

Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

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Much history has been made since my last letter to the Journal two weeks ago, and it is interesting to note how little effect, so far, the approximate ending of the war has had on the grain markets. All markets were closed on Monday, and general opinion was that Tuesday would bring a series of rapid price fluctuations. Such, however, has not been the case, the principle effect has been to make for very cautious trading. The cash demand is light, and the offerings are light also, while future trading is of the most limited character. The price of future advanced slightly on Tuesday; were almost stationary on Wednesday, and on Thursday showed a general slight decline with a narrowing of spreads.

The forward movement of grain for the two and a half months of the crop year now expired, has been very slow, and there has been a great deal of comment and considerable criticism as to why this should have been so, and there has been a tendency in some quarters to lay the blame on the change of management from the Wheat Export Company to the Board of Grain Supervisors, and some sections of the press which hailed the change with rejoicing, inasmuch as it permitted the trade getting back into business, when the arrangement was made in September, have since fallen foul of the Grain Supervisors, and blamed them for many things over which they have no control. During this week, Dr. Robert Magill, whose resignation as Chairman of the Board of Grain Supervisors, has not been accepted by Sir George Foster, made a statement to the press as to why the wheat movement had been slow. The original plan had been to move 70,000,000 bushels before the close of navigation. Up to the end of the first week in November very little more than 20,000,000 bushels had been moved, and with less than a month of open water, it is hardly to be hoped that this deficiency can be made up. The movement in previous years before the close of navigation was 87,500,000 in 1917; 74,500,000 in 1916, and 144,000,000 in 1915. Dr. Magill pointed out that the farmers had marketed 20,000,000 less than in the same period of 1917. No wheat had come out of Alberta this year, where last year the movement had been early and heavy, and many of the Saskatchewan districts were previously accountable for a heavy movement, have practically nothing to move this year, while in the northern districts, where the crop is heavy, threshing had been late. He further pointed out that the railway movement is in the hands of the Railway War Board, and while it had considered the movement of 70,000,000 possible, they found a good many obstacles in the way. On the government controlled railways the new equipment which had been expected for the movement of the crop would not now be available until January. All the roads report a serious shortage of labor, due to conscription, and since the beginning of October, a still greater reduction on account of influenza. This made accumulation at the head of the lakes slow and arrivals at terminal elevators for the month of September had been less than 4,000,000 bushels as against 11,000,000 bushels in 1917, and in October, 23,000,000, as against 32,000,000 in 1917. The movement across the lakes had been seriously affected by the fact that the port of Buffalo is closed to Canadian grain owing to the heavy shipments of the American crop. In 1917, out of a total of 100,000,000 bushels moved in vessels, 40,000,000 bushels had gone through Buffalo. American boats had not been available until the 24th of October owing to the refusal of the American owners to allow their tonnage to come to Port Arthur or Fort William until the 1917 arrangement of placing the marine insurance through the chartering company was restored. Dr. Magill refuted the criticism that Canadian grain had been seriously delayed, owing to the Eastern elevators being congested with American grain. Only 20,000,000 bushels of American grain of all kinds had been handled through Canadian ports in September and October. A large percentage of this grain was oats for cavalry for the Allies, and it was imperative that they be moved, and only 3,000,000 bushels of American grain had actually come in competition with the movement of Canadian grain. As a matter of fact, the Board of Grain Supervisors had only given permission for the movement of 5,000,000 bushels of wheat, and this was done at the special request of the Allies in order to load certain vessels placed at Atlantic ports by

the Admiralty, for which there was not sufficient Canadian wheat available.

These were the facts which Dr. Magill considered made for the general slowing up of the movement. The fact remains that the Canadian west has moved a smaller amount of crop than has been the case for many years, and that at the present time there is over 30,000,000 bushels of wheat on hand in interior elevators, while receipts at Winnipeg continue to be under 1,000 cars a day.

DR. RUTHERFORD.

