

In Southern Manitoba.

As promised, I forward you a report of the condition of the crops in, with a slight sketch of the progress of that part of southern Manitoba traversed by the Northern Pacific Railway between Winnipeg and the Pembina Mountain station of Swan Lake. Some ten years since, I went over this route for the first time, taking sixteen days to reach my destination, six miles north of the present village of Swan Lake, enduring many hardships, which commenced immediately outside of Winnipeg, when we had to swim the animals and float our effects across the river, a performance we found it necessary to repeat on several occasions. This journey I have just performed with much comfort in the well appointed cars of the Northern Pacific in five hours.

Most of the crop between this city and Morris is in the stook, and the number in each field indicates an average Manitoba crop, but one cannot help noticing the extremely weedy condition the land was in, evidenced by the stooks, which in numerous instances were perfectly black with the maturing rank growth of weeds. This was particularly observable in the Mennonite settlement. Between Morris and Miami harvesting was well advanced. The grain in this district suffered from the early growth, but the sample will be No. 1, with an average of twenty-five bushels of wheat, thirty-five of oats, and thirty of barley, per acre; further back I understand the yield is much heavier.

Miami is a thriving village, containing several substantial buildings, with others erecting. Conspicuous is a spacious and comfortable hotel and pretty church belonging to the Presbyterians. Between Miami and Somerset, the road passes through a densely wooded and very picturesque district, which, in a few weeks, when the autumnal tints are developed, will present to the traveller a phantasm of bewildering beauty. The land, before arriving at Somerset, is rich meadow interspersed with poplar bluffs and patches of wheat and oats, few and far between.

Around Somerset station are some fine fields of grain. In comparison with other parts considerably backward, but luxuriant in growth. There is, however, a considerable amount of grain in stook. A station is in course of building and the nucleus of a village already exists. Several of the farmers here suffered severely by hail, especially Messrs. Clouston and O'Malley, who lost their entire crop. On leaving Somerset the line at first passes through an uninteresting country, but on emerging from the bush the smiling expanse of the Swan Lake settlement greets the eye. Luxuriant fields of grain standing and in stook cover the landscape. But here also the standing crop is backward, owing to the rankness of growth, for probably no soil in the world is richer than that prevailing here, indeed the same may be said of the whole of that magnificent valley, bounded on the north by the Tiger Hills and on the south by the Pembina River, a stretch of about twelve miles. It requires but a few days of harvest weather for the farmers of this district to secure a crop of phenomenal yield, the continued rain is no doubt a very serious matter, and has started a second growth, so that fields which appeared to be ready for the reaper a few days since are now quite green again. But no sensible farmer will wait for this to mature. Jack-frost, not Old Sol, would ripen it.

In the Norguey district the crops are ripe and the yield large, but there is a great scarcity of labor. I saw a field of Mr. C. Holland's wheat, close to the village, containing about ninety acres, dead ripe and promising a yield of at least forty bushels to the acre. Though offering large wages, he has up to the present been unable to hire help, and the class of men seeking employment may be judged by the following story told to me by the gentleman to whom it occurred, so that I can vouch for its truth. Having engaged an Ontario laborer at thirty dollars a month permanently, he thought he was all right. But he and his wife being invited to a tennis party and the hired man not being included, and a few days afterwards on a few friends coming to early dinner and the same gentleman not being taken from his work to join the party he packed up his traps and left giving these instances as his reason for doing so. I might say as an illustration of the Swan Lake yield, that I saw one farmer who was using a ball of binding twine to the acre. These balls weigh about four and a half pounds and the weight required to bind an ordinary field of wheat is from two and a half to three pounds. It must be a matter of fact to all interested in the progress of the country to notice, comparatively speaking, the absence of animal life. The herds of cattle are very scarce, proving how much the farmer still depends on his grain produce. The forecast in the early part of the year as to the probable scarcity of hay is entirely disproved. Hay stacks dot the country, and there are hundreds of thousands of tons waiting for the mower, which will be allowed to rot under the winter frosts. No doubt the want of help is a just excuse for many a farmer not putting up sufficient hay to last him for two seasons, but its scarcity in the past year should prove a warning not to neglect securing a commodity which nature has so bountifully provided for him, and call to his recollection the old adage, "Old hay is old gold."

The Northern Pacific Railway has been a great boom to the farmers in the districts it has opened up. Occasional growls are heard at the tariff rates, but increasing population and consequently increased production will remedy this. The construction and operation of a line of railway is attended with vast expense, and those who risk their capital must look for some return.

In conclusion, I may truthfully say that barring the autumn being so unprecedentedly wet as to ruin the crop, from what I have seen and heard the grain crop of 1890 will compare favorably with any in the previous history of Manitoba.

JOHN PENNEFATHER.

The above interesting letter from Dr Pennefather was held over from last issue on account of short space. The trip taken by the doctor was during the week ending August 23.

Four thousand seven hundred and sixty boxes of cheese were boarded at London, Ont., on Aug. 30. The market was dull throughout. Two offers at 9½ declined, and no sales.

The total area under potatoes in the United Kingdom is about 1,370,000 acres, say 580,000 acres in Great Britain and 790,000 in Ireland. France grows over 3,500,000 acres, and Germany about 7,250,000 acres of Potatoes.

Lumber Cuttings.

Thompson's new mill at Rapid City, Manitoba, was tested last week and found satisfactory.

Christie, of Brandon, and Tait, of Birtle, have made arrangements to lease the saw mill at Birtle, Man., from the town council for the balance of the season, and will commence cutting lumber at once.

N. Slaughter & Co., a Michigan firm who recently acquired timber limits in British Columbia, have purchased a mill site from M. M. English, at Sycamore, near the mouth of the Fraser river, and intend erecting a mill of large capacity.

The Rat Portage lumbermen claim that they will procure all their logs from Minnesota for next season's cutting, unless they can make some arrangement with the Ontario Government at once regarding timber limits. They say that the sales of timber lands at Toronto will be held too late to allow them to get in supplies before it freezes up.

W. L. Johnson & Co., of Gambier Island, Howe Sound, whose shingle mill and machinery were completely destroyed by fire some seven weeks ago, have rebuilt and are running again on a larger scale than ever. Since starting up over a million shingles have been turned out, for which a ready market has been found. The new mill is larger than the old one, its capacity is greater, but so great is the demand for its output that the establishment has to be kept running night and day.

The McLaren-Ross mills on the Fraser River, near Westminster, B. C., are rapidly being got into condition for cutting operations, says the *Columbian*, and only the finishing touches remain to be added to the works. The monster band saw and its mass of machinery has come to hand and is now being set in position; and when this machine is ready for use, which will be in about a month's time, the whole establishment will commence running with a full complement of hands. The manager of the company says that, besides supplying the local and continental trade, the mill will load at least one vessel every week for foreign ports. This means that four or five large, deep sea vessels will be constantly in port, which, apart from the value their trade will be to our merchants, will give to the harbor a busy and prosperous appearance, and go far to convince visitors of the importance of Westminster as a shipping centre.

Hides.

The *Montreal Gazette* reports the hide market at that place as follows:—"Business in hides during the week has not been of very extended dimensions, solely owing to the fact that holders are offering very sparingly, while stocks generally are light. In local green hides the ½ advance noted last week has been maintained, and there has been business in No. 1 at 8c, with some sales of inspected at an advance of ½ on this price. Western buffs and upper No. 1 are higher, some fair sized lots changing hands during the week in a small way at 8½ to 9c, while heavy steers are quoted stiff at 9½ to 11c. On the whole the position of the market continues as firm as ever, and it is being reflected on the leather market as evidenced by tanners' actions."