

CANADA'S AGRICULTURE AND MINES

Glasgow Writer's Errors—Reasons for Diminution in Area and Value—Mineral Statistics

Comparing the 1912 figures, as received from the Canadian government printer, with those for 1911, under exactly similar headings, there cannot be a shadow of doubt left that Canadian land to the extent of approximately 400,000 acres has gone out of cultivation, and that the value of the crops harvested has declined by approximately \$50,000,000, writes G. W., of Glasgow, in the London Economist.

Now, these results are not in accordance with those the public were led to expect. Before the official figures were published very little was heard about the disastrous effects of "killing frosts." All newspaper estimates were for record crops. As recently as December 2nd last the president of the Bank of Montreal, in his speech to the shareholders, estimated an increased wheat yield in the Northwest of 11,000,000 bushels, whereas the actual result shows a decrease of practically the like amount. But it is said that the decline, now that it has to be admitted, in agriculture, as shown by the crop returns, is made up for in other directions, and the Canadian Gazette suggests that live stock farming is taking its place. No figures, as you justly point out, are given to substantiate the suggestion, and what figures are available are opposed to any such conclusion.

The figures given on this subject in the lately published Statistical Abstract for the Colonies are not complete for all provinces, but assuming that in those cases where they are incomplete for 1911 (the latest year given) they are the same as those given for the previous year, we find that since 1907 there has been an almost continuous decline. Thus, cattle are down from 7,193,386 to 6,548,083, sheep from 2,771,447 to 2,493,163 and pigs from 3,381,510 to 3,297,938.

Similar Tendency in Minerals.

Not only is agriculture in Canada declining in all its branches, but a similar tendency is found in the production of metals and minerals. The production of gold in 1911, compared with 1910, declined by 20,000 ounces; silver, 130,000 ounces; iron ore, 44,000 tons; and coal, 1,400,000 tons, against which there was an increase of 70 tons of copper.

We may well ask: What are all Canada's new inhabitants, of whom we hear so much, doing? They are not producing wealth in proportion to their numbers, that is clear. But they are consuming wealth, and that as fast as we are foolishly exporting it, in the form of loans, from this side.

That there is great prosperity in Canada at present no one would attempt to deny. But it is prosperity based on the issue of an almost unlimited number of promissory notes, and cannot last. In truth, promissory notes now figure as Canada's principal export commodity.

Exceptionally Severe Winter.

Dr. Archibald Blue, chief officer of the census and statistics office, in commenting on the above letter, states:—

"In 1912, for the first time since the crop estimates of the Dominion government began to be collected in 1908, the total area under field crops shows some diminution as compared with the previous year. In 1912 the estimated area under field crops was 32,449,000 acres, and in 1911 it was 32,853,000 acres, the decrease being thus 404,000 acres. Of this decrease not less than 326,000 acres was in respect of fall wheat winter-killed by the exceptionally severe winter of 1911-12. The remaining net decrease of 78,000 acres may be accounted for by the disastrously wet and cold weather which prevailed throughout the greater part of Canada during the sowing season last spring. Thousands of farmers were unable to sow wheat at all, and had either to sow late crops or let their land lie fallow.

"In the three Northwest provinces the acreage under oats was increased by 351,000 and of barley by 48,000, while the wheat acreage was less by nearly 340,000 acres.

"Owing to the special circumstances of weather and the consequent difficulties of grain growing, I think it probable that in 1912 a larger proportion of the area than usual was put into summer fallow, and if this was so the returns of acreage sown in the ensuing season should show a corresponding expansion.

"Anyway, it is certain that the decrease to which the correspondent of the London Economist calls attention is attributable entirely to the abnormal character of the season of 1912, and not to any other set-back in the development of the Northwest or of other areas of Canada.

"As was pointed out in the Census and Statistics Monthly for December last, the average prices for most of the crops were less last year than in 1911, and this, with the other factors, accounts for the diminution in total value."

With regard to the statistics dealing with minerals the total value of the mineral production in Canada in 1912 was

\$133,127,489, according to the preliminary statistics, which are based upon direct returns from mine and smelter operators, but subject to revision, prepared by Mr. J. McLeish, chief of the division of mineral resources and statistics. Compared with the previous year this production shows an increase of \$29,906,495, or nearly 29 per cent.

The mineral output in 1911, however, was somewhat restricted owing to long extended labor disputes and the largest previous production was in 1910, compared with which that of 1912 shows an increase of \$26,243,866, or over 24 per cent. The per capita production in 1910 was \$14.93, and this has increased in 1912 to over \$18. This record is a gratifying indication or confirmation of the fact that the Canadian mineral industry in 1912 has had by far the most successful year in its history.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION AT NEW WESTMINSTER

British Columbia Electric Railway Improvements—Lulu Island Branch—Elevator Facilities

(Special correspondence.)

New Westminster, B.C., March 25.

The British Columbia Electric Railway Company will spend nearly \$200,000 in New Westminster this year. The new freight yards between Fourteenth and Sixteenth Streets, which will have a storage capacity for four hundred and fifty freight cars, will take \$100,000, while \$50,000 have been appropriated to new car barns. These barns, it is believed, will be the largest in Canada and will be capable of housing nearly fifty interurban cars. The clearing of the site is nearly completed and building will start shortly.

In addition to these improvements the company will double track the line along Columbia Street from Leopold Place to Brunette Street. Surveys are being taken between New Westminster and Port Moody for locating the line which the company intends to build in the near future. Other lines planned are one from New Westminster to Port Mann and another from New Westminster to the Delta.

Canadian Northern Busy.

Work is in full swing on the Lulu Island branch of the Canadian Northern Railway running from the west boundary of New Westminster to Steveston at the mouth of the Fraser. The contracts, sub-contracts and station contracts are now being let and the grade will be completed by the beginning of June.

Mr. T. H. White, chief engineer of the railway, visited the eastern terminal at Steveston and Woodward's Landing the other day to choose a site for the terminal ferry wharves. The company also has plans for several miles of freight tracks which there is good authority for stating will probably be used in connection with terminal elevators. Within about three months tenders will be called for the portion of the line running parallel to New Westminster's waterfront, where it is believed over a mile of double track overhead steel work will have to be built.

A second elevator was opened in the city the other day by the Grain Growers' British Columbia Agency. This elevator is situated on the Canadian Pacific Railway and British Columbia Electric Railway tracks in the west end of the city and has a capacity of 25,000 bushels and an additional storage of 500 tons. The other licensed grain elevator has been operated by the Brackman-Ker Milling Company for fifteen years on Front Street. The same company also operates a grist and rolled oats mill.—K.M.

NEW TRUST COMPANY

At the annual meeting of the People's Loan and Savings Corporation the directors reported having made application to parliament for a charter for a trust company, to be known as "The Premier Trust Company," and to be operated in connection with the corporation. This action was approved and authority given to take a controlling interest in the proposed company.

The Grand Trunk Railway Company reports that during February it received on outstanding orders 428 box cars from the Pressed Steel Car Company, twenty-five box cars from the Canadian Car and Foundry Company; twenty-four Pacific type locomotives from the Montreal Locomotive Works; nine switch engines from the Canadian Locomotive Company; seventeen Mikado locomotives from the American Locomotive Company, and four refrigerator cars from the Canadian Car and Foundry Company.