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CANADA'S WHEAT TRADE.

In Canada when the financial markets turn their attention to agricultural products the first item they consider is wheat, and when wheat is the subject of conversation the chances are that "Manitoba Spring" will form the burden of the talk. Indeed one might suppose, from reading the financial and other journals at seeding time, during the summer, and at harvest, that Canada's prosperity depended almost altogether on the fate of the Western wheat crop. It will be interesting to investigate the statistics in order to discover if possible how far this concentration of attention upon the one cereal is justified.

At the outset it is to be remembered that the financial markets concern themselves more particularly about the stuff that comes to market rather than about the total production. If a farmer produces a thousand bushels of a certain cereal, and consumes two hundred, it is the eight hundred which he sells that gets the most attention. The statistics of grain inspected furnish tolerably satisfactory evidence of the quantity sent to market, though it should be said that they deal more especially with the exported stuff. The following table shows the quantities, in bushels, inspected, of four kinds of grain that have steadily increased in the past ten years.

	WHEAT.	OATS.	BARLEY.	FLAX SEED.
1907-8	74,845,424	21,930,729	4,017,053	1,616,000
*1906-7	48,363,803	12,339,587	2,837,918	602,000
1905-6	61,437,497	11,315,864	2,619,585	494,000
1904-5	41,166,589	9,630,038	1,548,828	306,000
1903-4	38,685,340	14,015,434	2,345,992	606,507
1902-3	39,916,373	14,230,859	1,947,889	426,536
1901-2	37,629,593	9,244,485	1,131,027	95,000
1900-1	17,665,455	11,253,367	1,775,583	24,285
1899-0	23,231,690	9,703,850	2,746,106	42,500
1898-9	27,147,163	12,956,264	257,185	—
1897-8	25,489,146	13,403,220	338,279	714

* 9 Months.

Ten years ago Indian corn ranked immediately after wheat—as much as 15,392,432 bushels being inspected in 1897-8, and 17,850,014 bushels in 1898-9—but in 1907-8 only 4,227,324 bushels passed through the hands of the grain inspectors. Peas also show a heavy decline. In the year 1896-7,

5,416,383 bushels were inspected; in 1907-8 the total had fallen to 592,723 bushels.

The figures show that the markets have not erred in devoting their attention mainly to wheat. It is to be considered also that the predominating position of this cereal is made more secure when the fact is taken into account that its price per bushel is usually considerably higher than the others.

A very interesting feature of this table is the proof it contains that the barley raising industry in Canada is reviving. During the ten years of reciprocity with the U. S. the Canadian barley crop was an important item. With the abrogation of the treaty our barley trade received a hard blow. Most of the product in 1907-8 came from the West—3,244,800 bushels out of the 4,017,053 inspected passed inspection in Manitoba.

Flax seed is another crop which shows a remarkably rapid development. That belongs practically altogether to the Western provinces. It was introduced by the Mennonite farmers, and is a most profitable crop.

So far as the statistics of inspected wheat go they show that practically the whole passed through the Manitoba Division—the actual figures being 73,697,340 bushels Manitoba Inspection and 1,148,084 Eastern Inspection. The explanation is that the Eastern crop is consumed locally. Local millers buy practically all the wheat produced in their respective districts. As they themselves have the opportunity to pass upon the quality of the stuff they purchase there is not the same necessity for inspection by a government official. But the Western crop surplus is for export, or for sale to Eastern millers who cannot examine it before contracting to buy.

The development of facilities for handling the Western crop is clearly illustrated in a table of elevators and warehouses.

	Elevators.	Warehouses.	Storage Capacity. Bush.
1900-1	426	36	18,879,352
1901-2	545	52	23,099,000
1902-3	740	53	30,356,400
1903-4	918	46	41,186,000
1904-5	976	64	46,953,630
1905-6	1,165	82	50,690,700
1906-7	1,221	85	55,222,200
1907-8	1,318	97	58,535,700

The two big railway systems now operating there account for the following:

	C.P.R.		C.N.R.	
	Elevators & Warehouses.	Capacity. Bush.	Elevators & Warehouses.	Capacity. Bush.
Manitoba	474	14,574,600	213	5,921,000
Saskatchewan	384	11,186,500	132	3,480,000
Alberta	81	2,714,900	24	830,000
British Columbia	5	276,000	—	—
Ontario Terminals	11	11,758,700	2	7,000,000
	955	40,510,700	371	17,231,000