

THE WESTERN OUTLOOK

Seeding Now Well Advanced—Moose Jaw and Medicine Hat are Prosperous—Calgary a Busy City

(Staff Correspondence)

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SEEDING is in full swing in all parts of the west, and spring has opened up favorably. In the last ten years that the writer has covered this western territory the present season, looked at from every angle, is the most favorable from the crop point of view, and, of course, that is what counts in the west. A genuine spirit of optimism prevails. The west experienced a most unusually mild winter, there is plenty of moisture in the ground to carry the seed well along, and from every source of information it is learned that the seed has gone in under most favorable circumstances. In the Moose Jaw section, one of the districts where the crop was fairly good last year, conditions are very satisfactory. The merchants report good business, and even with all the victory loans and war work and expenditure, there seems to be more money in the savings banks than ever. Wholesale houses, of which there are a large number in Moose Jaw, report increased business with collections quite satisfactory. The trust companies and legal offices are busy winding up estates of victims of the "flu" epidemic.

In the Medicine Hat district where a good crop is much needed this year, from 20 to 40 per cent. of the seeding has been done already, and by the time this appears it will be nearly completed. Seeding conditions this year are ideal, and the seed is going in with a rush; there is plenty of moisture here, and the farmers, said a prominent manager of one of the large flour mills, are the most optimistic in years, many of them have to be provided with seed by the government on account of scarcely any crop last year. The acreage will be about the same as last year, there being very little fall ploughing done. Medicine Hat is an important milling centre. The flour mills report a fair domestic trade, but we are doing very little export at the present time. Mr. Preston, manager of the Lake of the Woods Milling Company, spoke of one order of about three cars of flour from the Hudson Bay Company to go to their post on Herschel Island in the Arctic Ocean, the vessel leaving from Vancouver about the middle of June. Medicine Hat is a great industrial centre, having still undiminished supplies of natural gas which can be supplied to manufacturers at such low cost. Three new industries have started this spring. The Alberta Foundry & Machine Company who are transferring from the making of munitions to that of farm tractors on a large scale, also Martin and Phillips, who are going in for the manufacture of light farm tractors, which are in such great demand at the present time, also the Saskatchewan Bridge & Iron Works who are moving their whole plant from Moose Jaw where they have been making munitions principally, in the last few years.

Prospects for an exceedingly good year in the Calgary district are very bright, and crop conditions are more favorable at the present writing than for several years past. In discussing the outlook with *The Monetary Times*, Mr. D. G. Campbell, secretary of the board of trade, said:—

"Business conditions in Calgary are good. Last year's crop failure had caused considerably worry as to the future, but as is generally the case the evil that was feared was considerably greater than the evil that visited us. The failure of the crop concerned wheat principally, though coarse grains, hay and pasturage generally suffered to some extent. But in spite of the failure, the value of agricultural products produced and marketable in the province for the year amounted to over \$214,000,000—quite a respectable sum when the population of the province (approximately 560,000 people), is taken into account.

"The coming of peace brought its problems, involving chiefly readjustment of stocks. This process of readjustment has been going on gradually, confidence that was disturbed in November and December, has been restored, and the outlook for this year is favorable.

"Crop conditions are good. We have had considerable moisture; the land is in good condition and seeding is general. Being a province where agriculture is the principal, as well as the basic industry, the tone of business is usually a reflection of crop prospects.

"Industrial activity has been very steady. Labor disturbances culminating in cessation of work have been comparatively few; building activity is reviving somewhat, and there is not much unemployment. With prospects for considerable extension of municipal and government development work there is every reason to expect that the year 1919 will be at least as good a year for business in Calgary as 1918 was."

Farm Land Situation

"Generally speaking," said Mr. H. H. Farman, manager of the Western Agencies and Development Co., to *The Monetary Times*, "the sale of farm lands in Alberta has not been active so far this season. There are some inquiries for ranch properties, but those who are looking for wheat or mixed farming lands, are disposed to wait until such time as the crops are assured. Then, too, the local buyers are short of ready money for further investment, due to the unfavorable crop returns for 1918. Perhaps, however, this situation is just as well, as there was a danger of land prices advancing beyond the real value that is warranted by our present population and the returns from farming operations under normal prices.

"There is a real shortage of desirable houses in this city, and rents have advanced to nearly the level of the years 1912 and 1913. Considerable house building is in progress, and it is to be hoped that conditions in this respect will have improved by fall. Present costs for material and labor, however, are so high, that the rental returns from new dwellings is not sufficient to make them an attractive investment."

Mayor Marshall, interviewed by *The Monetary Times* representative as to his opinion on the conditions of unrest in the country at present, said:—

"While there is a great deal of unrest in the country, in fact in the world, at the present moment, I believe the adjustments during the reconstruction period are gradually getting down to a basis of understanding, and that by co-operation of classes and interests, when they get together man to man in the matter, we have nothing to fear for the future. The governments and municipalities are having their own troubles, and sometimes, through misunderstanding, their interests seem to clash, yet I find, that by coming into direct contact with one another, either by sending representatives to the seats of government, provincial and Dominion, or having special representatives from them visit our communities, we are able to understand one another and get together very quickly.

"The one thing we need to fear more than another is change of too radical a nature. A condition of this kind would undoubtedly create chaos throughout the country, and that is the one thing we must guard against. By this I do not mean that we are to in any way impede progress, but there is a great difference between progress and radicalism. People of all classes must come to understand that we must reap the fruits of this war and to do so, we must get the idea out of our heads entirely of wanting to go back to old conditions, as it is to be hoped that we will never return to former conditions in their entirety, but we must hold to all that is good and beneficial of the past, of which there is a great deal.

"As to the financial condition, I believe Western cities are slowly but surely getting on a better and sounder basis. I am very optimistic of the future of our own city, as while we have a great deal of back taxes on our books, we are clearing the situation in that direction by the tax sale that is being held at the present time.

"Our development for the future must be sound and conservative. We must be careful of going into debt except where it is absolutely necessary and in keeping with proper, practical development."