

Abundant Crops are General

Frosts in the West lately damaged oats and potatoes considerably. Grain Exchanges opening.—Uneasiness regarding cars for coal and grain

By E. CORA HIND.

Yorkton, Saskatchewan, August 25.—Last week it was impossible to get a letter off as my motor journeys took me far afield where there was much crop but few postal facilities.

Since last writing, have motored over 1,500 miles through crop, and it will be another week or ten days before the inspection can be completed. There is much poor crop, but taken as a whole, the wheat crops is far far better than seemed possible a month ago, and in the southern and central portions of all the provinces fully 85 per cent. of the wheat is in stock and therefore reasonably safe from serious damage, although the old saying of western farmers holds true that "no crop is actually safe until it is sold and the money in the bank."

The weather has been very variable. Two weeks ago the farmers were lamenting the intense heat, which was bringing the crop in too fast and endangering the grade, but last week the mercury dropped suddenly and on the nights of the 19th and 20th there were quite heavy frosts over very large sections of the west. The wheat, all but the latest crops, have escaped any material damage, but there will be considerable loss on oats, as some of the best crops of oats were very green. There will be some loss on potatoes also as in many sections they were frozen to the ground and in the case of late crops the tubers were not fully matured at that time.

In southern Manitoba and parts of the centre considerable threshing has been done, and in all the provinces the bulk of the winter rye has been threshed and a considerable amount of the new crop again seeded. The acreage in winter rye will probably be doubled this season, especially in the districts where they suffered from blowing and drifting, as it has been proved that winter rye which is seeded early in August and gets a good growth, may be pastured during October, and again in the spring will develop so early that it is a very great help in holding soil which is inclined to drift. On the very large farms in Alberta and Saskatchewan the rye is being seeded in broad strips on the south and west borders of farms as these are the directions from which the devastating winds usually come.

Open Grain Markets.

Since my last letter, trading in futures has been resumed on the Winnipeg, Calgary and Fort William grain exchanges. Resumption of trading did not make the stir that was expected. The exchange hesitated long about opening for October, but finally decided to open October and December. Trading so far has been largely confined to sales for October delivery, and the sellers are often farmers who will ship their own cars direct. The decline which has taken place since the opening is a sufficient indication of their wisdom in so doing. If cars are plentiful and the railways are making strenuous efforts to have supplies at every station, it is probable the early movement of wheat will be large. Wheat has come in early, 75 per cent of the wheat crop is in stock at the present time, and rapid progress is being made with the balance of the wheat, and with other crops and should fine weather continue, threshing will be quite general in some districts before the end of August. There have been quite a few

cars of wheat moved already, but they have all practically been consigned to mills.

There is considerable uneasiness as to the possibilities of congestion, owing to the fact that this year both coal and wheat must move eastward at the same time, whereas in the past the coal has come west and the same cars have carried wheat east.

All the railways have gangs at work bringing their tracks up to the necessary standard of efficiency, but it is doubtful if the Canadian National railway will succeed in getting heavy rails placed on the full length of its Saskatoon-Calgary line before the movement of crop commences in earnest, and it is over this line that the heavy coal trains must come from the Rosebud Valley mines.

The Livestock Situation.

The livestock situation is presenting some perplexing features. The west has an abundance of feed this year, yet the farmers are not buying stock cattle to feed through the winter. The

movement of stocker and feeder cattle to farms is almost nil, while the movement of these cattle to market is fairly brisk. The situation is hard to size up. The trouble which the farmers experienced in securing feed last year is a probable factor, but it seems rather curious that while the big ranchers were, earlier in the season, clamoring to have United States cattle admitted free in order to restock ranches depleted by heavy liquidation last year, at the present time neither farmers nor ranchers are showing any interest in absorbing the stockers and feeders that are coming on the three big markets of the west, namely Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton.

It is possibly as well that the range pastures should not be too heavily restocked for another year, as while the pasture is excellent it has not entirely recovered from the close cropping of 1918 and 1919, but this does not apply to feeders for winter, as they would not run at pasture, but be fed in more or less confined areas.

In rather marked contrast to the few stockers luth and Port Arthur, which will not displace but and feeders going into winter quarters for feed have been put up all over the country. The hay crop, both cultivated and wild hay, has been a very fair one, and there are veritable colonies of stacks in all directions all over the country. The irrigated farms in Alberta have the best crops of alfalfa they have ever had, and the average of yield in two cuttings will be over four tons to the acre.

Transportation Routes Undergoing a Re-Alignment

By F. W. GRAY

A re-alignment of transportation routes in North America is assuming definite shape, some of the causes being undeveloped, and as yet not clear, and other causes more apparent.

The more general use of the Panama Canal is following upon the great port improvements on the Pacific Coast, Seattle having taken the lead and reaped the initial benefits of its expenditures, with Vancouver not far behind. More and more does it seem likely that the trade of the Orient will flow towards the Pacific ports, and that Vancouver will increase in importance and volume of shipping interchange. The growing strength of Japan, and the commercial impetus and increase in population which is likely to follow her occupation and administration of Eastern Siberia, Manchuria, Sakhalin, Corea, and the long heralded renaissance of China, which seems likely to take place under Japanese tutelage forecast much coming enlargement of the commerce of the Northern Pacific. The political changes which these future developments may give rise to are momentous and may force some re-adjustment of the attitude of North America towards Japanese and Chinese ambitions, but they point indubitably towards greater importance of the Pacific ports and the railway lines that serve them. The presence in China of great deposits of anthracite, bituminous coal, iron and alloy metals, is one of the significant facts indicating world destinies.

The great bituminous coal reserve of Canada lies bordering the crest and to a great extent on the Albertan side of the Rockies. This deposit is so large and unique in Canada that it must at some future date become the dominating centre of Canadian industry, and the focus from which transportation lines will radiate. Inspection of the map will show that the western coalfield is relatively near to the Pacific Coast, and that in days to come Vancouver will become a great coal-

exporting port, and the point from which manufactured articles, made with the assistance of western coal will go out.

The recent conferences on the St. Lawrence water-way indicate quite unmistakably that the future will see ocean-going vessels going to Duluth and Port Arthur, which will not displace but will supplement the existing east to west rail lines, and others that are yet to be built. Such a route will mitigate those seasonal crises in transportation which the periodical accumulation of crops combined with climatic conditions must always cause in North America, and it will be time to talk about redundancy of transportation facilities and competition of facilities when it shall be demonstrated that existing routes are adequate. Most people will be of the opinion that their complete inadequacy has been proven.

From the viewpoint of the coal and steel industries of Canada, the importance of the St. Lawrence water-way—should its possibility be favorably reported upon by the engineers who are studying it—is that it will enable Nova Scotian coal and Newfoundland ore to be brought to steel plants and metal-working establishments in Ontario and Quebec, and thereby lessen a dependency upon our neighbors that has become a national menace.

There is the further consideration that the north-western states of the Union are about as dependent upon British Columbia and Alberta for bituminous coal as Ontario is upon United States sources of supply. Quebec cannot be said to be dependent upon the United States for bituminous coal, as there is an amply sufficient potential source of supply in Nova Scotia, and the St. Lawrence waterway has for many years carried millions of tons annually from Nova Scotia to Quebec centres of consumption. When the coal fields of Alberta and British Columbia become the main

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