

Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

Since last writing Winnipeg has experienced one or two very exciting coarse grain markets for which no adequate cause seems to be forthcoming, but the most feasible explanation offered was that a small amount of tonnage available for neutral countries for which particularly barley and rye were wanted. The demand was almost entirely from New York. While the extremely active demand only lasted a day or two, the firm price remained and the barley is running from 5c. to 6c. per bushel higher than it was a week ago, though lower than the high point of the advance, but to-day witnessed a sharp break.

The whole situation with regard to coarse grains is a very curious one, and no one seems to know exactly what they are at. Barley is particularly erratic and nervous. There are no very large stocks in terminals, but there is presumably a very considerable quantity in farmers' hands, and it was farmers who profited by the sharp up-turn of the market.

WILL THERE BE A FIXED PRICE?

The situation with regard to wheat is unchanged, and speculation is rife whether there will or will not be a fixed price for the 1919 crop. Considerable discussion has been evoked by a recent copy of Broomhall's Corn Trade News, which in its general review states positively that there will be no fixed price for 1919 wheat, but apparently Winnipeg or Ottawa has received no confirmation of this statement. There are large stocks of wheat in interior elevators, and exceptionally heavy stocks in terminals at the lake front, and the present indication is that there will be an early opening of navigation. There is apparently very little information to be had as to the chances of an early export movement of wheat and flour.

Almost the only happening of importance in grain circles during the past week has been the decision to have the president of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange proceed overseas to join Dr. Robert Magill, who has returned to Great Britain, apparently to watch the situation, both in the interests of the Exchange and the Board of Grain Supervisors. The president of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange is Mr. Fred Anderson, an American of Norse descent. He has been many years' resident in Winnipeg, though he is still a young man, and is regarded by his fellow members as one of the best posted men in the trade. He is associated with the veteran grain man, G. R. Crowe, in business.

HON. T. A. CRERAR'S STAND.

Much interest is being taken in the stand made by Hon. T. A. Crerar before the agricultural committee, on the fixed price for wheat. Mr. Crerar's stand is absolutely sound in principle, and while he claims it as a purely personal opinion it may be taken for granted that it presages the stand which the government intends to take. His stand, moreover, is very much a case of throwing the gauntlet down to the farmers of Saskatchewan, as the United Farmers of that province and the members of the legislature, who are nearly all farmers, made a strong demand for the fixed price for wheat. If Mr. Crerar comes out as definitely on the question of a lowered tariff generally and free agricultural implements and machinery it will go far to placate even Saskatchewan on the subject of the fixed price. If he does not it is quite easy to see breakers ahead.

LIVESTOCK.

The delegation from the Winnipeg Livestock Exchange, which visited Ottawa in connection with the quarantine embargo on Western cattle going into the United States did not obtain

much satisfaction from Dr. Torrance, the Dominion Veterinary General, but two of their number have remained in Ottawa endeavoring to get Dr. Torrance to go to Washington himself or to send someone in authority to interview the United States authorities on this matter and see if less drastic enforcement of regulations cannot be obtained.

There is a very strong feeling among livestock men that the Health of Animals Branch has not been as energetic as it should have been in enforcing our own regulations as to cattle from the mange area, and this slackness has opened the door for the enforcement of regulations which, while on the American statute books before have never been enforced. There is also a feeling that the American livestock producers have urged their government to the enforcement, the few cases of mange in cattle from supposedly clean areas giving them their opportunity. The American corn lot feeder has been particularly keen on getting western Canadian steers owing to their excellent feeding qualities, and the producers of less desirable steers have regarded the thousands of Canadian steers crossing the line and topping their market for feeders, with no friendly eye.

MANGE MAY ONLY BE AN EXCUSE.

The idea that all the trouble is not due to fear of mange is more or less confirmed by the resolution passed at the annual meeting of the American National Livestock Association, held at Denver, Colorado, last January, and the full report of which is to hand this week. This resolution reads: "Whereas livestock producers responded to all governmental appeals for increased production of food and wool during the war, and there now seems to be a great probability of heavy imports of such products from foreign countries; therefore be it resolved, by the American National Livestock Association, that we ask our congressional delegation to use every means to secure such embargoes and import duties as will permit our own products to meet the imported articles upon an equal basis, as computed by the cost of production."

Taken in conjunction with the sudden and drastic enforcement of quarantine regulations previously held in abeyance, the resolution is significant to say the least. Failing redress in the matter of the enforcement of regulations the delegation to Ottawa suggested the dividing of the Winnipeg yards for the handling of cattle, with and without certificates so that cattle coming from clean areas and with a proper bill of health could be traded in in one section and the cattle from the mange areas in another. This would involve great loss in loading and unloading facilities, and occasion great expense to the stock yards companies, but would at least make trading possible.

THE BRITISH EMBARGO.

The question of the lifting of the embargo on Canadian cattle to Britain is also coming in for its share of attention. The provincial legislature, as previously reported, passed a resolution asking that the Dominion Government press for the removal of the embargo on our cattle into Britain. Just at present there are representatives of Scotch houses visiting the west inquiring into the possibility of shipping western cattle to Britain, they report continued efforts on the part of farmers in Britain to have the embargo removed to permit of feeder cattle from Canada going into Britain, and state freely that their only source of supply of feeders at the present time is Ireland, and that the supplies from Ireland are inadequate and of poor quality.

Heard On The Street

That "far-away fields look green" to many speculators.

That maple sap has not been running so freely as in the average season.

That the advance in butter prices has created a strong market for oleomargarine.

That the Customs receipts at Ottawa for the year show a decrease of \$3,209,343.

That the U. S. railroad administration's refusal to accept steel prices might cause selling in steel stocks.

That Dominion Government securities are still reckoned as gilt-edged, with prices that make a yield from 5 to 5.20 per cent.

That there has been little or no winter injury to orchards in Ontario. Wonder what excuse will be found for dear fruit this year.

That the customs receipts at Toronto for the fiscal year ended March 31, show an increase of \$61,040 over the previous year, the total being \$33,034,000.

That engineering scouts of the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company have been looking over the Alberta Oil fields with the view to developing any promising holdings.

That approximately ten million acres of land have been broken in Alberta this year, an increase of two million acres.

That the Merchant's Bank issue of new capital stock to the par value of \$1,400,000 is the natural consequence of the bank's progress.

That the striking textile operatives at Lawrence, Mass., are willing to submit their claims to the arbitration of Henry B. Endicott, of Boston.

That the chickens and the old hens too, of the Toronto, W.C.T.U., who would have denied Tommy his cigarette, have come home to roost.

That the Montreal Board of Trade campaign for members had a very encouraging result although the number aimed at was not reached.

That there is a big demand in Europe for Copper which will find expression as soon as the trade restrictions are removed.

That President Beatty, of the C. P. R., and Chief Justice Mathers of Manitoba, will be two of the representatives of capital on the investigation board which is to report on the feasibility of co-operation between Labor and Capital in the control of industries.

That an office of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Co., has been opened in the Department of Railways and Canals at Ottawa, to facilitate the handling of the work in connection with the receivership of the railway.

That since the passing of "Prohibition" in Ontario, no fewer than a million quarts of liquor have been consumed as medicine.

That Hollinger Consolidated Gold Mines is now selling its gold to Ottawa, having arranged to secure from the Royal Mint there an allowance corresponding to the exchange which it would receive if shipped direct to New York.