

Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

Calgary, 12th April, 1917.

The West is at last admitting the fact that spring is late. Practically nothing has been done upon the land as yet — certainly no seeding, and very little ploughing, though in the middle of the day there is a good deal of getting on the land with the harrows. In Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan there was a heavy snow fall on the night of Easter Sunday, and it is probable that the weather will now steadily warm up. The snow was very wet and melted immediately, and the bulk of it soaked into the ground. The soil will be in excellent condition, and there will be abundance of moisture to carry the seed until the time when we have a right to expect June rains.

It seems now that there will not be any very acute shortage of labor, certainly not in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and Manitoba will be materially helped out by the men who will go out from the city of Winnipeg and give from six weeks to two months.

The fact that the United States has entered the war and that there appears to be every prospect of conscription in that country, has materially helped the labor situation in Western Canada. Numbers of Americans, who rushed away from Canada when the National Service Cards began to circulate, are now rushing back again fearing conscription in the United States. They are between the Devil and the Deep Sea, but they seem to have decided that the Devil of National Service in Canada is less to be dreaded than the Deep Sea of Conscription in the U. S. A.

Canadian Government officials are not saying much, but they have the number of a good many of these weak-kneed patriots.

The higher prices of grain which have come with the United States entering the war, will certainly stimulate production. And the demand for agricultural and heavy horses together with the prices being paid for them is another indication of the determination to get in every acre that is possible.

I have been in Alberta for the past ten days attending the Spring shows and Bulls sales at Edmonton and Calgary, and the interest being taken in live stock as indicated by the demand for both bulls and stallions, and the high prices paid are most encouraging.

The Edmonton sale is comparatively small and of recent growth, but there is a great need for it owing to the rapidly developing territory to the north, and the management of the sale were greatly encouraged by the fact that the highest priced bulls went into the north country. Edmonton shows every indication of developing into a great sorting market for all classes of live stock. It has always been a great hog country, and the size and quality of the hog exhibited at Edmonton, considering the high prices at which feed grain could be sold, was the best possible evidence that Northern Alberta is in the hog breeding business to stay.

Calgary has staged one of the most spectacular bull sales ever witnessed on the continent of America. In regard to numbers it has been only exceeded twice — once in Perthshire, Scotland, and once in the Argentine. 504 bulls were listed and the first day of the sale 224 were sold at an average of \$258 each — while several sold at prices ranging from \$550 to \$825 which was the top of the sale for the first day. To-day, however, this price was beaten — one 15 month old shorthorn bull selling for \$1,350, and a Hereford for \$850. About fifty per cent of the bulls offered at this sale are two years old — possibly 30 per cent are yearlings, and the remainder are aged bulls which are being sold because the limit of their usefulness in the present herds has been reached.

Alberta breeders state that anything over \$100 gives them a fair return on a two year old bull, and anything over \$80 a reasonable return on a yearling — so that it will be gathered from some idea of the profit to be made in cattle breeding in this country.

The highest priced bulls of this sale were all bred in Alberta. And no bull that has not been in the province at least six months is eligible for this sale.

One of the features of the sale has been the placing on exhibition of Gay Lad 49th—a two year old bull for which Frank Collicut, of Crossfield, Alberta, paid \$11,900. Mr. Collicut has a herd of over 600 head of purebred Herefords, and bought this sire in the United States to use with his best cows.

While there are not lacking those who look forward with some apprehension to after war conditions, there is no doubt that at the present time a strong feeling of optimism is abroad in the West.

Failure of the United States Wheat Crop

The United States Government report on the condition of winter wheat, issued on Saturday, April 7, indicated a great deal of damage in the States of Nebraska and Kansas and was so low as to be sensational, making the condition 63.4, compared with 85.7 in December, and a ten year average condition of 76.2.

The Government estimate of the crop condition, with the usual allowance for abandoned acreage, pointed to an outturn of only 430,000,000 bushels, compared with 495,000,000 indicated last year and 482,000,000 final last year.

A strikingly low condition of 35 was reported in Nebraska, against a ten year average of 90.

