

Conditions in the West

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There has been a good deal of interest in connection with the grain trade in the West this past week. The Government is proceeding to act on the amendment to the Railway Act, and Mr. Spencer, the transportation expert of the Railway Commission, has been in Winnipeg for several days. The Canadian Northern Railway were ordered to move a certain number of cars daily off their Goose Lake line into the Government elevator at Saskatoon and seemingly no further provision was made for moving the grain out of Saskatoon eastward. As a matter of fact, the Government elevator at Saskatoon was filled to the roof on the night of the 9th of March.

However, it develops that once again the Lake Shippers' Clearance Association has come to the rescue by proposing to take a certain number of cars of grain to be loaded at the Saskatoon elevator and to turn over against them warehouse receipts for grain in the terminals at Fort William. The details of this scheme are not worked out yet, but it looks as if in this way not only would relief be afforded to the congested sections in the West, but it would relieve the embargo which particularly has existed against Ft. William for two months. The loaded cars from Saskatoon would go via Armstrong and could be deflected to whatever ports were open for grain which has been on order out of Ft. William for weeks, but has not been moved. The government railway could not take the wheat to Ft. William itself because the Grand Trunk Pacific elevator at Ft. William is also full to the roof so that this means of relief should be greatly appreciated by the government whether it is or not.

Conditions in the country are worse than they were even a week ago, as during the present week there have been two very heavy storms, accompanied by much snow, which has further embarrassed traffic. Really, the efforts of the railway companies this winter have been nothing short of heroic. It is necessary to make a trip over some of the side-lines and see the great walls of snow that have been dug out in blocks and piled 10 and 15 feet high along the tracks, to estimate something of the labor that has been involved in keeping traffic open during the past few months.

The Wheat Market.

The market for the week has been topsy-turvy, and the closings on May have varied all the way from 1.14% to 1.09% cents. The market for Friday morning was characteristic of the peculiar conditions; it opened at an advance of 1% to 2 cents for May, fluctuated 2½ cents and closed 1% higher. In the early part of the session export houses bought very freely on the high prices, indeed, 2,000,000 bushels were traced as being taken off the pit in the first hour and a quarter of the market, then one of the houses, that had been a free buyer, turned round and sold sufficient to start a break and the market receded to 2½ cents from the opening. In the last half hour there was further rallying with closings as has been indicated. One export house had offers for 45 loads and sold 25 for delivery before May 10th. It is about the latest that sales have been made for so far.

Opening of Navigation.

Rates for the opening of navigation will be extremely high. Ore men have been buyers of boats during the winter and while some of the ore tonnage may come in for an individual trip, there seems to be a prevailing idea that on the whole tonnage will be scarce and the present rate to Montreal is 9% and charters have been made to Buffalo from 5% to 5%. Just at the moment it looks as if the opening of navigation was a very long way off, but experience has taught the West that when the heavy snow fall, such as we have had this winter, comes on a comparatively thin ice the break-up is quite likely to be early and sudden.

Stocks in Store.

The Northwest Grain Dealers' Association has just put out a further estimate of the crop. The amount inspected up to March 8th is 215,382,000 bushels. They place the amount in transit at 5,300,000. The stocks in country elevators at that date were 44,700,000 and they have placed the wheat required for seed, feed and country mills at 35,000,000, and the amount in farmers hands to market 50,000,000. This would give a crop of, roughly, 350,000,000. Personally, I know that they are excessive in their estimate of grain needed for seed and country mills, and per-

sonally, I have no figures that would confirm the 50,000,000 in farmers hands, but that is always a very problematic thing; and there is no question that there is a tremendous amount of grain still to come forward. The amount of oats inspected so far has been 55,000,000; and there are 9,500,000 in store at country points. The Alberta farmers especially have a very large amount of oats to dispose of as their crop was late in maturing and was very late in being threshed, in fact, a lot of their oats are not threshed yet. Their oats are large and heavy, but suffered from frost making them undesirable for seed, but excellent for feed.

Elevation and Storage Charges.

