

"They have a good deal of trouble with smut in wheat in the Argentine. Frosts in the southern part of the country also cause damage some seasons. With old lands where wheat has been grown for fifteen to twenty years, and where no plant-food has been put back in the soil, the land becomes tired and foul or sour, thereby producing poor crops.

HARVESTING THE CROPS.

"Generally speaking, the reaping is done in a very short space of time, for the reason that nearly every man, woman, girl, and boy works from early morn till late at night to save all the crop before any of the grain is shed. Reaping machines and horses are plentiful, but sometimes with a big crop labor is scarce.

"Threshing is, as a rule, done by contract, and is begun as soon after the harvest as machines and men can be secured. Very often estancieros combine and purchase threshing machines and do the threshing on a sort of share system, or, rather, on the co-operative principle.

"The life of the Buenos Aires and Santa Fé wheat-farmer is, saying the least of it, monotonous, although I must say it is probably one of the healthiest climates in the world. Needless to say, the temptations of the ordinary estanciero to spend money are not great. They live very simply, but hardly ever does poverty exist. About the only amusement is playing the violin, guitar, or banjo. It is not a very pleasant feature for an Englishman to hear these Italian wheat-growers discussing matters among themselves when he does not understand them; but if you only get a twinkling of the language you become impressed with it. I know of no language except the Maori language which is so soft and sweet.

"Getting back to the wheat business, which I wish to make as short as possible, I may point out that there are about three hundred and fifty railway stations where wheat is shipped for export—that is, from the country districts. While passing I may mention that there does not seem to be much disposition to rapidly build up country towns, as is the case in Canada and the United States.

"At the Port of Buenos Aires they have many enormous elevators on the principle of those at the head of Lake Superior in Canada, through which latter a vast portion of the wheat consumed in Great Britain passes. At the Port of Rosario they have also large elevators. The difference between the methods of handling wheat in the Argentine and Canada particularly in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, the wheat is never put in bags; it is delivered direct from the machines into large wagon boxes, from which it is shovelled direct into the elevators, which are dotted along the line at each small town or siding. The wheat is all classed or graded and placed in different compartments high up in the elevators, after which it is run directly into the cars at a small cost. It is then conveyed to the head of Lake Superior, where it is again run or elevated into these enormous sky-pilot elevators, from which it is delivered into the vessels without very much hand labor.

"In the Argentine all the wheat, as in New Zealand, is put in bags and stacked up at the stations until sufficient cars are available to carry it to the sea-ports. I have seen as much as three hundred thousand bags of wheat stacked up at one station in the district of Tres Arios awaiting transport. In many cases the bags are placed directly on the ground, without any straw or boards underneath. In the case of heavy rains a considerable quantity becomes damaged. This is said to be the fault of the farmer, but I say it is the fault of the government, for during my stay in the republic large quantities of wheat were blocked at the various stations owing to a strike on the railways. This strike hampered trade greatly, but it was finally settled peacefully at a great expense to the farmers. During the strike I had several quaint experiences while traveling. Nearly every train was paraded by Spanish soldiers; what they were there for one could not tell, for although they had swords, bayonets, rifles, no person seemed to be getting hurt, as would be the case in North America where the militia is called out for a like purpose. Sometimes we would stop two hours and a half at a railway station, for what purpose no person could explain; nevertheless we stopped.

"The Spanish soldiers are a great body of men. They are all undersized; they wear a uniform which seems to have been specially designed by the government to act as a target for any foreign foe. They have all sorts of shiny belts and shoulder-ornaments, and the most conspicuous of all is a very high cap, the top of which is a deep scarlet, thus making a grand target in time of war.

GENERAL.

"The great plains of the Argentine are well equipped with railways, and extensive developments yet continue on a large scale. It is said that back as far as 1867 there were only about 360 miles of railway in the country, while in 1900 there were 10,601 miles of these railways. The government owns about 1,500 miles, and nearly 9,500 miles are owned by foreign companies. In length of line the Argentine stands about eighth on the list of countries. The paid-up capital is about \$560,000,000 gold. The total receipts according to the Argentine Year-book for 1900, are over \$400,000,000 gold. There are three gauges in railways in the republic. One is a very wide line, being 5 foot gauge; it is really the standard throughout the country.

