

Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

Farmers and business men alike in the West are relieved at the announcement that the Government will permit the manufacture of heavy rails in Canada, sufficient to put the various railroads in shape for the big crop which everyone hopes may be the result of the coming season. It has been abundantly apparent in the last two years that the C.N.R. is in very bad shape, but the tremendous efforts which have been put forward by the C.P.R. to maintain their standard of efficiency, has somewhat blinded the public to the fact, that rails which carry such enormous burdens as 70 cars of wheat in a single train, cannot go on indefinitely without renewal. It is admitted that between 500 and 600 miles of the C.P.R. should be relaid during the present summer season with heavy rails if there is not to be confusion and delay when the crop begins to move. As the road in other respects has been kept fully up to standard, this will not be such a difficult matter, excepting that there is, of course, a great shortage of labor. It was for his purpose that the officials of the road petitioned the Government for permission to utilize a certain number of Chinese coolies, who are from time to time passing through Canada on their way to work behind the trenches in France. If Canada could be absolutely sure that these Orientals could be utilized for this purpose only, and then got out of the country, there would possibly be no great objection to the request of the railways being granted, but there is a well defined feeling of terror that once the Chinese coolies are let in, they will be here to stay. Of course, heavy rails will not be of much use without men to lay them, but if the new Board of Registration can only be persuaded to speed up that work, and having ascertained where men are, compel them to go to work at useful employment, it might be possible to do the necessary work in Canada this season without the coolies.

LABOR PROBLEM.

In calling first of all for an army of boys of 'teen age to work on farms, it looks a little as if those in charge of the labor were beginning at the attic instead of at the basement. This taking of boys out of the school is a matter about which the conference of women recently held at Ottawa felt very strongly, but apparently their protest was not regarded as having much weight. The fact that the majority of the women present were mothers of boys, did not entitle them to have any special enlightenment on this subject. This plan had been tried out to a considerable extent in Ontario last year, and the women with the experience reported to the conference that the boys were materially behind in their studies and in many cases, came back completely exhausted through attempting to do men's work with the boy's strength, and proved dull and listless when they returned to school.

The women from Quebec showed that large numbers of men from farms were working in munition factories, at work which women could do, and which they were willing to do, and the same is true to a very considerable extent in Ontario also, and the women made a very reasonable request that these men should be returned to the farms before the boys of 15 years of age be asked to leave school; moreover they asked that the men be taken out of non-essential industries, and mildly suggested that the hundreds of men in pool rooms and barber shops could better be employed in working on the farms. Of course, there is a union of pool room employees and a barbers' union, and union labor must not be coerced, it is very much better to deprive the growing lad of his education.

WOMAN LABOR.

Another thing which seems to be receiving scant attention, and which the conference of women tried hard to impress upon the War Committee, was the absolute necessity of getting women into the farm kitchens. This is not a class of work which is attractive, particularly in the West. The work is hard and heavy, and the shortage of water on many of the big wheat farms is a serious drawback. It is not work that is going to attract women from a monetary standpoint, but the conference of women felt that if there was an appeal made for women to do this work as a special "war service," and if they were recognized by a uniform or badge and given a status by the War Committee, that it would be possible to secure this help. It was suggested that an appeal for voluntary registration could be made through the newspapers. So far, nothing has been done.

The great advantage of getting a good supply of

help into the farm kitchens, would be, not only that it would relieve the overburdened farm women, but in many cases, women who are experienced in out-door work could be free to do that work, while women who can only do house work could be employed indoors.

BULL SALES.

As usual, Manitoba has opened the series of spring sales of pure-bred bulls and disposed of 177 bulls in a little less than a day and a half. The prices for good bulls were excellent, running from \$350.00 to \$2,200.00.

Saskatchewan is offering 450 bulls this week and Alberta will next week offer the world record of 875 bulls. For this sale many inquiries are coming from the United States, and it is expected that the sale will be a phenomenal one in every way.

The stimulation in livestock production, especially in the cattle classes, is unmistakable. Manitoba's sales of sows (in pig) was not a success. This was due, no doubt mainly to the great scarcity of feed suitable for young pigs. Most of the sows offered would come in about the end of May. Saskatchewan is also having a sale along this line, and it will be interesting to see whether the demand for sows is any better there than it is in Manitoba. At the sale at Brandon 107 sows were sold, at an average of seven pigs per sow, which is a conservative average, this would mean 700 pigs with a weight of 200 lbs. at the end of, say November next.

LIVESTOCK PRICES.

