

147

# BRITISH COLUMBIA FINANCIAL TIMES

A Journal of Finance, Commerce, Insurance, Real Estate, Timber and Mining

Vol. II. No. 7.

VANCOUVER, APRIL 3, 1915

SINGLE COPY 10c  
THE YEAR \$2.00

## Dry Farming in Lillooet and Nicola Districts

**Valuable Report Prepared by Adviser in Charge—Cereals, Grasses, Clovers, Vegetables and Small Fruits Do Well—Alfalfa Especially Promising.**

An interesting and suggestive report prepared by Mr. W. J. Elliott, Adviser in Charge of Dry Farming Investigations at 105 Mile House and also at Quilchena, has just been published in the report of the Minister of Lands for the Province of British Columbia. This report is particularly valuable because the results of the experiments conducted will materially assist settlers in the so-called dry belt of British Columbia more successfully to grow those cereals, grasses, clovers, vegetables and small fruits best adapted to districts of limited rainfall. While the conclusions drawn are based upon but one season's work, they are very suggestive, and point strongly to the possibility of utilizing large tracts of our present dry land areas for profitable field crop and vegetable production.

The spring of 1914 was very backward at both stations. The total precipitation at 105 Mile House for the twelve months preceding the harvesting of the crop was 10.94 inches. Frosts were reported every month during the growing season, but these were not sufficiently serious to injure many of the crops. Some of the milling wheats were frozen down late in May, but even under this handicap they matured before killing frosts and yielded twenty bushels of grain to the acre. Frost also did some damage to the potatoes. The most serious loss, however, resulted from the plague of grasshoppers which, in the Nicola district, almost completely ruined the crops. In Lillooet the injury caused was much less serious, and was confined practically to certain grass and clover experiments.

At both stations, the soil was carefully prepared in 1913, and as a result of thorough tillage the greater part of the precipitation was conserved for crop production. On the more rolling parts of the experimental grounds Mr. Elliott was able to conserve all the moisture resulting from the melting snows by discing across the face of the small hills, and as the ridges left by the disc served to check the downward flow of the water, practically all of it was absorbed by the soil.

Approximately twenty acres of land at 105 Mile House was put in with experimental plots, which varied from one-twentieth to one-quarter acre in size. In addition to the experimental grounds a bulk crop of seventeen acres of oats was sown. These oats, grown under field conditions, yielded at the rate of thirty-nine bushels to the acre.

In addition to testing a number of leading varieties of milling wheats, Mr. Elliott seeded several plots with durum or macaroni wheats. These wheats are admirably adapted for dry farming districts, and it is not surprising that one of them, the Ghirka, yielded thirty and two-third bushels per acre. The lowest yield—twenty bushels—was given by the Marquis, but this comparatively poor showing is attributable largely to the fact that this variety suffered most from the frost during the last week in May. In view of the fact that this was the first crop produced on this land, these yields are certainly most gratifying.

In oats, the Kherson gave the highest yield, sixty-five and one-half bushels per acre. This variety is largely grown in the dry farming districts of the American west. The lowest yielding oat was the Sixty Day, a very early sort, which averaged thirty-eight bushels to the acre. It is interesting to note that the frost injured the oats very much less than it did certain of the varieties of milling wheats.

The results obtained with barley were much less satisfactory than those secured with wheat or oats. The cold, backward spring, accompanied by cool nights and occasional frosts during the growing season, no doubt accounted largely for the unsatisfactory returns recorded. It is just possible that this crop was seeded too early to enable it to develop to best advantage, but from our present knowledge it would appear that a more frost-resistant barley is essential to ensure success in these districts.

The pea crop was almost a total failure. The vines made a splendid growth, but were cut down too early by the frost to admit of the grain maturing.

It is interesting to note that when a germination test was made of the different cereals harvested on the plots, nearly all gave a high percentage of germination. Those varieties which ripened earliest were, as a rule, the ones

DRY FARMING IN LILLOOET AND NICOLA DISTRICTS.

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