"According to figures given in the Year-book, the Argentine is working under better conditions in the growing of live stock than any of the British colonies. It is claimed that at present the majority of the freezing companies are working with much less expense in the administration, etc., taking it the year round, and their output is much greater, thereby enabling them to pay in proportion enhanced values to the estanciero (farmer). Another strong point in favor of the Argentine estancieros is that they work steadily throughout the whole year, whereas according to statistics the upwards of fifty stations in the British colonies are only able to work on an average, taking them all round, a little over one-third of the year. So enormous is the business of growing fat stock in the Argentine becoming, that it is estimated by reliable authorities that within very few years they should be able to export two million steers either alive or through the freezing-works.

"In order to give our people an idea of what they have to compete against, I quote the following figures from the Argentine Year-book for 1902 and 1903: In 1902 the exports of cattle or steers from the Argentine were 118,303 head. The number of cattle exported in 1903 is said not to vary much from 1902. The number of wethers shipped in 1902 was 122,501; horses, 16,008; frozen mutton, 80,073 tons; sheep-skins, 41,405 tons; salted cow-hides, 35,343 tons; dried cow-hides, 26,558 tons; salted horse-hides, 135,685; dried horse-hides, 282,138; wool, 197,936; jerked beef, 22,304; frozen beef, 70,018; tallow, 49,095.

"I have much pleasure quoting a few of the statistics just issued by the Ministry of Agriculture for 1903—that is, so far as the meat industry is concerned. The principal exports in this industry were frozen sheep and lambs, 2,445,993; frozen beef, 84,628 tons; wool, 192,989 tons; sheep-skins, 41,475 tons; hides, 37,239 tons; horse-hair, 2,241 tons; tallow, 39,000 tons. The bulk of the frozen meat in 1903 was shipped to the United Kingdom and South Africa, but most of the wool went to France. The sheep-skins went to Germany, Belgium, and the United States, the bulk to the two former countries. The value of the wool exported from the Argentine in 1903, estimating it at \$2.61 gold per 10 kilos., was \$50,424,168 gold, or, say, over £10,000,000. Last year 1,202,100 cattle were slaughtered for dried beef. In addition to this, 269,000 were slaughtered for making extract and preserved beef.

"I landed in the Argentine in February, and I noticed that the exports of frozen sheep and lamb for the previous month, January, were 194,731 carcasses, and of frozen beef 72,150 quarters.

"It may be interesting to New Zealanders to know the conditions under which men may start pastoral farming. I now speak of people with a small capital. The landowner, as a rule, provides a house, pens, and the necessary fittings, and camp land sufficient to carry stock and 800 sheep. The shepherd or estanciero buys a further 800 sheep. He takes charge of the whole flock and provides his own food, mutton excepted, which is to be taken from the flock. Whatever the profit from the flock may be it is divided equally between the landowner and the shepherd, after deducting the shearing and dipping expenses, which are advanced by the landowner. The shepherd or farmer is allowed to plant vegetables required for his family, also to keep poultry, milch-cows, bees, etc., and he can also plant fruit-trees. Contracts of this kind are generally entered into for a term of three years. At the end of each year the produce of wool, wethers, sheep, and skins sold is divided. The increase is divided at the end of the contract, when the shepherd may either take his share of capital in sheep, or renew his contract. The necessary capital for such a plan as this is very small: 800 sheep at \$1, \$800; six horses at \$15, \$90; furniture, utensils, and general expenses for first year, \$250; total, \$1,140. With this capital, and with sheep shearing 5½ lb. to 6 lb. of wool, the shepherd's portion of the profit may be estimated at from \$450 to \$550, without counting what he could make from butter, cheese, poultry, honey, etc.

"The State lands which are available for sale or for renting, as given by the 1903 Year-book, number nearly a hundred million hectares, situated as follows: In Santa Cruz, 24,949,976 hectares; Chubut, 22,545,742 hectares; Rio Negro, 15,087,470 hectares; Chaco, 13,025,450 hectares; Neuquen, 6,174,158 hectares; Formosa, 8,676,180 hectares; Pampa, 3,124,802 hectares; Tierra del Fuego, 1,886,809 hectares; Misiones, 792,000 hectares; total, 96,262,487 hectares.

"Seventy-five per cent of the wool in the Argentine is of white-faced long-wool sheep (Lincolns and Leicesters), 20 per cent of merinos, and only about 5 per cent of black-faced and criollo sheep.

"In 1901 228,358 tons of wool was exported, and in 1902, 197,936 tons. In 1903, 192,989 tons was exported, most of which went to France and Germany. I have seen a great many fine flocks of sheep in the Argentine, and some of the breeders pay extraordinary prices for stud stock at Home; notwithstanding this, and the fact also that they have such an excellent climate for the breeding of animals, their sheep on the whole, in my opinion, do not compare with best New Zealand and Australian sheep. You will, however, find some of the best stud stock that is to be found in any part of the world. Owing to the fact that my stay was such a short one in the republic, it was impossible for me to collect much practical information direct from the sheep-farmers—that is, with reference to the actual methods of handling sheep on the estancias."