The price for commercial hogs touched \$20.50 per cwt. during the present week and this, in spite of the increased receipts. As the very top notch for

choicest steers has been 12c, it is difficult to realize why people prefer feeding steers to hogs. At the present time the supply of really first-class steers is limited, and the auction sale of fat bullocks and calves in connection with the Provincial Fair at Brandon brought record prices. A calf weighing 940 lbs. sold for 56c a pound, another weighing 900 lbs. sold for 48c; while a 1,300 lb. 20-month old bullock sold for 42c a pound. Several were sold for 38c and 34c, and the lowest priced animal for 14c. Some of the steers were bought for the purpose of further feeding, but most of them will go to the block.

BARLEY AND OATS.

During the past ten days the Winnipeg Grain Exchange has found it necessary to fix the price for oats and barley and to prohibit trading in the May futures, except for the cleaning up of previous contracts. The price of oats was fixed at 99c and barley at \$1.99. This leaves flax the only grain open to speculative trading, as the May future was only one being traded in for oats and barley. Good seed oats are extremely scarce, and the Provincial Governments have again given the municipalities power to borrow money to buy seed in places where it is required. Barley is also difficult to get, but it has one advantage over oats, and that is, that practically any barley that can be bought will germinate fairly well, while the same can not be said of oats bought in the West owing to the damage done by frost last fall.

The weather has been mild and there has been little snow in the Prairie Provinces. The farmers were beginning to be a little apprehensive on the score of moisture, but lately there has been a general snowfall which was very welcome. If the clerk of the weather could have seen fit to bless the West with, say half of the snow that there was in Eastern Canada, it would have been of material advantage in the production of the next crop.

A Wealthy Province.

British Columbia is fortunate in having as a spokesman for its resources Mr. P. A. O'Farrell, who gave to the Montreal Gazette a few days ago an article on the mineral resources of that Province which cannot fail to attract much attention. It is not very long since an eloquent Canadian described British Columbia as a "sea of mountains." The description will still stand, but with it will be the picture so vividly painted by Mr. O'Farrell of the resources of wealth and power which these mountains contain. The advantages of the railway lines in respect of shortness and grades, the grain and cattle producing lands, the vast coal deposits, the wealth of copper and other metals, and the abundance of water powers—these and other features of the Pacific Province are set forth in eloquent terms. Here is a picture of one of British Columbia's big things:—

The Hidden Creek copper ores were offered for \$30,000 a dozen years ago. But nobody wanted them. They were 650 miles northwest of Vancouver, on a lonely inlet. A dense forest clothed the rugged slopes. A wild torrent leaped from crag to crag and tumbled into the sea four miles below the mine. Thirty thousand dollars was a big price to pay for 2 per cent copper ore in such an out-of-the-way place at that time. A few years later the Granby Copper Mines in Kettle Valley began to play out and the company had to find copper elsewhere or go out of business. They paid \$700,000 for the deposits at Hidden Creek. They had to create a complete harbor on that lonely and rugged shore of Observation Inlet. A wooded isle at the entrance makes Anyox a perfect harbor. The Granby bought the island and then discovered it contained a gold mine from which they have been recouped five-fold. They cleared away the dense forests and built a miniature city where the forest grew. Streets were made, perfect drainage provided, and water and light plants constructed. Boarding

houses, apartment houses, cottages and villas grew along these streets, and a fine hotel, an up-to-date hospital, schools, churches, a picture theatre, lecture halls and playgrounds. While this was being done, a great smelter plant kept rising along the hillside above the waters of Anyox. An electric railroad ran daily from the wharves up the rugged mountain sides to the mines. The resounding mountain torrent was chained and set to work. It provides the city with light and the mines and smelter and railway with power, and now, at the end of five years, the smelter devours one million tons of copper ore and 70,000 tons of coke and tons of thousands of tons of lime and quartz yearly. It is extracting from this million tons of ore, a million of gold and silver, and 42,000,000 lbs. of copper, and if this hideous war was over, Granby copper could be made for 9 cents a pound. There are about 2,500 people living in this model miniature city of Anyox. The minimum wage is \$4.75 and the monthly payroll is about \$200,000. Seven-room villas are rented to Granby employees for 70 cents a day, five-room cottages with both-rooms for \$17.50, and three-room apartments, with bath-room, for \$10.50 a month. Single men get bedroom and board for \$1.12 a day, and that includes hot and cold water and electric light and steam heat in the bedrooms, and the bill of fare is just as wholesome and palatable as any prepared for guests in the best hotels run on the American plan. Anyox, though it is a perfect, up-to-date miniature city, is yet not a city, town or village. It is but a camp. Everything visible and invisible at Anyox is part of the Granby demesne. All these forests clothing the shaggy mountain slopes and the islands and the lonely shores beyond are part of the Granby estate. Granby bought and paid for everything you see save the sky and the

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