

## Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

WINNIPEG, SEPT. 13.

The event of the week has been the publication of the fixed price for wheat in Canada, and the farmers of the Canadian West have occasion to congratulate themselves on the liberal price that has been secured, in view of the difference in the situation between the United States and Canada. It was a very difficult matter for the Board of Grain Supervisors to make a price, which would be sufficiently profitable to stimulate production, be in line with the American prices, and not excessive to the consumer. As has already been pointed out, the great divergence between conditions in the United States and Canada is that the American wheat is 80 per cent consumed at home, while the Canadian wheat is 80 per cent exported, therefore, the American Food Controller was more interested in reasonably cheap bread to the great consuming public than in satisfying the desire of the farmers for profit. Another very knotty point was the fact that while the American wheat is not to any great extent for long periods of time in interior storage, thus occasioning carrying charges, the Canadian crop from the first week of December until the middle of April is subject to a carrying charge. The easiest way to deal with this so far as Canada was concerned, would have been to add from time to time a small fraction to the basis price in order to cover the carrying charge, but this would have had the effect of very soon making the basis price at Fort William much higher than at Duluth. This would have created trouble with the American farmer. The plan finally adopted by the Board, of adding 2 cents to the price, to be paid by the Canadian mills and the Allies, and an additional amount not to exceed 2 cents by the United States mills and the Allies, thereby creating a fund which will be utilized to cover the carrying charges on wheat. This arrangement, as a matter of fact, places the small farmer who must sell his wheat by the load in a better position than he has ever been before. Shortage of cars and uncertainty as to when wheat would be moved has always been the reason for taking all carrying charges off the price paid the farmer, far earlier in the season than would have been the case had movement been swift and certain. This time the farmer will be able to sell by load at the Fort William price less freight, 1 cent commission, the handling charges for elevation, exchange on money to the country, etc. It is not likely that the charges other than freight will, at any point, exceed 6 cents a bushel, and as the money to be made by the elevator houses this year will be almost entirely their commission, they will be keen to handle as much as possible, and will therefore cut handling charges to the lowest minimum. Even on a 10 bushel crop grading No. 3 Northern, the prices set will leave a profit of \$8 an acre or thereabouts. At the same time, flour, at \$11.00, while nearly double the price it was before the war, is still the cheapest and best food offered. The price to the Allies is not excessive for war time.

Of course, nobody expects for a moment that everybody will be satisfied, but speaking broadly, the farmers certainly have no cause of complaint, as the price set for No. 1 Northern is 51 cents higher than the fixed price, and 21 cents higher than the maximum price suggested to Sir George Foster by the Canadian Council of Agriculture last spring, as being likely to prove acceptable to Western farmers. This was at the time when he had proposed that the crop should be bought at \$1.30. The cost of production has not been much, in any, in excess of what was anticipated at that time, indeed the harvesting has been somewhat reduced in cost by the co-operation of the stooking gangs from the small towns and cities, and even threshing is being helped out to some extent in the same way. The highest price paid for the work done by these volunteer helpers is 30 cents an hour, this money, almost invariably being turned over to the Red Cross; but it means \$3.00 a day of 10 hours, which is certainly not excessive for harvest wages.

### CROP ESTIMATE.

During the week I issued my official estimate in the Manitoba Free Press, placing the crop of the three provinces roughly at 213,000,000 bushels for wheat, 194,000,000 for oats, 38,000,000 for barley, and 9,000,000 for flax. This was after a trip of many thousands of miles by train, and over 1,500 miles of motor-ing, together with a final report from over 200 local correspondents. The heavy frosts of September 8th and 9th were a great misfortune, so far as coarse grains are concerned, because they were severe enough to thoroughly destroy a number of very

heavy fields of oats in the north, that were just passing from the milk stage into the dough state; they will make good fodder, but cannot be threshed. These oats were seeded in good time, but owing to the drouth and the frost of the 21st of June, were greatly delayed in development, only a very small percentage of the wheat could be damaged by this frost, and that mainly as to grade, as the bulk of the wheat was past being affected as to yield. The quality of the wheat is excellent, and by far the largest proportion of it will fall within the contract grades unless we have a very unfavorable threshing season.

Considering the shortage of labor which has prevailed throughout the season, the amount of excellent summer fallow in the three provinces is quite remarkable, while the amount of breaking in Alberta and in Northern Manitoba is very large indeed. Saskatchewan seems to have been less fortunate in this respect. In Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan the scrub country, a very great deal of use has been made of small tractors this year, for breaking, and they do very good work. The breaking with large tractors on the open prairie sections is much less successful, and a good deal of it has left a poor seed bed.

### LIVE-STOCK.

Live-stock markets are very active, so active, indeed that it has been impossible to obtain the returns for August until to-day. These show that in

the 8 months up to August 31st, 108,000 cattle were received at the Winnipeg yards, compared with the 59,139 for the same period of last year. The receipts for the month of August were 34,521. Manitoba contributed 11,271, Saskatchewan 21,348, Alberta 1,711. 16,515 head were consumed locally, 7,439 went east, 2,653 went west, and 8,156 went south as against 4,895 in the August of 1916. Of the total receipts of cattle 6,174 were stockers and feeders, and of these 2,451 went south, as against 2,595 in 1916. Manitoba absorbed 705, Saskatchewan 483, Alberta 603 and 1,932 were shipped east. Last year in the same month Eastern Canada took no feeders at all.

