

CANADIAN CONTRACT RECORD

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HEAD OFFICE, Confederation Life Bldg., TORONTO
Telephone Main 2365.

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D. BURNSIDE, Representative.
WINNIPEG Telephone 224 330 Smith Street
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Early Seeding Brings Confidence.

Crop reports from the West continue to promise a splendid year for the farmers. Seeding time has been favored with ideal weather and the advanced season indicates that the wheat will be hardy enough to withstand any late frost which may threaten it. Last year it was so late before seeding could be done that the young grain was just in the milk stage when the late frost came along and nipped it. The damage was general and heavy. This year seeding will have been finished a month earlier than last so that the grain will be well beyond the milk stage before the dangerous period of possible late frost arrives. The splendid weather of the last few weeks has induced the farmers to exhibit the most unusual optimism and the feeling has already been reflected in general business, which according to reports from all parts of the country is responding readily to the stimulus. For a short time it looked as though there would be a scarcity of rain during seeding time, but this is no longer a source of anxiety, as rain has been falling generally throughout the West during the past week. There had been indications of rain for two or three days, and on the 23rd it was reported as coming down steadily throughout Eastern Saskatchewan. Other reports from various parts of the West show that the rain has now become fairly general. During the rain, the weather was warm and balmy like that of June. This has resulted in good progress with seeding. In some favored districts the wheat is now practically in the ground. In addition

to the good weather the farmers are enjoying an additional advantage on account of the splendid condition of the soil which was thoroughly dried and well pulverized before the rain came.

A notable feature of the real estate situation is that there have been good sales of farm lands to actual settlers. Improved farms are being sold at good prices to immigrants from the east, or from the United States. In several sales reported, the purchasers are from Great Britain.

The railways report good sales of their lands to actual settlers, and real estate agents throughout the West also report sales and a healthy inquiry, such as leads them to anticipate a fair season's business. Improved property in cities and towns is also showing more activity, but there is actually no speculation in vacant property. Building has also begun, excavations being under way, and it is probable that the season will be a satisfactory one in this respect, especially in a good class of residences.

The influx of settlers continues quite heavy. Many farmers are going on land in Western Saskatchewan. A despatch notes the fact that already 77 cars of settlers' effects have come into Swift Current. It is only within the last two or three years that land in this and the Maple Creek district has been taken up for farming. Now the rancher is being rapidly displaced. The northern portions of the province are also receiving a large number of actual settlers.

Delay on Important G.T.P., Section.

Reports of the rapid construction of the G. T. P. western lines are so general that it seems as though the road were being pushed to completion at a remarkable rate of speed. There are, however, a few flies in the ointment from the public's point of view, which should not be overlooked. One of the most important things in connection with the road is that it should be in a position to take part in the shipment of grain from the Northwest before the next crop is ready for market. Much is dependent upon the success of the season's crop, and one of the factors of success will be the availability of plenty of railway facilities for shipment. In the past, congestion has been too frequent, and with the increased acreage and the promised bumper crop of the coming summer there is sure to be a severe tax placed upon the railways. The services of the G. T. P., therefore, will be

greatly needed by that time. Reports show that much of the Western division, between Edmonton and Winnipeg, a distance of 800 miles, is covered already. The country traversed by this line is one of the finest expanses of wheat land in the world and will provide a great quantity of grain for the coming harvest. This piece of road will be in operation before the harvest is gathered, according to the report of Sir Charles Rivers Wilson. From Winnipeg to the east, the G. T. P. is being built under the supervision of the Dominion Government. There is a distance of 245 miles from Winnipeg to Lake Superior Junction, from which latter point the company itself is building a branch line to Fort William. This branch is also nearing completion, but the connecting link between Winnipeg and Lake Superior Junction is not making the progress that should be required of it. Unless this portion is completed before the harvest, all the extra grain brought into Winnipeg by the western section of the G. T. P. will only serve to increase the congestion of traffic upon the old lines from that city to the lake ports. If it is completed, there will be direct connection for the G. T. P. western lines with Fort William, whence the grain can be shipped by steamer to the company's ports on Georgian Bay, and placed in its cars at these points, for shipment to tide water. There is yet considerable time left for the completion of the section between Winnipeg and Lake Superior Junction, but from the report of Sir Charles Rivers Wilson to the company at its half yearly meeting it looks as though there is more than a reasonable doubt as to its being finished in time. Sir Charles said:

"The portion in which you will remember we are most urgently interested is the 245 miles between Winnipeg and Lake Superior Junction. This work has been under contract for some time, but the contractor has met with great difficulties. Labor was scarce and difficult to obtain, and also it has been found the physical difficulties were much greater than were anticipated, chiefly on account of the great amount of rock work. I understand, however, the contractor, Mr. McArthur, has been working all through the winter—he claims to have had at work between 6,000 and 7,000 men, and he is now adding to that number, but I am afraid some further considerable delay will still take place in the completion of that portion of the road. You will observe why it is so important.