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JAMES J. SALMOND, MANAGING DIRECTOR
FRED. W. FIELD, MANAGING EDITOR
A. E. JENNINGS, ADVERTISING MANAGER

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THE WESTERN CROP

Why not drop the term "bumper" in relation to the crops of Western Canada? The suggestion comes to *The Monetary Times* from the West. It was possible to have such a crop when cultivation was limited to the Red River valley and a bit of central Manitoba. One can hardly conceive of any set of conditions which will now ensure a record yield from Winnipeg to the mountains, with every variety of climate and differing conditions of soil, where the altitude varies from nine hundred and fifty feet to over three thousand feet, and with open prairie and bush land.

Another important consideration is that in many parts of the country the farmer is less dependent upon his grain than in former years. Much progress has been made, particularly in Manitoba and Alberta, in the direction of diversified farming. The grain crop is still all important, but, nevertheless, consideration must now be given to the growing importance of dairy farming and stock-raising.

The reports from reliable sources in Western Canada lead *The Monetary Times* to believe that this year's crop will be a fair average crop, or possibly a little better than an average crop. One seldom sees a field of very heavy grain. There will be less than the usual number of reports of "tremendous" yields. No part of the country, however, is without a crop. It is all maturing satisfactorily, and weather conditions are good. In Manitoba, probably fifty per cent. of the oats had been cut by August 18th. Considerable wheat was also in stook. Saskatchewan was a few days later, but cutting was in progress there last week. In Southern Alberta the crop is early and is being rapidly harvested. The aggregate grain yield this

year should be equal to that of last year, while the quality may be better.

An important consideration, of which the daily newspapers have taken very little notice, is that the farmer will get his labor this year for about sixty per cent. of what it has cost him during the past two years. The farmer is, therefore, feeling rather comfortable over the situation, and does not express any regrets for the general slackening of building operations in our cities. In Vancouver a few days ago the board of trade was negotiating with the Canadian Pacific Railway for a harvesters' excursion to be undertaken from Vancouver to the prairies, to give employment to the workmen of that city. This is a healthy movement. The abnormal construction works in our different cities attracted large numbers of workmen to secure employment as carpenters and unskilled laborers at high wages. The farmer was deprived of legitimate help, and the cost of building in the city was increased through the wages paid to these incompetent workmen. This year the farmer can get help for his harvest at a remunerative price, and this condition should prove entirely to the advantage of the country.

A bad storm did a great deal of damage to the crop at a number of points in Manitoba, and warned us that until the grain is threshed the crop is not secure. This, however, was the first real damage from this source, and will not materially affect the general result. The most serious danger yet to be encountered is the possibility of frost.

After twelve months' freedom from wild speculation and the necessary curtailing of business operations through the scarcity of money, we should feel the benefit of the proceeds of the crop to a degree not usual in this country. Prices are rather better than last year, and there is every indication that this year's crop will give us more money than that of last year.