

WESTERN CANADA SECTION

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Representatives Amalgamated Press of Canada

CROP PROSPECTS IN THE WEST.

Abundance of Seed and Optimism—Grain Act Discussed at Ottawa—Mining Activity in Western Ontario.

Monetary Times' Office,
Winnipeg, April 14th, 1908.

Western Canada is in the midst of seeding operations; in Manitoba it is general, and throughout Saskatchewan it is well under way. The general conditions and the outlook could not be more favorable. Southern Manitoba and Southern Saskatchewan are practically one-fourth seeded, and with an increase of acreage reported from every district and with seeding fully one month earlier, the outlook is the reverse of last year, so far as the laying down of the crop is concerned. There is an abundance of seed grain, and the general expectation is of a very large crop. Farmers are more optimistic than they have been during the past eighteen months.

Money appears to be at last getting easier in the Western metropolis. Several of the large loan companies have received considerable sums to invest in farm and other mortgages, and the rates of 8, 9, and 10 per cent., which have prevailed for the past nine months have practically disappeared, there being large sums now available for loan on good security at from 6 to 8 per cent. Speaking on the subject of investments, Mr. A. McT. Campbell, manager for Manitoba of the Canada Life Assurance Company, said that the Canada Life invested all its premium income in the West. The mortgage loans of his company at the end of 1906 stood at \$2,185,000, and at the close of 1907 they had increased to \$2,463,000. They invested in various debentures in Manitoba nearly 1½ million, making the company's total investments in the province, \$3,885,000; while in Alberta they had a total investment of over one million, and in Saskatchewan practically the same proportion. The aggregate investments in the three provinces for the Canada Life nearly touched the six million-dollar mark.

To Improve the Handling of Grain.

The conference held at Ottawa during the past week on the subject of the Manitoba Grain Act, between the Government, the grain-growers, the grain men, and the railroads of Western Canada, has terminated with satisfactory results to all concerned, the grain-growers receiving an attentive hearing from the Ministers of the Crown to all suggestions they brought forward for the improvement of the handling of grain. The grain men of Winnipeg emphasized the necessity for elevators throughout the country receiving 40 per cent. of the available cars, which would mean a better service to the farmers and quicker despatch of the grain to Fort William. They contended that the Manitoba Inspection Act should be extended so as to cover all elevators through which Western wheat is handled on its way to the sea. A strong feeling exists in the West that some definite action should be taken on the question of Government-owned elevators. In the Saskatchewan Legislature a motion was brought in by one of the opposition members for an enquiry into the question and the control of interior elevators. It was defeated on an amendment that the grain-growers' convention wait upon the Government and place their position before it. The House deferred consideration until that delegation should be heard.

Bumper Immigrant Year.

"Still they come" is the appropriate phrase to apply to the continued rush of homeseekers and immigrants from Europe and the States through the gateway of the West. Anticipations that immigration would be light this year have proved erroneous; in point of fact, 1908 points to being one of the busiest years in immigration and homesteading work yet experienced.

Immigration has been much later than last year, but May and June will show a greater rush than the corresponding period of a year ago. Up to the present, over 90 per cent. of the immigrants are men, chiefly of the agricultural class, for which the demand is much greater than the supply. Over 1,000 could be easily placed from present applications. Homeseekers from the States have been numerous, over 12,000 farmers having entered Western Canada. They brought with them their cattle, horses and farm implements, and are thoroughly versed in the conditions on which they are expected to enter.

A delegation has been conferring with the authorities at Ottawa for the purpose of securing from the Government a

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contribution towards the cost of a bridge across the Red River from the centre of the city to St. Boniface. They had been successful in their mission, receiving assurances from the Premier and Minister Graham that the Government would in all probability provide a reasonable portion of the cost of construction. The delegation had the assistance of the Hon. Clifford Sifton and D. W. Bole, M.P., for Winnipeg.

Several of the Western Ontario gold mines are being opened up for work during the coming spring. Black Eagle Mine is preparing to commence operations on an extensive scale. The mine is one of the most promising as a gold producer in Canada. Values seem to be persistent, and the work of development has reached over 500 feet. Several other companies in the vicinity of Lake of the Woods, held by Chicago and Minneapolis capitalists, are also re-opening. The general prospects are bright for a return of the prosperity of the early mining days in these centres.

Gold in the Arctic Regions.

A party consisting of two men with their families have left Edmonton to float down the Athabasca and Mackenzie rivers in search of gold in the Herschell Island regions, where a strike was recently reported. The prospectors expect to spend over 30 months in the Arctic regions.

It is understood that the coal dealers of Edmonton will ask the railway companies for reduced rates for the introduction of Edmonton coal to Winnipeg. The present rate is \$4.30. At a rate of \$3 per per ton it is believed that a large quantity of coal would be sent by Winnipeg from the Edmonton mines, the output of which at present exceeds the demand.

Travellers from the western provinces who have returned to Winnipeg report good business from all the general stores throughout the country. One of the reasons for this is probably that not nearly so many representatives from eastern firms have up to the present entered the western market. Conditions are generally believed to be extremely bad. Saskatchewan suffered much more than Manitoba, yet business there is gradually showing an increase in all industries, there being a renewed demand for lumber throughout the Province for new buildings; and while this was generally sold on long time notes, it has now become a feature to pay part cash. Implement men report that farmers are ordering as much machinery as in other years, and on the same terms as previously.

Possibility of a Railway Strike.

The news from Toronto that notices have been sent out by the three big Canadian railway companies to reduce wages 10 per cent. has caused considerable feeling in Winnipeg. The men are inclined to think that the present is no time for reduction of wages, as cost of living has not been reduced in the West. No word has yet been received at the local offices of the various companies, but the general impression is that there will be a strike should the ten per cent. reduction be insisted upon.

Parliament has adjourned over the Easter holidays, and not until the members return will there be any decision as to when the elections will be held. Upon this decision will depend the length of the present session. It is the general opinion that the Government will not go to the country until 1909, when it is certain that there is to be another session before the dissolution of Parliament, this present session will terminate very abruptly. It is expected that in any event the Insurance Act will go over.