

Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

The first annual meeting of the Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers, Limited, which was held in Toronto last week, was of very great interest to the West and should be fruitful in indicating to the East the growing importance of the wool industry of western Canada.

Out of a rough total of 4,556,000 pounds of wool handled by the association during the year, nearly 3,250,000 pounds came from the four western provinces. Of the wool from the West 1,272,482 was sold in Canada and the balance was shipped to Boston where it was subject not only to the fixed price, but to a discrimination of 5 per cent against imported wool and various other expenses, so that the price for Canadian wool that was sold in the United States during 1918 was much lower than the price for Canadian wool sold in Canada, which is a reversal of the usual condition, and was no doubt only due to the fact that the New Zealand and Australia supply on which the Canadian manufacturers were depending was late in arriving, while the American government had placed large contracts with the Canadian manufacturers for woolen goods which had to be filled. The placing of these contracts, however, it is thought will have a stimulating effect in the matter of reviving the practice of combing wool in Canada, at least, this was the opinion expressed by the manager of the Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers, Limited.

The Canadian wool sent to Boston and appraised by the experts of the United States Government brought to light some of the weaknesses of the Canadian clip, more especially of certain parts of the western clip, and should be very valuable in stimulating the production of better sheep and greater care of the wool, and all of this data, it is understood, will be furnished to the various sheep growers' associations for distribution to their contributors.

The association has made its way against a great many difficulties during the year, and there is no doubt that had it not been for the establishment of this organization in February of 1918, Canadian wool would have been embargoed by the Canadian government, or, as requested by the manufacturers, commandeered and combed in bond in the United States, making a very much lower price to the Canadian producer than any that they actually received. There were a number of things which required adjustment, but when everything was adjusted and the reports finally adopted, all of the thirty delegate shareholders, who according to the constitution comprised the annual meeting, felt that they could go back to their various provinces and associations and endorse more emphatically than ever this co-operative method of selling wool.

During the same week practically all the Canadian breed associations met in Toronto and there was a very considerable delegation from western Canada to these meetings. One of the matters which formed a continued source of surprise to westerners was the total absence of any interest in these big meetings and important organizations by the daily press of Toronto. The references to these gatherings was of the briefest and most prefatory character and any stranger reading them would never for a moment dream that Canada was a country with agriculture and livestock as its chief industry. When it is realized what an enormous amount of space is given to meetings of manufacturers and such like matters, and the scant attention given by the daily press to agricultural meetings, when the agricultural exports much exceed the value of manufactured exports, it causes "one furiously to think."

Very much interest is being felt in the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association which will be held in Regina on the 18th, 19th and 20th of February. The Saskatchewan Grain Growers claim this year a membership of 60,000 and there will probably be 1,600 or 1,700 delegates to the

annual meeting. J. A. Maharg, M.P., who is president of the organization, and who has been overseas in company with Dr. Magill, secretary of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, and George Fisher, a member of that body, in connection with the various matters relating to the sale of the western wheat crop and more or less distantly connected with the peace commission, has returned in haste to preside at this meeting.

The Manitoba Grain Growers and their brethren the United Farmers of Alberta, have taken a very emphatic stand against asking for a fixed price of wheat. It is understood, however, that the Saskatchewan body will take the reverse position, and if they do, it will be the first sign of a serious cleavage between the three great bodies of organized farmers of the prairie provinces. The other two bodies have decided on political action and they have endorsed the farmers' platform, and it is not expected that there will be any division of interests along this line in Saskatchewan, but the action of Saskatchewan on the question of a fixed price for their wheat will be awaited with very great interest.

The Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company is a very important factor in the councils of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers. So far every attempt of the first big commercial company of the organized farmers to wit, the United Grain Growers, to amalgamate with them has failed, and there is no doubt that there is a certain element of friction between these two bodies. The United Grain Growers have practically absorbed the Alberta Co-operative Elevator company. Saskatchewan, being the chief wheat raising province of the three, the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company handles an enormous amount of grain, and if the United Grain Growers could have the same control of it as they now have of the Alberta Co-operative Elevator, it would make them one of the biggest monopolies in Canada, though they would undoubtedly resent that title. It will be seen from the foregoing that the coming meeting at Regina will be one of far-reaching importance.

The announcement just made that the Wheat Export company will resume the buying of flour is good news for the West. The situation with regard to the export movement of wheat, flour, bacon and beef is a most unsatisfactory one at the present time and even the smallest alleviation along the line of one of these commodities is felt to be a gain.