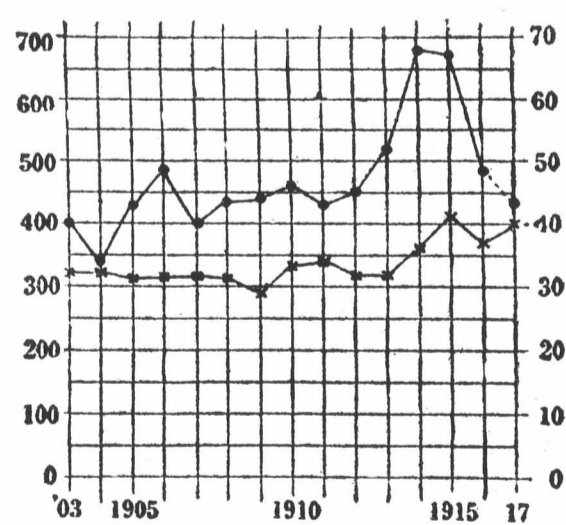
Apparently only the most favorable results from Spring wheat can bring a surplus for export this year. The average crop of Spring wheat is about 250,000,000 bushels, which, added to a Winter crop of 430,000,000 bushels, would give a supply for the country of about 680,000,000 bushels, which would be only 40,000,000 or 50,000,000 bushels more than the home needs.

"Any disaster to the Spring wheat crop," says the New York Analyst, "would mean that not enough wheat would be raised in America to supply domestic requirements. Spring wheat conditions, however, are quite promising at present."

"The situation as far as Europe is concerned is particularly serious. The exports of wheat from North America since July 1 have been 262,000,000 bushels, against 338,000,000 the previous year. Unless the wheat supplies raised in France, Italy, and England are considerably larger than the amount raised last year, the requirements from North America will be fully as large for the coming season as for the past, so that a very great deal will depend on the outturn of the American and Canadian Spring wheat crop."

"There will be practically no surplus of wheat carried over in the United States or Canada this sea-

son, compared with a surplus carried over last July of about 235,000,000 bushels, so that it is essential that a large crop be raised this year. But for the huge carry-over last July from the record crop of the preceding year the condition of Europe as to



The upper line relates to the size of the winter wheat crop, the 1917 figure being the indicated yield on April 1. The lower line relates to the acreage planted to winter wheat. The two lines in contrast show that the crop has been much more than ten times the acreage in all except two years, 1904, and again this year. The condition on April 1 was 63.4 compared with 78.3 last year, and 83.8 the year before.

supplies would have been extremely grave, necessitating the bringing of greatly increased supplies of wheat from India and Australia. There is a very

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INCREASE IN COST OF FOOD.

Staple Articles Cost 40 Per Cent. More Than Two Years Ago.

Statistics collected by the Department of Labor, Ottawa, show increases in the prices of grain, meats, vegetables, textiles metals fuel and coal oil and building materials to have taken place during March. The cost of list of 23 staple foods for a family of five for a week was \$10.70 in March, as compared with \$10.46 in February, \$8.36 in March, 1916, and \$7.68 in March, 1914. There has thus been an increase of almost 40 per cent. in the expenditure of the average family for food. Meats and potatoes showed the largest increases, while eggs were considerably cheaper and the price of dairy butter fell slightly. Statistics in regard to other items of the family budget show that anthracite coal averaged \$10.66, as compared with \$10.99 a ton in February, and \$8.56 in March of last year.

Rents advanced in Quebec city, in several Ontario cities and in Edmonton.

The department's index number for wholesale prices rose to 220.6, as compared with 217.3 for February, 176.4 for March, 1916, and 137 for March, 1914.

On the other hand 23 changes, affecting 2,500 workers, indicated that the upward tendency of wages still continued. The changes reported involved persons engaged in branches of the transportation industry, metal trades and in civic employment.

AN INDUSTRIAL CENSUS FOR 1917.

In an interview on Friday last, the Rt. Hon. Sir George Foster made the announcement that a comprehensive census of the industries of Canada would be taken for the year 1917 by the Census and Statistics Office. It is believed that for the period of reconstruction which will follow the return of peace the fullest possible data with regard to industrial undertakings of all kinds ought to be available. In Great Britain the reconstruction committee of the Cabinet is considering a similar suggestion.

A postal census of the manufactures of Canada was taken for 1915, and the results, with those of the census of 1911, constitute the latest information now available. It is intended, however, to make the Census for 1917 much more comprehensive and to bring all data up to date. The plans are already drawn up for certain sections of the field; they will be completed during the summer and the inquiry launched towards the end of the year, so that the results will be available for 1918.

large supply of wheat still in Australia, and a very important supply in India, but the question of bringing this supply forward is one of tonnage. Owing to the vast loss of tonnage and the great length of time required for journeys from India and Australia to Great Britain, but little of this wheat has been brought forward this season. With the present prospects for the United States Winter wheat crop it will be necessary to move this surplus."