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## EDITORIAL.

### The Western Wheat Crop.

Looking from a window of a house in the wheat belt of the Canadian West on any evening during the month of October, immense bonfires could be seen in all directions. This is a familiar scene, and in these fires last month 75 per cent. of the bulk of the straw grown on four and a half million acres of the best wheat land in the world went up in smoke. It was the final scene of the second last act in the drama of the wheat for the present season. The last act is now in progress, and not only are the eighty thousand farmers and their families interested, but every person who has come to the age where the serious things of life are considered, gives some attention to the wheat trade.

As a crop season, that of 1906 will be considered a fair average. The spring opened rather un auspiciously for germination, but the rainfall was sufficient, and growth eventually was rapid. Hot weather soon after the grains headed out brought on an early harvest, but somewhat detracted from the yield. The season is remarkable in that there was practically no damage reported from any blight or pest, and the inspectors' office at Winnipeg, where all wheat is examined, reports more than 50 per cent. graded I Northern and 25 per cent. 1 Hard, and this under a system of inspection universally agreed to be the most severe in the world.

The estimated yield of wheat in the Canadian Northwest for the present crop year is conservatively placed at 85,000,000 bushels, while many good authorities have made an estimate of 100,000,000 bushels. Some one has estimated that there are nearly 79,000 farmers in the Canadian Prairie Provinces. Dividing the wheat crop among these producers, would give to each man 1,100 bushels, which yields a handsome income per capita from this source alone.

Taking the conservative estimate of a total of 85,000,000 bushels, the average yield per acre will be about eighteen bushels. This is considerably better an average than has been produced upon equally large areas in other countries. In considering yields, we cannot ignore the fact that some of the best have grown upon lands that have been cropped for from ten to twenty years. Instances are not wanting of yields of fifty bushels to the acre, and whole sections (640 acres) have given returns of between twenty-five and thirty bushels to the acre. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that much of the old land is showing signs of exhaustion, and there is the significant fact that Saskatchewan's average is considerably above Manitoba's.

The quality of the 1906 wheat is probably the best of late years, about twenty-five per cent. grading 1 Hard, fifty per cent. 1 Northern, and the remainder 2 Northern and rejected. The rejected lots this year, however, are not damaged to any extent by smut or frost or dampness, but grade rejected on account of the presence of other seeds, principally wild oats.

Naturally, with so large a crop as was harvested in Canada and the States, prices could scarcely be expected to remain as high as they were last year. Just as soon as new wheat began to move quotations began to settle, until about Sept. 15th Fort William prices were 72½c. for 1 Northern. Since then prices have ruled around 74c., although the demand for export is slow.

Intense interest has been maintained in the movement of wheat this year, on account of the difficulty shippers have experienced in getting cars. Harvest and threshing came on fully two weeks

earlier than was expected, and found the railway companies unprepared to handle the immense quantities of grain offered, so that by the end of September practically every railway station market was clamoring loudly for more cars. Country elevators have not been so full since the bumper crop of 1902. The Western railway lines have worked hard at moving wheat for the past three months, realizing the importance of getting wheat across the lakes before the close of navigation, or into lake-port elevators, so that as much money as possible could be got into circulation. At the same time, all the transportation companies in the West have had the haunting fear of a repetition of last year's conditions, when a blockade on the eastern side of the lakes rendered ineffective much of their work in the West. As it is, an immense quantity of wheat has been handled, the receipts up to the 6th inst. at railway points being some forty million bushels, while thirty and a half million bushels of the new crop had been discharged from Lake Superior points by the end of October.

Throughout the country there is elevator capacity for fifty million bushels, so that it is possible, if farmers wish, to get practically all the marketable wheat into store before the winter sets in. The year 1906 will go down in history as a fairly satisfactory one, notwithstanding there were hot, dry winds just before harvest and difficulties in getting the grain to market. The season has been free from untoward storms, and threshing was all completed in good time. The labor situation was amply relieved by the presence of some twenty thousand Easterners during harvest, most of whom will have returned, to spread the news of younger Canada's opportunities and achievements.