The appointment of Dr. John Gunion Rutherford, C.M.G., to a place on the Railway Commission of Canada, gives the western provinces the first direct representation they have had since the death of Hon. Thomas Greenway. The appointment is a particularly popular one in the West. Dr. Rutherford is a man of not only exceptional ability, but with exceptional experience. He knows the West and its needs thoroughly, and he has also a wide range of knowledge of world conditions as they affect the development and trade of western Canada. He has served Canada in many capacities already. For ten years as Veterinary Director General, and for six, he occupied the dual position of Veterinary Director General and Livestock Commissioner, and laid the foundation of all the admirable regulations for preserving the health of animals, that Canada found such an adequate protection during the terrible outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the United States a few years ago. He was a delegate from Canada to the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, and for his very valuable work in connection with the establishing of that institute he was made a companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. When in 1912 he resigned as Veterinary Director General and Livestock Commissioner, Sir Thomas (now Baron) Shaughnessy seized upon the opportunity of obtaining the doctor's views on the development of the West and adopted the policy sketched by Dr. Rutherford in total; not only that, but secured the services of the doctor to put the scheme into effect; and this plan which included the distribution of pure-bred sires by the Canadian Pacific Railway, has proved of great encouragement in the breeding of better livestock in Western Canada. Dr. Rutherford is fully seized with the importance of livestock breeding to the West and he is fully aware of the very important place which transportation occupies in this work, and his place on the railway board will enable him to adjust many things for the West that hitherto proved stumbling blocks and rocks of offense in the work of the livestock breeders.

CONFERENCE.

Much interest is felt in the West in the conference which is announced to be held in Ottawa next Tuesday, between the livestock interests, the Government

WAR ON FAKE ADVERTISING.

A closer relationship is being established among the various agencies of the United States which are opposing the promotion of speculative enterprises, according to Merle Sidener, Chairman of the National Vigilance Committee of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, which has its headquarters in this city, and while such enterprises are still using some advertising space as one means for defrauding the public, space is harder and harder to get and the path of the bombastic promoter is growing more difficult, Mr. Sidener declares.

The vigilance committee has recently been working in close harmony with State Councils of Defense, the Capital Issuer Committee, "blue sky" commissioners and other officers of various states, as well as through vigilance committees of advertising clubs in more than one hundred communities.

"We have been especially gratified," Chairman Sidener said to-day, "by the response we have had from the newspapers of the country. We have sug-

gested that, for the protection of their readers, they should not accept advertisements of any enterprise which has not had the approval of the Capital Issues Committee, the purpose of which is to see that needless enterprises are not promoted during the term of the war.

"Every day we have word from newspapers that they will comply with the suggestion. It is only necessary, in most cases, to cite the unfairness to the newspaper reader, involved in the publication of such advertisements.

"Examination of the clippings of undesirable advertisements reveals the interesting fact that the promoter of speculative enterprises does not give up readily. He evidently likes the easy money he gets, for, as we drive him out of newspapers in the larger communities, he buys advertising space in smaller papers, which have apparently not heard of the movement. But we are following the campaign into the offices of the smaller papers, and it is becoming harder for the promoter to get space at all. It is to the credit of the more reputable newspapers that they have taken a stand against being a party to such promotions."

MILK.

The milk situation in western cities, and more especially in Winnipeg is very acute. There have been commissions to inquire into the matter, but they seem to have rather a fatal effect on the supply. Apparently the lady cows do not believe in milk commissions, certainly their owners do not, and they are selling their dairy cows and getting out of the dairy business with a rapidity that is nothing short of appalling. The whole situation has been materially aggravated by the serious outbreak of influenza, increasing the demand for milk in the cities, while in the country it has laid low many of the people who did the necessary work of producing milk.

GENERAL CONDITIONS.

General business conditions in the West are very materially affected by the presence of influenza. Many industries are crippled by the shortage of staff, and the absence of gatherings of all kinds and the general fear of infection is checking business. It has been a matter of surprise and gratification, that under the very adverse conditions, the Victory Loan has made such excellent progress.