

The Brain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, September 19, 1917

THE PRICE OF WHEAT

At last Canadian farmers know definitely what they are to realize for their 1917 crop of wheat. That price will be \$2.21 for No. 1 Northern in store at Fort William or Port Arthur. It is approximately the same as farmers in United States will receive for wheat of equal quality at Duluth or Minneapolis. It is a liberal price and we believe will be satisfactory generally to the farmers of Western Canada. It will guarantee to those with a fair crop a good return for their labor and investment even in these times of excessive production costs. That there is any element of profiteering about it to the farmer no one who has had to contend with nature and the difficulty of farm work during the last two seasons will contend. But they are assured for the first time of a fair return for their work. The new price is 91 cents per bushel more than the offer made for this crop by Sir George Foster last spring and rejected by the Canadian Council of Agriculture. It is at least from 40 to 60 cents more than that realized by the farmers for last year's crop. Most of this crop will grade much higher than that of 1916 and it will therefore mean a much greater aggregate return. While the spreads have not yet been set for the commercial grades below No. 3 Northern, this will be done soon and no such a confused condition of affairs as prevailed last fall when such a large amount of low grade wheat began to come in will be possible this season. The spreads so far set between grades would seem to be fair and conform fairly closely with the spreads in times of normal trading before the war.

Under the new prices all buyers of wheat for consumption in or out of Canada must pay in addition to the fixed price the sum of two cents per bushel to the board, and when this grain is purchased for export an additional two cents per bushel is to be paid to the board. This will create a fund out of which will be paid the carrying charges on grain in country elevators, for the Board of Supervisors will utilize the existing channels of distribution, namely, the Lake Shippers' Clearance Association and the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. The fund mentioned above is only to pay carrying charges on street wheat in country elevators. The charges for commission and handling in country elevators will be the same as now, but the maximum margin between the base price and that received by the smallest farmer in the most remote district, omitting the freight, will scarcely be likely to exceed six cents. Such a margin, however, has not yet been definitely set.

The work of the Board of Grain Supervisors in setting the price of wheat has been a most difficult one and was of necessity governed very largely by the line of action in United States and the attitude of the biggest buyer, the allied wheat commission. Had the board made a set price at Fort William with a periodical, say monthly addition in price to cover the carrying charges instead of collecting a fund as will be done, the Fort William price would have soon been in advance of the Duluth or Minneapolis price and there would probably have been deep dissatisfaction among some United States farmers.

There will now be no advantage in price to farmers holding their grain. True where they have farm storage they can doubtless better devote their time to preparing all the land possible for next season's crop than by teaming grain to elevators. Immediately that season is past, however, they will be better off if they get their money than keep their wheat. No allowance will be made them for storing at home.

THE WAR ELECTION FRANCHISE

The prospects in the political field now point to a party election which will be bitter in the extreme. The War Election Franchise Bill has been put through the House of Commons under the closure. The effect of this legislation in the House has been to drive nearly all the conscriptionist Liberals back into the old party fold. It could hardly have been otherwise. The franchise proposals of the new bill will chiefly affect the prairie provinces where thousands of citizens of alien birth or extraction will lose the franchise which they have enjoyed for many years. The prospects of a union government seem very slight. It is possible that some Liberals will be taken into the government before the election is held, but that it will be a representative union of the parties outside of Quebec does not look at all likely. That the election will be fought out on party lines seems now the strongest probability. This is one of the greatest misfortunes that has come to Canada in its history. The blame rests with both parties and it is now hardly worth while trying to apportion it. The present political crisis is the outcome of the mean, narrow, selfish and sordid party system that has prevailed in Canada almost since confederation. It is the natural fruitage of such a system. It is too late to correct the evil before the election is held, but every citizen capable of clear thought should take it to heart in the future.

As to the War Election Franchise Bill, we cannot see how the present crisis can possibly justify such legislation. If the government returned at the next election had no other duty than the prosecution of the war there might be found some justification. But the new government will have many mighty problems in addition to the war itself. It will also have the administration of all the public business of Canada which will be carried on in much the usual way. The new government will also be charged with the shaping of fiscal and economic policies both for the war period and probably after peace is restored. Those citizens of alien birth or extraction who will be disfranchised will pay their taxes in the same manner and to the same extent as before and will exercise all the duties and privileges of citizenship except the franchise. Those women who will not receive the franchise will have the same obligations and duties as the state as will their sisters who will be permitted to cast a vote. We cannot but look with the gravest apprehension upon the probable dangerous effect of this most extraordinary and unparalleled restriction and regulation of the franchise in a democratic country.

There is just one point upon which we can see a justification of the franchise measure and that is the desirability of maintaining in power the Borden government until the conclusion of the war. Upon this point there is naturally a wide divergence of opinion. Despite the many, many sins both of omission and commission that may rightly be charged against the Borden administration, we do not believe that very many people in Canada think that the situation would be materially improved by the substitution of another purely party government. There is no doubt that the Borden government feels itself to be best qualified to carry on the war and that the franchise measure is designed to produce this result. A graver danger may follow, however, at the first election after the war. The present government will no doubt be returned to power as a result of the franchise measure they have adopted. If not, then the managers of the election will not be as capable as we believe them to be. If such is the result they will quite reasonably look to further

adjustments of the franchise to perpetuate them in power for years to come. This will of course be scouted, but it is nevertheless quite within the range of possibility.

The hope of the future as we have many times repeated seems to lie in the West. From the two old parties the West has never received anything approaching a square deal. The West will never receive a square deal from either of the two old parties as at present constituted. The best hope is that out of the present crisis may be developed a Western party that will give its full support in the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion and will at the same time be in a position to see that the welfare of the West is no longer ignored. There is far more reason in the establishment of a purely Western party than in either of the two old parties now existent. Whether the Western party comes now or later it must be one of the aims towards which the West will look and plan if this Western country is to come to its own.

THE GUIDE CROP REPORT

On another page in this issue appears the crop report covering conditions up to September 5. Appreciation is due the 440 correspondents who gave us such complete and carefully prepared reports. Final Guide reports in previous years have approximated very close to actual out-turns and it is largely due our correspondents that we have been able to make this true. Drought has been the chief factor limiting yields and its damage prevailed mainly through the southern districts across the whole three provinces. Frost late in June followed by drought did much to curtail crops in places. Rust, which did such terrible damage a year ago, is almost unknown this year. Hail damage has been generally small, judging by reports, whereas last year was the worst in the history of the country.

The great damage has been to oats and barley. In the south plenty of fields will be cut for green feed only and considerable areas were plowed up. Wheat generally will average well and it will be nearly all within the first three grades, so somewhere near the maximum price will be realized for it. Consequently the returns from this crop should be greater than from any crop ever harvested, with the possible exception of that of 1915. The hay crop seems better than was generally anticipated, but potatoes are not as good as might have been expected. There is a larger acreage, however, of the latter.

The Guide's estimate is as follows:—

Crop	Estimated Total Yield
Wheat	224,307,200 bushels
Oats	239,065,480 bushels
Barley	45,259,820 bushels
Flax	6,837,435 bushels

Later reports will show how near these figures are to the actual official out-turns.

THE WOOL SITUATION

On another page of this issue appears an article on the war-time wool situation. In it the author deals among other things with the question of shutting off the American market from Canadian wool growers. He emphasizes the arguments of the eastern textile manufacturers and of the representatives of the western growers for and against such a measure. The western men have the best of the arguments. The attitude adopted by the eastern manufacturers regarding Canadian wool has been reprehensible. They have systematically boycotted the western growers. Every reasonable effort has been made to get them to compete for the wool. The few bids that were received were below the competitive prices,