### Reciprocity Arrangements Must be Circumspect.

Speaking on the subject of Chicago's interest in reciprocity with Canada, at the Merchants' Club Banquet, in the Windy City, Nov. 10th, James J. Hill pleaded for dropping all commercial bars between the United States and Canada. The time was more auspicious now for favorable consideration on Canada's part than it probably would be later on, when the Chamberlain project was revived. Canada, he said, is no longer in the position of a suppliant. There has been an increasing irritation toward the American attitude, while the fact that their tariff on dutiable goods is 49.83 per cent., while the average of that levied by Canada on dutiable goods coming from United States is 24.83 per cent., causes comment and suggests reprisals. It is also a matter of common knowledge that Canada is aiming in every possible way to make more secure the large, profitable and increasing market for our products in Great Britain.

If the time be deemed not yet ripe for wiping out customs houses on both sides of the line, then the least that Mr. Hill demands is a policy of ample reciprocity.

While protectionists will insinuate that reciprocity would prove a boon to Mr. Hill with his well-known railway policy, there is no doubt he is looking at this subject from the correct American point of view. It is also one of the economics of which our own people would do well to make themselves thoroughly familiar. An obvious objection to reciprocity from our standpoint is that, once it were adopted, our trade would forthwith commence to flow chiefly north and south. Then, should the time ever come, as it came once before, when the reciprocal arrangement suddenly ceased, our trade would be seriously dislocated, and it would take a decade or two to

re-establish in new channels. Had we an assurance that reciprocity—on certain articles, at all events—once secured, would continue permanently, it would prove a great boon to this country; but, unless a decided change has come over the spirit of the dreams of our neighbors, Mr. Hill will be as a voice crying in the wilderness, and such a provision is, we fear, hardly within the realms of practical politics. Canada will do well to proceed guardedly in negotiations looking to freer trade relationship with the United States, though meeting with cordial frankness any reasonable proposals, accompanied by judicious safeguards.

### British Columbians Approve Legal Berry Box

The Dominion Conference of Fruit-growers at Ottawa last March was remarkable for nothing more than for the excellent spirit which dominated it, and resulted in the harmonizing of difference of opinion and conflicting interests between east and west. The same spirit has recently been manifested again by the fruit-growers of British Columbia. They have been accustomed to gauge the capacity of their berry boxes by the pound, whereas in Ontario the measurement system has been in vogue. The growers of the Pacific Province withheld approval of the Eastern berry box. But a Dominion law provides that the size of the berry box shall be four-fifths of a quart. The British Columbians have been using a pound box, which is about two ounces smaller. Last spring the enforcement of this law was put into the hands of the Fruit Division, and A. McNeill, its untiring chief, had a delicate situation to deal with. Some of the Western basket manufacturers were continuing to turn out the smaller-sized box in the face of the law. A few weeks ago Mr. McNeill made a trip to the Coast to smooth things out. He interviewed the basket men, and found them willing to make nothing but the standard size, provided they were assured all of their competitors would be compelled to conform also. It then remained to convince the growers. A minority was obdurate. In the course of a protracted meeting, Mr. McNeill pointed out that they stood to lose nothing by the change, seeing that they could sell their box for enough more to make up. This elicited from one man a retort, "We don't split nickels out here." But the Chief's good nature proved imperturbable. "Well," he said, "I think you'll admit there has been a deal of hair-splitting over these two ounces of berries this afternoon." They saw the point. One revelation that helped the decision was the fact that one of the largest firms had been using up its old stock by making a box of the legal dimensions, merely lowering the false bottom sufficiently to give an extra two ounces capacity. The ultimate result of the gathering was unanimous agreement to adopt the legal standard berry box, and Mr. McNeill had the satisfaction of hearing one of its strongest opponents admit that they had somewhat misunderstood the situation, and accord a meed of praise to the courteous and painstaking Chief of the Fruit Division. Blessed be the apostles of harmony.

"The Farmer's Advocate" is the paper for the cheesemaker, because it gives him a generous amount of reading about his work, and keeps him primed regarding the latest developments in dairy investigation and work. Not less important, it keeps him in touch with the broader agricultural life, increasing his chances of usefulness to and influence with his patrons. Not merely farmers, but all who have business with the agricultural class, should read "The Farmer's Advocate" faithfully. Those who do, find its perusal a pleasure, as well as a help.