally in favor of a decontrolled market and should the board be continued and should he refuse to act for another year National Selling might assume a very different aspect.

If there is any change made in the board there will no doubt be a clamor from the farmers, more especially from Saskatchewan, to have the board composed almost if not entirely of farmers. If the Government accedes to any such proposition as that there would be very handsome prospect of disaster in the selling of the 1920 crop. Selling a crop in foreign markets is a difficult and delicate business, and one that cannot be learned overnight, even by the most astute grain grower.

If the Government finally decides on control for 1920 the best thing it can do is to leave the board as at present constituted, always provided they persuade Stewart to remain at the head of it.

With regard to placing coarse grain under control that would certainly precipitate a very serious situation. The head of the farmers' party, Hon. T. A. Crerar, has placed himself on record as opposed to permanent national selling, but if the coarse grain trade is controlled, even for one year, it will mean the practical wiping out of the whole machinery of the grain trade. National buying is not at all likely to become a permanent thing and when buying is decontrolled the last excuse for National Selling will have disappeared, but there will then be no established channels of trade to safely and promptly handle the crop.

Not within the time of any of those now interested in the trade will Canada have developed to a point where she will be consuming 75 per cent of her crop, and the trained ability and the vast machinery which has been slowly and carefully built up to handle the crop is a very material factor in its prompt movement. It must be borne in mind that during the three years when selling has been practically nationalized there has been less than a normal crop to market. A return to the bumper crop of 1915 for example would present a very different problem to solve.

Sugar Shortage is Acute

Coupled with the shortage of tin cans reported last week, many people are pessimistic about the price of sugar for the canning and preserving season. From coast to coast reports show that Canada's fruit crop promises to be a bumper one and with present high prices it would be a shame it is not possible to save a good percentage of it for the winter months.

Wholesale grocers are watching the situation closely and state that sugar will sell at thirty cents a pound or even at three pounds for a dollar in a few months. Strikes in the refineries and a shortage of the Cuban crop are claimed as the principal reasons for the high prices. The Board

of Commerce threatens to publish a list of profiteers in sugar. This list is said to contain the names of wholesalers and retailers in many parts of Canada, chiefly Ontario and Quebec. If the alleged profiteering is true, thorough prosecuting of the offenders should be in order.

There is a rift in the clouds however and the possibilities are that the world's supply of sugar may be normal once again. Sweden anticipates a particularly good crop of sugar beets during the coming year and F. O. Leicht, of Magdeburg expects Germany's beet sugar output this year will reach 1,165,000 tons, against 750,000 tons last season.

WORKED BOTH WAYS.

A north countryman was looking for work, and he applied at a certain mill.

"Has't gotten character?" quoth the one in authority.

"Nay, but a' can get it."

And off he went. An hour or two later he returned, and again the same one demanded with some asperity:

"Has't gotten thy character?"

"Nay, a've not brought mine, but a've gotten thine. Good mornin'."