The coarse grain situation of western Canada is a serious one, although the prices have been very high, the winter being exceptionally mild there has not been the customary demand for feed and enormous stocks of oats have accumulated. There are over 10,000,000 bushels in store in interior elevators. This includes something over 8,000,000 bushels in country line elevators and 2,500,000 in government interior terminals, while the demand for oats is very spasmodic. The new organization for the shipment of coarse grains to Denmark, Holland and Sweden came by cable from London and requires a good deal of red tape with regard to the movement. At the present time there is absolutely no export trade in coarse grains, and no local demand East or West. The East has had such a mild winter and there are such large stocks of feed on hand that there is practically no hope of relief from that quarter. Within the last day or two there are rumors of certain New York interests being short on the Chicago corn market and there has been buying that has jumped the prices rapidly, but while the Canadian prices of coarse grains have gone up in sympathy with the relative advance on American oats and barley, there has been no increase in trade.

LIVE STOCK.

Live stock prices are holding up well and choice steers on the Winnipeg market are selling from \$14.50 to \$15.00 per hundredweight. Receipts are light at the present time. Hogs are \$16.50 for selects with increasingly heavy receipts.

Two of the most important matters which came up at the week of meetings at Toronto was the announcement by the Hon. T. A. Crerar, Minister of Agriculture, that a large chilled meat plant would be provided at Montreal during the coming summer and the action taken by the Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers and later by a special delegation carried to the Minister of Agriculture asking that Australian and New Zealand mutton coming on the Canadian market be stamped as such and sold under that label. During the discussion on this matter at the wool growers meeting it was found that this mutton was affecting the Canadian sales of mutton not only in the western provinces, but actually in Prince Edward Island. The sheep growers did not ask for any embargo on the product coming in, but simply that they be so protected that it could not be sold as domestic mutton. It was pointed out that in asking for this they were merely asking for something that had been the rule in Great Britain for many years. The wool growers meeting, which was absolutely representative of the whole of Canada, was a unit in feeling that there should be protection of their industry along this line.

CENSUS OF PRODUCTION, 1917.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics has completed its census of the manufactures of Canada for the year 1917, and the preliminary totals are now available. The returns cover 34,380 establishments and show a remarkable development in this branch of Canadian industry when compared with the census of 1915 as summarized in the following table:

	1917.	1915.	Increase.
Capital invest. \$2,772,517,680	\$1,994,103,272	\$778,414,408	
Employees on salaries No.	73,598	52,683	20,915
Salaries paid	95,983,506	60,308,293	35,675,213
Employees on wages No.	619,473	462,200	157,273
(Including piece-workers).			
Wages paid	457,245,456	229,456,210	227,789,246
Cost of materials 1,602,820,631	802,133,862	800,686,769	
Value of products	3,015,506,869	1,407,137,140	1,608,369,729

The gross value of goods made in Canada in 1917 amounted to \$3,015,506,869, and the cost of materials was \$1,602,820,631 leaving a net value added by the process of manufacture of \$1,412,686,238 or \$5,449,098

more than the gross value of production in 1915.

The total capital invested in Canadian industrial plants in 1917 was \$2,772,517,680, of which (a) land, buildings and fixtures amounted to \$998,351,070, (b) machinery and tools to \$567,262,538, (c) materials on hand, stocks in process, finished products, fuel and miscellaneous supplies to \$745,546,310 and (d) cash, accounts and bills receivable to \$461,357,762.

The number of salaried employees was 73,598, of whom 57,668 were males and 15,930 females and the total amount paid in salaries was \$95,983,506. Employees on wages exclusive of outside piece-workers numbered 602,632 of whom 489,915 were males and 112,717 females, and they received wages amounting to \$449,548,644. Piece-workers and employed outside of establishments were 7,755 males and 9,086 females, who received a total payment of \$7,696,812.

The total cost of all fuel used during the year was \$73,087,840. The quantity of bituminous coal used amounted to 7,568,499 tons, worth \$39,688,856; anthracite coal 410,705 tons, valued at \$2,894,186; coke 2,079,965 tons, valued at \$16,122,122; gasoline 3,158,895 gallons, valued at \$859,775; fuel oil 88,746,824 gallons, valued at \$7,607,323; gas, natural or artificial, 92,815,369 m. c. ft., valued at \$2,397,545, and other fuel to the value of \$2,149,441.