The total receipts of hogs for the 8 months is 247,808, as against 236,825 for the same period last year. The receipts for the month of August were 29,887 head compared with 24,321 in 1916. Of the August receipts Manitoba furnished 7,479 head, Saskatchewan 14,508, and Alberta 7,900. 9,246 head were consumed locally, and 23,016 went east, 127 west and 373 south.

J. D. McGregor, of Brandon, has been elected a member of the Board of Food Control in Canada, especially with regard to the conservation of meat, and yesterday held a meeting with the commission and live-stock men before leaving for the east, in order that he might be informed as to the slaughter of veal and lambs and young pigs. The reports of the various firms show that the receipts of these animals was exceptionally small at Winnipeg yards, and that of the receipts coming in, practically all that were good for purposes of breeding or finishing as mature beef, mutton or pork, were preserved, while only the dairy calves unsuitable to make beef were being slaughtered.

### PRICES FIXED FOR THE 1917 CANADIAN WHEAT CROP.

The prices fixed on the 1917 crop of wheat by the Board of Grain Supervisors for Canada, on a basis of Fort William and Port Arthur, are identical with those set by the United States on the same grades on a basis of Minneapolis and Duluth.

Following are the prices: No. 1 Manitoba Northern, \$2.21; No. 2 Manitoba northern, \$2.18; No. 3 Manitoba northern, \$2.15; No. 1 Alberta red winter, \$2.21; No. 2 Alberta red winter, \$2.18; No. 3 Alberta red winter, \$2.15.

Prices on the other grades of wheat will be fixed as soon as sufficient information about quality of new crop has been secured by the committee.

Flour millers in the interior west of Fort William and Port Arthur will be permitted to pay in excess of the fixed charges a maximum of one cent per bushel diversion charge.

The board has decided that the price on wheat loaded out of elevators in Canada licensed as private shipping or mining elevators shall be as follows: The price fixed above, the price of wheat loaded or shipped out of such elevators.

Minimum will be not more than four cents less than the fixed price, grade for grade. The buyer, in addition, pays f.o.b. charges.

In the United States the American millers and the Allies are required to pay to the United States Grain Corporation one per cent on the wheat purchased, in addition to the fixed charges. In accordance with the request of the United States food controllers, the Board of Grain Supervisors for Canada have decided that Canadian flour millers, the Allies and other consumers of Canadian wheat will be required to pay in addition to the above fixed price a sum of two cents per bushel to the board, and the Allies, including the United States, a further amount, not exceeding two cents per bushel, the money accruing from these sources being to create a fund out of which will be paid the carrying charges on wheat in country elevators.

The following are the prices: Basis Minneapolis and Duluth—No. 1 dark northern, \$2.21; No. 2 dark northern, \$2.18; No. 3 dark northern, \$2.15; No. 1 dark hard winter, \$2.21; No. 2 dark hard winter, \$2.18; No. 3 dark hard winter, \$2.13.

The mixing of grades at terminal points is prohibited to the United States.

### WHEAT PRICES FAIR.

Regina, Sask., September 11.—"The maximum prices as set by the Board of Grain Supervisors for wheat this year, in my opinion, are fair prices, but I do not believe it is the best principle to follow, setting of a maximum price each year. I am satisfied that at \$2.21 a bushel the farmer will be getting good returns, but that is not the question just now to me.

### TO LIMIT COAL COMING TO CANADA.

Piling up reserve here.

Washington, September 14.

Continued export of coal to Canada in large amounts through Great Lakes ports at the expense of the northwestern states will be checked immediately by the Fuel Administration.

Dr. H. A. Garfield, the Fuel Administrator, to-day requested the Exports Administrative Board to permit no more coal to be shipped from the country except under license restrictions and asked that no license restrictions be granted unless they are approved by the Fuel Administration. Coal heretofore, along with other American products, has gone to Canada under blanket licenses issued by Collectors of Customs.

"The Fuel Administration," said Dr. Garfield, "does not intend to cut off Canadian exports, but with his supervision it will be able to equalize the distribution of coal, and see that the Northwest and Canada both get their fair shares."

Complaints coming to Dr. Garfield that much of the coal going to the Lakes was not reaching the Northwestern states prompted an investigation which revealed that a great part of it was reaching Canada. In the period between August 24 and September 8, it was found out of a total of 1,755,812 tons of coal that reached lake ports, 530,973 tons went into Canada. This is far in excess of the proportion of Canadian shipments by lake boats in normal times. While Canada has been piling up a reserve store of coal, the Northwest is threatened with a shortage this winter, which it is declared may force industries to close down.

At present the Government is considering seriously the cutting off of coal that is going to German-owned public utility concerns in South America, which the State Department suspects of furnishing much of the money that is being spent for propaganda on the North and South American continents. If shipments to these concerns are stopped, it is declared, the South American Governments will be forced to take over the utilities, which would put an end in large measure to the expenditure of profits for propaganda.

The world wants food, not cheap food particularly, and wheat must be produced."

This was the statement made by Hon. W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture for Saskatchewan, this evening, when informed of the action of the Board of Grain Supervisors. Continuing, he said: "Setting a maximum price for Canada is a bad principle, and I much more favor the principle established by Great Britain of setting a minimum price for a certain number of years, which will tend to increase production and give the world what it wants—wheat."