

Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

Perhaps before passing to the conditions of the crop a word as to the big fairs of the western circuit will be in order. They are the best barometers of livestock conditions which are nearly, if not quite as important as the grain. There are five big shows, namely Calgary, Edmonton, Brandon, Regina and Saskatoon. They begin with Calgary at the first of July and conclude with Saskatoon early in August. Each fair lasts a week. Enormous amounts are given in prize money and all the big herds of cattle in Canada, a few from the United States and all the big studs of horses from the three western prairie provinces find their way to these shows.

I am writing from Brandon today so that three out of the five can be dealt with intelligently. It is no exaggeration to say that the increase in cattle, hogs and sheep is 75% since before the war, and the quality has improved almost as rapidly as the quantity. There has possibly not been any individuals shown that were superior to individual cattle, sheep and hogs in the past, but the improvement has been in the largely increased number of high quality individuals. Hogs and sheep have made the most sensational advances both in numbers and quality. Edmonton is one of the great hog centres of western Canada and the same judge has presided in their rings there for both summer and winter fairs for five years and he stated that in every class there were from six to seven animals among which competition was so close as to make judging very difficult.

Beef cattle were the outstanding feature at Calgary with special emphasis on Hereford, of which breed Alberta now has three bulls of this breed that cost respectively \$17,000; \$11,900 and \$20,000 and scores of bulls that range in value from \$5,000 to \$1,500. The feature of the exhibits of Herefords, Shorthorns and Polled Angus at all the shows is the number and high quality of the young stuff that is home bred.

Dairy cattle are much in evidence and at Edmonton there were dairy herds from seven out of the

nine provinces and from Minnesota and Dakota. The Alberta bred Holsteins, Ayreshires and Jerseys held up well against this competition.

Here at Brandon dairy competition is keen and in addition to the big herds of dairy cattle there is an immense exhibit of creamery butter which George Barr Chief of the dairy division pronounces the most uniform lot he has ever judged. Out of fifteen creameries competing the highest score was 98 and the sixth score or lowest prize scored 97 1/2.

THE CROP.

It is too bad not to be able to report the crops as good as the livestock, but the fourth report of the Manitoba Free Press which I issued just before coming here is about the worst as to general condition that the paper has had in July in ten years.

There were unprecedented frosts late in June and there has not been sufficient general rains to overcome that set back and almost every district is now calling for rain. Straw is very short, and the stubbled in crops are very light. The worst feature of the situation is that coarse grains are worse than wheat, so that there is danger of shortage of coarse grains and fodder, as the hay crop is light. There is still time for material recovery, but even the most favorable weather from now on will not insure an average crop, which would be 17 bushels to the acre for wheat.

This may seem like croaking too soon, and were it not for the need of conservation in all directions it might well have been left until a later period. There should, however, be the utmost care exercised that not a pound of grain remaining from last year be wasted, for assuredly it will tax the country to supply its own most conservative requirements and at the same time send to Britain and the Allies the amount which they will need, if our armies are to be kept up to the standard of efficiency.

Labor shortage is another acute problem and one that so far very little of a really practical character has been done to alleviate, but of this there will be more to say later.

Handling the Grain Trade

The Grain Board in Session at Toronto

TORONTO, July 20.

The Board of Grain Supervisors of the Dominion Government will consider the following recommendations, submitted by the Dominion Millers' Association:

"That a fixed price be set for carrying charges; that the supply of Ontario millers be received through the Wheat Export Company; that the Government take over and operate the mixed elevators; that the freight rates be reduced; that the Government change the grade system and discontinue the market sample system at Fort William."

The flour and grain section of the Toronto Board of Trade urged that the following recommendations be adopted relative to the marketing of grain under the present war conditions:

"The abolition of the option market; a maximum and minimum price for wheat being fixed, to be changed from time to time as conditions warrant; a limitation to three months for option trading; abolishment of dealing in futures; a proper carrying on of the cash grain business; adoption of restrictions in dealing in futures; that no person who buys wheat for future delivery be permitted to resell the same until he has taken actual delivery for cash wheat, and that the supplying of cash wheat east of Port Arthur be continued through the present eastern channels as being the best means of guaranteeing that the milling and baking industries will at all times have sufficient grain and flour to satisfy the needs of the public.

VIEWS OF THE MILLERS.

W. T. Moore, of Meaford, Ont., president of the Dominion Millers' Association, and C. B. Watts, secretary of the Association, were heard by the Board on Friday.

Mr. Moore said: "The main object should be to reduce the cost of every bushel of wheat as between the farmer and consumer and to eliminate every cent of unnecessary expense."

Mr. Moore went on to point out that the millers were

at the mercy of the dealers, who might at any time want more profit than would be generally considered just.

