

FLOUR OPINIONS GUARDED.

A policy of watchful waiting seems to be the one adopted by local millers who refuse absolutely to make any statement as to the flour situation. One of the local millers declared that the ordinary man on the street had as good an idea of the situation as the oldest man in the flour business. One said "To have flour you must have wheat first and if wheat sells for \$3.00 a bushel or higher, then flour must also follow. The only selling in the wheat market at present," he went on, "is that done by private sales. Our Winnipeg market quotation sheet is blank and likely to remain so for some time."

"Yes," commented another milling official in answer to a remark, "I suppose the housewives of Montreal are quite delighted over the fact that two weeks ago spring wheat flour dropped \$1.90, and that winter wheat grades declined \$1.00. Prices may go down further still, or may shoot up again to-morrow. It would take more than human foresight to see how the market will jump. Markets for futures in both Winnipeg and Chicago have been erratic of late the last couple of weeks selling highest and, comparatively speaking, low prices. Bearish crop reports and the rumor that the United States government was about to stop the operations of the Entente Allies as buyers in wheat have done much to break the high ruling quotations and the effect of the declines is at once felt in flour."

"The Government is doing its best to stop speculation in wheat and the effect of such a move remains to be seen," said another prominent flour dealer. "To eliminate speculation you have to eliminate the professional speculators—the people, the only people in fact who have enough courage to operate on the falling end of the market. England wants to buy wheat and the flour mills want wheat. Just where the Government will find itself when conditions are such that everyone in the market is a buyer and sellers cannot be found is a question. I have not considered \$20.00 flour at all probable, but it will take just some such move as this to send the price skyrocketing again and keep it there."

"Another foolish idea, but one which has not gained headway to any extent here," he continued, "is that one which causes people to buy up flour for storage. That may be all very well, but the trouble is that as a general rule the storage conditions are such that when the time comes to take away the flour it is useless. Storage conditions for flour must be excellent or the product will spoil. As far as my knowledge goes Canadians display much more sense in this direction than the people across the border, who when war was declared bought in haste and are now repenting at leisure."

"It is absolutely impossible to make any comment on the next wheat crop with the seed just in the ground a day or two," he said. "But from reports that have reached the east it would seem that there will be a much larger area of ground seeded this year than ever before. It, therefore, remains to be seen whether the weather man and Dame Nature are on the side of the Allies or not."

"If not?" was asked.

"If not!" he repeated, and eloquently shrugged his shoulders.

The London Times has, in part, the following comment to make on the action of the British Government in taking over all the flour mills in Great Britain with a capacity of five sacks per hour:

"It has become necessary for the State to have control of the milling of flour for bread because, under orders already in operation, there are certain cereals which may be mixed with wheat in the preparation of flour, and the most economical and effective method of distributing these cereals must be followed to conserve stocks. At present millers choose the substitute which suits them best, but it is preferable that all the mills should not be using the same substitute at one time, and under the direction of the Food Controller one mill will perhaps use maize and another rye. Further dilution of wheat is almost certain to become necessary in the near future, and the power to distribute the alternative cereals to the best advantage will be valuable."

"The taking over of the mills does not mean that the Ministry of Food will have to place an agent in each establishment, but certain general regulations will be laid down, and in any matter which may arise in regard to output or administration the Food Controller will have the last word."

"Quite a number of orders have now been issued to deal with the dearth of wheat and other cereals, and still more drastic steps may yet be required to deal with this, the most serious, aspect of the food problem. Assumption of the control of the sale and distribution of bread is not outside the calculations of the department."

HIDES AND LEATHER.

A deputation of Canadian hide dealers recently interviewed Sir George Foster in regard to the scarcity of leather. Mr. F. N. Beardmore, one of the delegates from Montreal, requested that something be done to induce Australia to remove its restrictions on the export of hides in order that Canada may secure enough to supply her needs. Boot leather it was pointed out is reaching not only unheard of but also impossible prices. The Minister promised to look into the matter.

The market is easier, being about 1c lower for green hides with a fair demand at the decline. As far as leather is concerned there is little or nothing doing locally. A few shipments of sole and black leather have been made to the States at unchanged prices.

Current quotations follow:

	Per Pound.
Hides:	
No. 1 inspected	0.26
No. 2	0.25
No. 3	0.24
Rough	0.23
Sheepskins, each	3.90 4.00
Calfskins	0.33 0.35
Spring Lambskins, each	0.25
Sole Leather:	
No. 1 Hemlock Sole	0.62 0.60
No. 2 Hemlock Sole	0.58 0.56
No. 3 Hemlock Sole	0.55 0.54
Oak Sides, Canadian, dry hides	0.63 0.61
Do., from hides, green	0.68 0.66
Oak backs	0.68
Oak bends, No. 1	0.85 0.83
Oak bends, No. 2	0.79
Oak bends, No. 3	0.75 0.74
Upper Leather:	
Gun Metal Sides	0.50 0.45
Chrome Box Sides	0.48 0.45
Matt Sides	0.45
Kangaroo Grain	0.42
Russett Oil Grain	0.42
Elk	0.45
Splits Wax	0.39 0.37
Automobile, Carriage, and Furniture Leather:	
Spanish furniture	0.37 0.38
Hand buffed	0.35 0.36
Machine buffed	0.32 0.32
Belting Leather:	
Belting butts, shoulders off	1.60
Belting butts, shoulders on	1.40
Harness	0.65 0.62
Skirting	0.57 0.53

A WOOL FAMINE?

