

Wheat Acreage Decreased Twelve Per Cent

Oats is Only Grain to Have More Acreage This Year — Conditions on May 31st were Below Average, But Rapid Recovery was Being Made — Canadian National Railway Reports Plenty of Moisture — Second Manitoba Free Press Report is Optimistic

EXCELLENT weather during the month of May enabled seeding, which had been delayed in the prairie provinces by a cold and backward April, to be completed. The condition of the grain at the end of the month was not far behind the average, concludes the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, in a report on conditions as at May 31st. A first estimate of areas sown to grain, hay and potatoes is also given by the Bureau.

Areas Sown to Grain, Hay and Potatoes

The total area estimated to be sown to wheat in Canada for 1920 is 16,921,000 acres, as compared with 19,126,000 acres, the final estimate of 1919. The decrease this year is 2,205,000 acres, or 12 per cent. The area to be harvested of fall wheat is 740,300 acres; so that the area under spring wheat is 16,180,700 acres, as compared with 18,453,175 acres in 1919. Of oats the total area sown is estimated at 15,291,000 acres, as compared with 14,952,000 acres last year, an increase of 339,000 acres, or 2 per cent. Barley has an acreage of 2,574,900 in 1920 as compared with 2,645,509, rye 730,100 as against 753,081, peas 219,065 against 230,351, mixed grains 900,800 as against 901,612, hay and clover 10,492,900 as against 10,595,383, and alfalfa 220,800 as against 226,869. These crops all show a decrease; barley, rye and alfalfa of 3 per cent., peas of 5 per cent., and hay and clover of 1 per cent. Mixed grains are practically equal to last year. The end of May is rather too soon for definite reports on the areas planted to potatoes; but a preliminary estimate of areas planted, or to be planted, is 802,500 acres as against 818,767 acres last year, a decrease of 16,267 acres, or 2 per cent.

Grain Acreage of Prairie Provinces

The area sown to wheat in the three prairie provinces totals 15,502,700 acres, as compared with 17,750,167 acres, a decrease of 13 per cent. Oats extend to 9,613,700 acres, or 2 per cent. above last year's area of 9,452,386 acres. Barley has an area of 1,751,500 acres, as against 1,800,745 acres, a decrease of 3 per cent., and rye 562,100 acres, as against 573,218 acres, a decrease of 2 per cent. By provinces the areas in 1920 are: Manitoba: Wheat, 2,563,500 acres (2,880,301); Saskatchewan, 9,422,800 acres (10,587,363); Alberta, 3,516,400 acres (4,282,503). Oats: Manitoba, 1,884,200 acres (1,847,267); Saskatchewan, 4,934,400 acres (4,837,747); Alberta, 2,795,000 acres (2,767,372). Barley: Manitoba, 876,100 acres (893,947); Saskatchewan, 477,800 acres (492,586); Alberta, 397,600 acres (414,212). Rye: Manitoba, 272,000 acres (298,932); Saskatchewan, 203,800 acres (190,482); Alberta, 86,300 acres (83,804).

Condition of Crops on May 31, 1920

Expressed numerically in percentage of the average yield of the past ten years, the average condition for all Canada on May 31st of the crops reported on was as follows, the figures within brackets representing the condition at the corresponding date last year: Fall wheat, 99 (101); spring wheat, 98 (98); all wheat, 98 (98); oats and barley, 98 (95); rye, 96 (101); peas, 98 (91); mixed grains, 101 (92); hay and clover, 95 (101); alfalfa, 94 (95); pasture, 94 (102). In Prince Edward Island conditions for all crops are either equal to or above the ten-year average. In the other two maritime provinces the condition for most crops is from 3 to 5 per cent. below the average. In Quebec, spring wheat is 100, oats are 103, barley and peas are 101, rye and hay and clover are 98, and mixed grains are 100. In Ontario the condition is for nearly all grain crops 1 or 2 per cent. below average, rye is 5 per cent. below average; hay, clover and pasture are 91,

and alfalfa is 96, these crops showing the effects of the dry weather of May. In Manitoba spring wheat is 100, or just equal to the average; oats and barley are 1 and 2 per cent. respectively below. In Saskatchewan spring wheat and oats are 98, barley is 99. In Alberta fall wheat is 94, spring wheat is 91 and oats are 90. In British Columbia fall wheat is 88, spring wheat 95, oats 94 and barley 93, these averages being below both 1919 and 1918.

National Railways Report

The detailed crop report for the week ending June 5th, compiled by agents in the territories served by the Canadian National Railways lines between the great lakes and the Rocky Mountains is uniformly encouraging. There appears to be plenty of moisture, and there are only a few points where a small amount of re-seeding has had to be done on account of high winds. There is no indication of trouble anticipated, and wheat especially seems to be well advanced throughout the area served by the C.N.R. Wheat seeding may be said to have been completed, and the seeding of coarse grains progressing finely.

Manitoba Free Press Report

In its second crop report for 1920, issued on June 8th, the Manitoba Free Press states that, with the exception of 1912, the outlook this year is the best of any year since 1904, when the reports began. It is better than in 1915, the bumper crop year, as heavy frosts occurred early in June that year. Out of 250 points queried, 203 were heard from, and these indicate that the general condition of the wheat crop is excellent, and that, while at a number of points it is from a week to ten days later than the early development of the hot May and June of 1919, it is a much more healthy and vigorous plant. Out of the 203 points heard from, 100 report crop ahead of last year, in some cases ten days ahead. The last week of May there were very high winds reported and there was serious apprehension of damage from this source. The reports indicate that the heavy rains and cool weather have not only stopped the drifting and blowing, but that, to a very great extent, the crop has recovered without re-seeding being necessary. Where re-seeding has been done it is mainly to oats.

Oats were 95 per cent. seeded by June 5th. This does not include oats for sheaf feed. Just 100 points indicate increases in oat acreages, running from 5 to 50 per cent., the majority of points reporting increases from 5 to 10 per cent. Twelve points indicate decreases in oat acreages, and this is explained by difficulty in getting seed. There appears to be heavy seeding of barley, which is still going on. Increases in flax acreage was specially asked for, and 80 points report increases running all the way from 1 per cent. to 300 per cent. Nearly all the points which report the very heavy increase in acreage state that it is on new breaking and a few that flax has taken the place of wheat.

Very grave apprehension has existed as to grasshoppers, and all correspondents in the infected areas were asked as to hoppers. The replies, on the whole, show, that the wet weather has retarded hatching, but whether permanently or not, remains to be seen. Only two points, both in Manitoba, namely, Waskada and Clearwater, report any serious damage up to the present. All points report fine organization to fight the pests and abundant supplies of poison for bait.

The most northern point reporting any sign of hoppers is Outlook, Saskatchewan. All that human energy can do is being done to prevent a spread of the plague should hotter weather develop them. The strong feature of the report is the abundant supply of moisture throughout the entire west.