He pointed out that the average cash price of wheat at Winnipeg during a certain recent period was \$2.55 1/2 a bushel, while the price asked here, at Georgian Bay ports, was \$2.73 3-5, a difference of eighteen cents.

"We feel that eight cents should have been sufficient to bring the wheat from Fort William," he declared.

"This leaves a balance of ten cents for the dealers, and whether or not this is just is a matter which may well be brought before this Board. The millers of Ontario are up against this problem, and for their benefit and the benefit of the ultimate consumer."

"The fixed price of wheat is the best, even if it is not the only way to remedy the situation," he declared.

"The law of supply and demand should govern your trading in Winnipeg so that the miller and the consumer will be benefitted. Our impression is that with the law of supply and demand no option market would be necessary."

Elevator charges and marine insurance were two other matters touched upon by Mr. Moore.

"This country cannot handle these problems without the co-operation of the United States," said the speaker, "and to do the thing properly we should seek this co-operation."

He said the uniform price should be \$1.75 a bushel. C. B. Watts pointed to the necessity of reducing the costs between farmer and miller, and farmer and consumer. He cited figures to show excessive costs, stating that the cost which might come properly under the heading of "operating elevators," was at this side of the lakes 3 1/2 c a bushel, and at Fort William 12 1/2 c. Watts then went into detail in connection with marine insurance. A man now chartering a boat could not place insurance where he pleases, but must place it with the agent of the owner.

"We could save say \$250 on the chartering of a boat if we could place the insurance where we please,"

BIG BLANKET ORDER.

The United States Government last week awarded contracts to Canadian woolen mills for \$750,000 worth of woolen army blankets. The contract was secured through the Knit Goods' Association of Canada, and was distributed among the mills at a meeting held in Hamilton last week. Other large orders for wool socks, cotton duck, and underwear had already been placed in Canada by the U. S. authorities, while immediately after the entry of the United States into the war arena representatives of the army department had cleaned up all available supplies of these goods in Canada.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.

Dining Car Service Appreciated.

The many patrons of the Canadian Government Railways, travelling between Montreal, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces have expressed much satisfaction with the dining car service on the Ocean Limited, between Montreal and St. Leonard Jct., since its inauguration last winter. Passengers east-bound leaving Montreal by the Ocean Limited at 7.00 p.m. may get their dinner aboard the train, and those returning to Montreal by this train westbound can have breakfast served before their arrival in Montreal at 8.55 a.m. This dining car service appeals particularly to business men, who have not much time at their disposal before leaving Montreal, or who have matters of importance to attend to immediately after their arrival in the city.

CANADIAN EXPORTS OF WHEAT AND FLOUR.

Exports of wheat and flour as wheat, reported by Customs Department of Canada, are as follows:

	1916-17.	1915-16.	1914-15.	1913-14.
Sept.	12,896,000	7,629,000	5,072,000	6,792,000
Oct.	16,619,000	35,143,000	12,268,000	25,237,000
Nov.	18,263,000	47,044,000	13,782,000	24,579,000
Dec.	22,384,000	42,524,000	8,674,000	24,536,000
Jan.	10,001,000	8,244,000	4,945,000	5,548,000
Feb.	4,241,000	3,309,000	4,962,000	3,573,000
Mar.	8,594,000	10,072,000	7,124,000	4,849,000
April	4,535,000	16,219,000	4,818,000	4,823,000
May	36,699,000	7,130,000	9,570,000	
June	28,051,000	10,430,000	6,724,000	
July	28,671,000	4,046,000	10,781,000	
Aug.	23,129,000	3,151,000	5,035,000	
8 mos.	97,533,000	175,175,000	61,645,000	99,937,000
Season	291,734,000	86,402,000	132,047,000	

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WESTERN LANDS — A DEAL OF 15,000 ACRES IN ALBERTA.

The biggest land deal in southern Alberta this year was completed at Lethbridge recently, when C. S. Noble, of the Noble Foundation, purchased 15,000 acres of the famous Cameron ranch, east of the city, from the Cameron estate, New York, at an average price of about \$10 an acre. This is raw land and will be put under cultivation soon.

he stated.

"Last year one agent made from \$60,000 to \$70,000 on insurance. There is a monopoly of the rankest kind."

"Why is this the situation?"

"Because the agent can say he won't charter a vessel unless he gets the insurance. There is a monopoly of lake boats, too, because one big competitor was absorbed last year by the Canada Steamship Lines. The Government should step in and regulate the rates."

He stated that the actual cash price for No. 2 northern from June 17th to June 22nd averaged \$2.55 4-35, but this was not the price sent to Toronto. The price obtained here was several cents a bushel lower.

There was an eighteen cents difference between here and there.

Commissioner Best—"Should the Government control lake rates?"

Mr. Watts—"I am not in favor of bringing lake rates under the control of the Board of Railway Commissioners because such rates fluctuate too rapidly."