

The Crop Situation in the West

Some Eastern Canadian newspapers with large circulation amongst farmers have recently published articles and interviews of a gloomy note to say panicky nature concerning the crops in the West. An interview in the Weekly Sun of July 17 with an alleged authority (name not given), having returned from the West, contained among others this statement:

"Canada will have in 1907 the most prosperous year in her history or else sustain a very serious setback; it all depends on the outcome of the year's harvest in the West."

"If this season's crop is safely harvested," continues this gentleman, "it will, because of the higher level of prices due to the shortage in the United States and Europe, bring more money than did that of last season. But if the 1907 crop is gathered without loss it will be because of an autumn as much as ordinary as was the spring recently past. If frost comes at the usual time three-fourths of the season's wheat will most certainly be destroyed."

"The West should be in a position to stand one bad crop with no serious inconvenience, but it is not. A continuance of good crops has been looked upon by the optimistic Westerners as a certain event, and has been used as a basis of crop for speculative purposes. All the Western towns have been going wild on municipal improvements, and business men in town and farmers in country have been putting every available dollar into real estate. As a consequence of this latter tendency, values have soared beyond all reason."

The gentleman then states as an illustration that "land within half a mile of the open prairies which lies all around Winnipeg is held at \$2,000 per foot."

Commenting editorially on the interview quoted above, the Weekly Sun under the heading "In a Critical Position," says:

"There is no doubt as to the truth of the statement given that the business interests of the country are at present in a most critical position. If frost comes in the usual time in the West, the wheat crop of the three new Provinces will be practically ruined, and the loss so caused would knock the bottom out of values represented by the east areas of land held for speculative purposes, and cause a serious reduction in the demand for manufactured products. Indeed, a general crash would almost certainly follow such a contingency. It is to be most sincerely hoped the forenoon will be as slow in coming in the fall as balmy weather was in its arrival last spring. In any case, a limit should be placed on the mad craze for speculation in Western lands. This speculation has already carried prices beyond the limit which even one more good crop would justify."

The Farming World takes the position that the interests of the various provinces of Canada are too closely interwoven for any one province to stand aside

and make statements which are liable to be injurious to other provinces. In order to get as near as possible at the true facts concerning the Western crops we have taken the trouble to write to a number of representative gentlemen in the West enclosing clippings from Ontario papers and asking for a summary of crop conditions as they actually exist.

MANITOBA.

The Hon. W. P. Roblin, Premier of Manitoba, writes as follows:

"Your letter of the 25th of July, with clippings from Toronto papers enclosed, duly received. I have read the newspaper statements carefully, and the conclusions reached are totally unwarranted from my point of view."

"Manitoba has a fair average crop, not one of the bumper kind that we sometimes have, but with the level of values to-day, much more profitable to the farmer and the country generally than the one of last year."

"The anticipation of damage to our crop from weather is no greater this year than any other. Sun, hail, wet, frost—all have in the past and, I presume, can again in the future, do damage to the crops of Manitoba as well as that of any other country. I do not, however, see any reason why there should be any disturbing newspaper statement made, such as contained in the clippings above referred to."

"I have a letter this morning from R. F. Lyons, M.P.P., of Carberry, and I quote you an extract: 'The crops in this district are a good average and coming on nicely. I think my own crop is fully as good as last year and likely to yield better.'"

"I also visited a farm of my own in Southern Manitoba last week, and I think I have not had a better prospect in ten years for wheat. The oats and barley will not be so heavy, as the drought affected late-sown grain more than early. My wheat crop, I should judge, will be fit for harvest between the 20th and 25th of August."

"I also interviewed a gentleman from Cartwright this morning, Mr. Waldie, a practical farmer, who says the crop in the Cartwright district is practically as good as last year. I quote him: 'The drought is less in the west where the drought obtained to the greatest extent. The northern part of the province has been very well favored with rain and has a magnificent stand of straw.'"

"One word regarding the so-called week-or-ten-days lateness of the crop. That statement is always made on a comparison of last year's crop. I do not think that the crop is one day later than it was two years ago, and I am absolutely sure it is not as late as it was four years ago, both of which crops were marked without any damage from weather."

Mr. S. A. Bedford, of Brandon, late manager of the Brandon Experimental Station, one of the best known and safest men in the West, writes, Aug 3—

"The crop in Manitoba and the West this year promises to be a very

patchy one and varies in proportion to the rainfall in the different districts. It is also greatly influenced by the system of farming practiced by the individual farmer. In Southern Manitoba, along the line of the Pembina Branch running parallel with the boundary, the crop is about two-thirds of an average one. Around Wawanesa and Souris the crop is also light. West of Napinka the crop is very nearly an average one. Throughout the country north of this town up as far as Minnedosa, Rapid City, Shoal Lake and Saltcoats, the crop promises to be a full average one. I should judge that throughout Saskatchewan there will be somewhat under an average crop. In all parts of the country, however, the crop will average two weeks later than usual. Should frost keep off for ten days later than the average season, the quality of the grain is likely to be much above the average, as our dry years usually result in a greater total of wheat. Throughout Southern Manitoba the prospects have greatly improved during the past ten days or two weeks owing to frequent showers and warm weather. Night before last the temperature dropped down to very nearly freezing throughout this part of the province, but no injury whatever was done as was proved by the uninjured plants of potatoes, cucumbers, etc."

"Farmers throughout the country are in a much better position to stand a slight setback than they were a few years ago, and I do not anticipate any great stringency from the reduced crop."

Mr. George H. Greig, President of the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition, writes:—

"This country has got beyond the stage where a partial crop failure in any one section will mean blue ruin to the whole of the Northwest of Canada. The crop conditions at the present time have very much improved over what they were a few years ago. In Southern Manitoba the crops have suffered from lack of rain and will be short and light; in Northern Manitoba (all north of the C. P. R. main line) prospects are very good. Saskatchewan is mostly good, both north, centre and south, but throughout Manitoba and Saskatchewan they are about two weeks late, but there is no reason why we should not have a fall this year as free from frost as we have had in several other years. The Alberta crop prospects are good."

"The remarks made by the interviewer in the Weekly Sun about prairie land adjoining Winnipeg selling at \$2000 a foot, is absolute 'rot,' and a paper such as the Sun should not be silly enough to make such quotations."

SASKATCHEWAN.

Mr. F. Hedley Auld, chief of the Bureau of Information and Statistics at Regina, writes. Enclosing a report on the crops of Saskatchewan, compiled from reports sent in by upwards of a thousand correspondents throughout that province, dated August 1st. Summarised it as follows:

"The healthy growth of the grain crops reported a month ago has been maintained. This season has demon-

strated
propar-
good c-
produc-
better
plowing
have do
ditions
the pr-
in Jm
rains in
some p-
excess
weather
blended
The am
which v
vanced
"Loca
ably, at
will be
timated
Septemb
ance v-
rather, the whe
Septemi-
"The l
condition
stand w-
Probably
will not
early fro
may, in
of recent
hand, in
that the
at the pr
year ago.

Senat
Wolsely,
"It is
than last
what
Those far
seed bed
soon as t
admit, w
headed o
tember, i
binder. I
there was
September,
aging fro
shall not
weeks will
be a lot o
wheat this
cent. of la

Senator
combe, W
"In Nor
since seed
able. We h
very nice
made remar
counting c
fact, one c
had, and if
there contin
early or ea
have some
is possible
come our w
safe as ever
"As far a
Alberta also
so has the
C.N.R.
"I was tal
Denovan of
returned fro
Slave Lake
glowing tem
berta. The c
than here.
"In my opi
We shall hav