Judges in the Grain Fields' Competition.

The first week in August will see the inception of the judging by the men to whom is entrusted the work of rating the standing crop of the various competitors in the contest for the prizes for growing grain.

Seed Commissioner George H. Clark was the originator of the idea and it is gratifying to note the hearty response by the farmers and agricultural departments of Alberta and Saskatchewan to the efforts of his branch to thus improve quality and quantity in cereal production. Saskatchewan will have competitions at nearly thirty points, Alberta at nine or ten, and Manitoba at one point only. Grenfell carries the palm for the largest number of fields entered at any one point, namely twenty. All the judges will meet in conference at Indian Head Experimental Farm on August 3 and on August 5 they will start for their various appointments.

The full list of districts, number of entries and judges is given below:

Gainsboro, 4, F. W. Green, Moose Jaw.
Carievale, 6, F. W. Green.
Oxbow, 4, F. W. Green.
Alameda, 4, J. E. Wright, Kenlis.
Carlyle, 12, J. E. Wright.
Stoughton, 12, J. H. Fraser, Edgeley.
Creelman, 9, J. H. Fraser.
Moosomin, 9, A. E. Wilson, Indian Head.
Wapella, 7, A. E. Wilson.
Fairmede, 4, A. E. Wilson.
Grenfell, 20, Angus Mackay, Indian Head.
Wolseley, 6, J. A. Brown, Spy Hill.
Sintaluta, 4, J. A. Brown.
Moose Jaw, 4, J. A. Brown.
Indian Head, 12, R. Phin, Moosomin.
Fort Qu'Appelle, 8, R. Phin.
Churchbridge, 7, A. P. Crisp, Moosomin.
Saltcoats, 12, A. P. Crisp.
Yorkton, 5, H. McFayden, seed branch, Regina.
Quill Lake, 9, McFayden.
Raddison, 3, Major F. Coles, Moffatt.
North Battleford, 8, Major F. Coles.
Battleford, 2, Major F. Coles.
Rosthern, 10, Thos. R. Brown, Regina.
Carrot River, 3, Thos. R. Brown.
Saskatoon, 5, A. Switzer, Grenfell.
Duck Lake, 5, A. Switzer.
Lloydminster, 12, G. H. Clark, Dominion seed commissioner.
Vegreville, 12, W. C. McKillican, seed branch Calgary.
Red Deer, 5, W. C. McKillican.
Medicine Hat, 4, W. H. Fairfield, Lethbridge.
Macleod, 7, W. H. Fairfield.
Lethbridge, 8, T. H. Woolford, Cardston.
Magrath, 13, T. H. Woolford.
Hartney, Man., 12, J. Bracken seed branch, Winnipeg.

Notes on the Fairs.

It is surprising to everybody who makes a first visit to the smaller fairs of the Province of Alberta to note the strength of the display in live stock and agricultural products. Down at Okotoks last week there were nearly three hundred entries in horses alone and for quality there are few shows in the west that could surpass the southern town. The grain exhibit though small was also first class as far as quality is concerned and was a credit to the district. One other feature is worthy of comment; it is the one-day show and on the following day the horse races are held. In this way the agricultural features are not submerged by the turf events and everybody is satisfied. It is horse-racing or agriculture there—you pay your money and take your choice.

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No one would ever think of telling the people of Wetaskiwin that the prize list of their agricultural society was "on the hog". This would not be true, but strictly speaking it is "on the dog". For dogs including collies, wolf hounds, Scotch and fox terriers, pointers and setters there was offered a total of \$30 in prize money, and for hogs, just \$21. Wetaskiwin has some of the finest country in the world, the grass grows rank and strong in that rich black soil. There is a government creamery which is making splendid progress. The people are using the by-products for the production of bacon of superior quality and yet—would you believe it?—the prize list offered \$9 for dairy products and \$30 for dogs—just the same amount for hogs and the dairy products combined as was offered for dogs. No sheep were shown, although to entice them to the show the management hung up almost half as much as for the canines. But too many dogs always mean few sheep so after all there was a reason. Men of Wetaskiwin, wake up! Get an idea of the eternal fitness and proportion of things. Don't go to the dogs, and the time will come that you will have a show far surpassing anything you have had in the past.