As intimated last week, the Canada Grain Commission held sittings and took evidence both in regard to the rates being charged for storing grain in interior elevators and also as to the various forms of storage tickets. The decision was that in view of the evidence, the Grain Commission would allow the maximum rate of 1½ cents for the elevation and storage to remain, but they would not prohibit elevator companies from charging a less rate, or indeed from charging nothing at all, only they would insist that if they lower the rate or abandon it at one point they must do so throughout their entire system, this arrangement to come in force on May 1st. With regard to storage tickets from May 1st until the end of the present year the ticket stamped, "Subject to Grade and dockage," would be suspended, and if any firm wished its renewal for the grain year of 1916-17 they must make application to the Grain Commission to have the Grain Act amended permitting the usage of these tickets, any application along this line to be accompanied by definite reasons for the request. The decision of the Grain Commission was regarded rather as a draw by the contending parties. The particular storage ticket in question is not provided for in the Act, but is allowed for by special regulations made by the Grain Commission. At these sittings the Canada Council of Agriculture made a very strong plea for the Board of Appeal to act as a check on the present inspection system.

Farm Labor.

The Provincial Governments are taking up the question of farm labor very actively and are seeking to obtain some line on the actual requirements. Local labor supply, apparently thinking that they would have matters much in their own way, have been asking for higher prices, but the government agencies state that they are able to secure a considerable amount of a good class of labor from the United States for \$40 a month, contracts to be made from, say, April 1st to the end of the threshing. There will be an increased number of women employed on the farms. The Gallician and Doukhobor women who have always been accustomed to land have been employed pretty extensively in the past few years and there will be more of them this year, and Canadian women, themselves, are beginning to see the necessity of turning their attention to the operation of agricultural machinery.

J. D. McGregor, whose name is famous all over the continent for his live stock wins at the International at Chicago, operates some 12 farms in the vicinity of Brandon and last year he employed Gallician women from the town of Brandon to do his hoeing. He found it paid him to send motors for them in the morning and take them back at night, and he intends to employ an increased number this year. He grows a great deal of corn and roots and they are employed in hoeing and also for raking hay and stacking it.

Live Stock Matters.

Live stock matters are extremely active in the West. During this week the Manitoba Cattle Breeders' Association held their 10th annual bull sale in Brandon and prices ran very high, as much as \$630 being paid for a yearling shorthorn bull, and \$600 for one eleven months' old. Other prices paid were \$330, \$310, \$280, and \$250. In all seventy-two bulls were sold in four hours, and it must be borne in mind that these sales meant cash down, in fact, on the opening of the sale it is announced that any man who bids an animal in 'and hasn't paid for it within half an hour will find it again put up for sale.

At the same time there was held a calf feeding competition. The Western section of the Canada Bankers' Association put up \$500 and the Minister of Agriculture of Manitoba \$500 to provide prizes for

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GERMAN EXPORTS TO UNITED STATES

The total value of the exports from Germany to the United States, as declared at twenty-three American consulates and fourteen consular agencies during 1915 amounted to \$39,967,183, as compared with \$156,406,714 in 1914 and \$186,035,254 in 1913. The exports in 1914 were the smallest in value since 1906, when the total was \$153,142,999. The decline in 1915 from the preceding year was almost 75 per cent.

The London, Eng., metal exchange opened again on March 6, under the conditions authorized by the Minister of Munitions.

the twenty best steers fed by boys from 9 to 15 years of age. Of course, there are very careful regulations in regard to the competition to prevent fraud. The animals were to be all calved in 1915, and had to be the property of the boys for a certain length of time. In this competition thirty-three entries were made. The first prize is \$150, \$100 out of the funds subscribed aforesaid and \$50 from the Exhibition Association; the last prize of the twenty is \$25. The winner of first money was ten years old, his calf was a grade Heresford steer sired by Perfect Fairfax. Competition was exceedingly keen and the amount of enthusiasm and actual knowledge displayed by the boys most gratifying. At the close of the exhibition, which was crammed to the doors, one of the heifers was sold for the Patriotic Fund and netted the neat sum of \$235. She weighed 875 pounds and was 11 months old. This gives some idea of the class of calf being fed in the West by the growing stock man.

Horses.

There is rather a peculiar movement in horses from East to West at the present time; the shortage of farm labor and the fact that so very little ploughing was done last fall, particularly in Saskatchewan and Alberta, is making the farmers put on more horse power for their work this spring. Manitoba has plenty of horses for sale, but her horses are all of a good class and she wants a tidy price for them. In the meantime the Union Stock Yards at Toronto having control of a number of horses rejected by the British and French Governments have been advertising these horses extensively in the West and quite a number have come through in the past two months, in fact in January and February 1,380 horses passed through the Union Stock Yards at Winnipeg for Saskatchewan and Alberta. While the total shipments for the twelve months of last year were round 1,100, the report is that these horses are purchased at very low rates in the East.

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