

SASKATCHEWAN CROP OUTLOOK

Seeding has Commenced Under Favorable Conditions—Collections Good—Continental Oil Co. to Establish Plant at Regina

(Staff Correspondence.)

Regina, April 22, 1919.

IDEAL weather prevails in this district and seeding operations are in full swing, under favorable conditions. The season is later than last year, but the seed will go in with a rush and there is ample moisture in the ground to give it a good start. Merchants and business men generally are in excellent spirits.

In discussing the situation with Mr. L. T. McDonald, secretary of the Regina Board of Trade, he said that the prospects in the West this spring were excellent. Regina, he pointed out, is an ideal distributing centre, is the capital and commercial centre of the province of Saskatchewan, the largest wheat-growing province in the Dominion. Already this spring, said Mr. McDonald, several large eastern wholesale and manufacturing firms have completed arrangements for the purchase of property in Regina, and will erect large warehouses to take care of their western business. Collections, he said, were very good, and the volume of business away ahead of last year.

While the writer was in Regina the manager of the Continental Oil Co., was in the city, and made the announcement definitely that this large oil company had completed arrangements to construct an oil refinery, the initial cost to be in the neighborhood of \$500,000. The Imperial Oil Company's undertaking at Regina, which has been in operation there now for two or three years, and around which a thriving community has been built up, has been a pronounced success. The business also of the T. Eaton Co., and the Robt. Simpson Co. at Regina, and serving a large area from there, have been most successful, and are working at full capacity.

The life insurance managers at Regina report large increases in business and managers of loan departments report payments being well met and also quite an active demand for loans. One trust company manager said to *The Monetary Times*: "There is considerable activity in the way of settling up of estates and the selling of stock and implements by auction held on behalf of various estates, the owners of which having died during the epidemic and owing to the lateness of the season, the farms were kept intact and the disposal of the chattels are now going on. The price obtained for the implements is exceptionally good, although the demand for horses is not what one would like. There is very little demand for horses in the western part of the province, but implements can readily be sold. Soldiers, who disposed of their chattels and rented their farms unequipped before going to war, are now returning to their lands, and getting equipment at these sales. Owing to the return of the soldiers there is quite an activity in farm lands. The soldier is buying and arranging for payment through the Soldiers' Settlement Board."

Official Report on Agriculture

The first bulletin of the season relative to Saskatchewan's grain crop for the present year has just been issued. Prospects and estimates of the areas to be sown, condition of crops from time to time, meteorological data, etc., will be collected and compiled from all parts of the province every two weeks throughout the growing and later, the harvesting season. The information thus compiled will be gathered by telegrams from representatives in all districts fully acquainted with the conditions existing in that district.

The first bulletin to be issued shows that the snow has practically disappeared from the land with the exception of deep drifts and around the bluffs. The frost is out of the ground to a depth of from twelve to eighteen inches, making it possible on the higher and drier lands to already start work with the harrow. Snow has fallen, however, in several districts within the last week, but this has been beneficial on

account of the added moisture, although delaying seeding perhaps for a week or ten days.

Sufficient seed grain appears to be on hand for all requirements. In those districts where a shortage appeared, the municipal authorities and grain growers' associations are endeavouring to meet the shortage. Many are importing seed oats owing to the scarcity of this grain last year.

Feed for stock during the seeding season appears to be sufficient and from present appearances there will be green grass within a short time to remedy any shortage that occurs. Some farmers are shipping hay from those districts where more than a sufficiency exists.

Regarding the area to be sown to wheat this year, some indefinite statements have been made. It would seem that owing to the unsettled conditions regarding the fixing of the price of wheat for the coming crop, many farmers are debating the advisability of increasing their areas. Possibly more land will be plowed this spring than last. More horse-power is available for one thing, the moist soil will help and the soldiers returning to the farming districts will assist in meeting the shortage of labor. At present a considerable shortage of help exists. Good wages are being offered, from \$65 to \$75 per month for experienced men being the rule.

ALBERTA AND GREAT WATERWAYS RAILWAY

Before the Public Accounts Committee of the Alberta Legislature on April 14th, Mr. Norman Harvey, Deputy Minister of Railways and Telephones, stated that the total cost to date of the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway had been \$6,748,613. The bonds of this railway were guaranteed for a total distance of 350 miles, Edmonton to Fort McMurray, including a branch line to Egg Lake, forty-one miles long, with twenty miles of siding. The total interest so far has been \$1,326,151. This represents the difference between the interest paid out on bonds of the railway under construction and the interest paid in on the trust funds from the proceeds of the bond sale on deposit in the bank.

According to Mr. Harvey, the system was that the interest on the guaranteed bonds was charged up as a part of the cost of construction on the lines under construction. Thus, the total interest on the bond issue was charged up against construction of the line until that portion between Edmonton and Lac La Biche was considered completed about two years ago and turned over to the operating department of the railway. Thereafter, the interest on the proportionate amount of bonds on the uncompleted portion was charged up as part of construction cost against that unfinished part, while the railway company was responsible for payment of interest on the bonds covering the completed portion.

The total railway mileage between Edmonton and Fort McMurray is 289 miles, and the steel is now laid to Last Cache, down to the river and within ten miles of the terminus, the grading being completed to the terminus. Mr. Harvey said that eleven miles of the Egg Lake branch had been completed with thirty miles of grading.

The deputy minister testified that the government had paid no interest direct to bondholders; that the cheques were paid out to the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway for the total amount of each progress estimate, including including interest on the bonds as part of the cost of line under construction; that the government never had endorsed any cheques and turned them over to bondholders; but that the interest was never paid to the company until the government was satisfied that the bondholders' interest had not been defaulted. He had not heard of any reports that such interest had been defaulted.

H. A. Warner, government engineer for the Lacombe and Blindman Valley Electric Railway, also was briefly examined and put in a statement of receipts and expenditures for the year 1918 of that railway, showing total revenue of \$18,543, with a deficit of \$136 for the completed portion of the line.