"AFLY requirements are taking such a quantity of wool," a local wholesale house remarked, "that Canada and, in fact, the world, is facing a serious shortage in that staple. The British authorities have taken over not only the clip of the United Kingdom, but also that of New Zealand and Australia, all of which supplies are, of course, being devoted to the uses of the army and navy. As Canada is dependent upon these countries for about half her supplies you can easily see the position we are placed in. It is true that there has been a wool commission appointed to work in conjunction with the Department of Trade and Commerce with the object of securing permission to import wools from Australasia, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand, which should show results in the very near future. All our domestic production is not suited for use in Canada, and while I don't anticipate any embargo being placed upon wool yet a license is now necessary before any can be exported. The result is that our home mills will get first call on Canadian wool while only those grades which are useless to us will be allowed out of the country. With these arrangements I hope that we will be able to tide over the difficulty which is really very serious."

BRITISH SHOE IMPORTS CUT OFF.

Among the articles banned from import to Great Britain by a recent decree of the British Government are boots and shoes of leather. During the year 1916 the United States exported to the United Kingdom footwear to the value of \$3,659,672. No figures are available as to just what proportion of this figure is made up of army shoes, but a reference to the statistics for the year 1914 and 1915 shows considerably lower figures—\$1,309,206 and \$1,482,504 respectively.

"As the situation demands new measures they will be forthcoming. Meanwhile it cannot be too strongly urged that economy of all grain is of vital importance. Oatmeal, which to-day is not within the scale of voluntary rations laid down by Lord Devonport, may be wanted later on to eke out the wheat. Waste or overeating of any kind must stop."

BANKING AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS IN THE U.S.

(Continued from page 4).

ing the present season. There is an improved feeling in business circles. Stocks in New York have made a sharp recovery in the past few days from previous low prices. Bank clearings for this week were about five per cent below the figures for the preceding week, but more than twenty per cent above the figures for this week a year ago. Business failures are much fewer than for the corresponding dates of 1916, 1915 and 1914, and are also below the figures of last week. Ordinary trade is somewhat quiet, but this is more than counteracted by enormous buying of war materials. Dividend and interest payments for June will exceed \$166,000,000 as compared with some \$137,000,000 for last June, and being a record total for the month. The railroads are buying more liberally, and they have entered upon an extensive policy of freight-car construction which may tend in time to relieve the car shortage, although the demand on the transportation facilities of the country must be exceedingly heavy for a long time.

The war situation undoubtedly causes some anxiety in business circles—more than it did when this country was not one of the belligerents. Instead of there being a disposition here to regard our part in the contest as a light one, present tendencies run in the opposite direction, and one hears talk of a long war calling for the exercise of this country's utmost strength. This may cause the country to put forth much stronger exertions than if there were a confident feeling that the war will soon end. As a reassuring factor, it must be recalled that at the inception of the war business here took fright, but soon recovered. Actually our own decision to enter the contest caused no serious business disturbance. Whatever uncertainty was engendered by this step will disappear once the country gets an accurate measurement of the job on hand.

OLD WORLD CROP REPORTS.

A cablegram received by the Government, last week, from the International Institute of Agriculture gives the following crop reports:

The condition of growing cereals on May 1 was good in Tunis, average in Spain, Netherlands and Algeria, mediocre in France, Great Britain, Italy and Switzerland.

Areas sown to wheat—Spain, 10,300,000 acres, or 105 per cent of that sown in 1916, and 106 per cent of the acreage of the five years 1911-15; Switzerland, 128,000 acres, 104 per cent of last year, and 121 per cent of average; India 32,885,000 acres, or 109 per cent of last year, and 108 per cent of average; Algeria, 3,141,000 acres, 96 per cent of 1916, and 92 per cent of average.

Areas sown to rye—Spain, 1,846,000 acres, or 100 per cent of last year, and 97 per cent of average; Switzerland, 74,000 acres, or 105 per cent of last year, and 122 per cent of average.

Areas sown to barley—Spain, 4,025,000 acres, or 93 per cent of last year, and 112 per cent of average; Algeria, 2,852,000 acres, or 95 per cent of last year, and 90 per cent of average.

Areas sown to oats—Spain, 1,416,000 acres, 119 per cent of last year, and 107 per cent of average; Switzerland, 111,000 acres, 109 per cent of last year, and 133 per cent of average; Algeria, 524,000 acres, 98 per cent of last year, and 100 per cent of average.

WINNIPEG GRAIN INSPECTIONS.

The receipts of grain in Winnipeg for the week ending May 25th, were as follows:

No. 1 Northern	315
No. 2 Northern	926
No. 3 Northern	951
No. 4 Northern	473
No. 5 Northern	222
No. 6 Northern	87
Feed wheat	70
Rejected	80
No grade	946
No. 3 special	119
No. 5 special	120
No. 6 special	26
Winter wheat	6
Totals	4,347
Same week last year	4,055
Oats	1,224
Same week last year	1,017
Barley	153
Same week last year	82
Flax	224
Same week last year	113