

Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

WINNIPEG, Sept. 7, 1917.

Interest continues to centre round the probable price for the Canadian crop of wheat. The Board of Grain Supervisors sat yesterday, and it is understood that they communicated a despatch with Ottawa. Whether that was a final decision or not, is not known. It is understood that there will have to be some communication between Ottawa and Washington before the final announcement is made.

There are a good many interesting side stories about this matter of the price of wheat that would make interesting reading if it were possible to publish them, but at the present time, it certainly would not be wise; and the unfortunate men who are devoting their time and strength to the work of the Board of Grain Supervisors are coming in for a great deal of unjust and unfair criticism.

As has been pointed out before, the situation as regards the crop in the two countries is very different, and what would be a profitable price to the American farmer with his greater means of transportation would not be so good to the farmer in the Canadian West. The fact that 80 per cent of the wheat produced in the United States is consumed there, materially lessens their transportation difficulties as it widens the number of terminal markets in their own country, and there is not likely to be any serious amount of carrying charges owing to delay in movement. In Western Canada, the reverse is the case; 80 per cent of the crop has to be exported and with the present shortage of men, and the fact that for the past two years at least, there has been a lack of mechanics to keep the rolling stock up to the highest efficiency, means that the railroads of Canada are not in the best position possible for moving the crop rapidly, and the percentage which can be moved before navigation closes will, in all probability, not be even as large as in past years. This means that all carrying charges from December to May must be taken care of by someone, so that if our price is fixed at \$2.20, it will mean that very many of the farmers of the three prairie provinces will not realize that amount.

On the other hand, if our price advances sufficiently to cover this carrying charge there will undoubtedly be trouble in Washington with the American farmer, who will refuse to recognize that the additional fixed price does not mean any more profit to his Canadian neighbor. The necessity of the two countries closely co-operating about the crop this year, has certainly complicated the situation.

It would materially have helped had the Canadian banks seen their way to finance the purchasing of the crop by Great Britain for the time being; there was talk of this earlier in the season, but it does not appear to have materialized. The banks have plenty of money, and it is not quite clear why they should not have undertaken this work, thus relieving Great Britain of the need of arranging with the United

States for the purchase of the crop, which, it is understood, is the method being followed.

THRESHING.

Threshing is progressing very rapidly, and so far there has been but one storm of any magnitude, and that did little harm, beyond delaying the work for twenty-four hours.

The receipts of new wheat are running around 175 cars a day, and 90 per cent of the crop, so far marketed, has graded No. 1 Northern and a small percentage of No. 1 Hard. Unless very bad threshing weather should intervene, there will be little wheat below No. 3. The color of the berry is beautiful, and it is plump and well formed; even the oats crop which is certainly far from a bumper, is vastly better than appeared possible even a month ago. For example, the famous Yorkton district, the largest individual oats area in any of the western provinces, figured, on August 2nd, that an average of 40 bushels per acre would be about the best that could be hoped for; now they are confident of an average of 55, and possibly 60, while many individual crops will thresh over 100 bushels. Some idea of the extent to which oats are grown in Yorkton district may be gathered from the fact that you can motor 50 miles without getting out of sight of an oat field.

All the north country where there are bluffs of trees, has heavier crops this year than the open plains in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, but in Southern Alberta, the open plains have the heaviest crops in the province, but this section had much more rain than the open country of the two other provinces.

CONDITION OF LIVESTOCK.

The livestock of the three prairie provinces is in excellent shape, and there is an abundance of feed on the stubble to last until the end of October, and should the weather continue fine, until the middle of November. It is hoped before that time that the scheme being devised by the Dominion Government for linking up the districts that have an abundance of feed but few cattle, with the districts that have many cattle and little feed, will be in working order. No further details have been heard of it since the return of the men invited to Ottawa by the Minister of Agriculture for consultation along this and other lines.

The movement of finished grass cattle south is heavy at the moment, and the Canadian Northern Railway, within the next ten days will move from the Rosebud country and from the Melfort country, between five and six thousand head of fat steers; part of them to the Chicago and part of them to the Boston market. Presumably these steers are for filling contracts for the Allies.

Nothing further has been heard about the decision of Great Britain to cease buying Canadian bacon. At the present time, the receipts of hogs on the Winnipeg market are very limited, and the price is firm, being \$17.25 to \$17.50 for selects with an excellent demand.

recovery as sudden and sharp as the recent fall.

Good crop reports are a factor of the greatest importance, both from a military and economic standpoint.

Another factor which directly and emphatically contradicts depression in Wall Street is the number of commercial failures, which during the past week was the smallest since the war began.

The banking position in New York, gauged by the amount of surplus reserves, is less favorable than for some time past, but it must be borne in mind that there has been a radical alteration in the country's banking system, and that while the reserve of the New York banks is still a matter of importance, it is by no means so important as it was before the changes above referred to took place. In fact, under the old system the bank reserves of a single city, or even of a single bank, were much more narrowly limited in their use than they are at present. Substantially, the reserves of all the National banks are now joined for mutual protection, thus immensely contributing to the strength of the general financial situation.

The building trades, which were halted by our entrance into the war, show signs of revival; bank clearings this week were slightly below those of a week ago, but on the whole better than for previous periods, there being a very marked gain in the month of August as compared with the same month of 1916 and 1915. Internal revenue receipts for the past year (ending June 30th), broke all records showing an increase of \$296,670,358 over last year.

U. S. GOVERNMENT WHEAT PRICES.

The basic price of wheat, including No. 1 Northern Spring, Red Winter and No. 1 Hard winter wheat, fixed by the Food Committee and approved by President Wilson, is \$2.20 per bushel delivered at Chicago.

The basic prices for the different grades are as follows:

GOVERNMENT PRICE.

No. 1 Dark Hard Winter	\$2.24
No. 1 Hard Winter Basic	2.20
No. 1 Red Winter Basic	2.20
No. 1 Yellow Hard Winter	2.16
No. 1 Soft Red Winter	2.18
No. 1 Dark Northern Spring	2.24
No. 1 Northern Spring Basic	2.20
No. 1 Red Spring	2.18
No. 1 Humpback	2.10
No. 1 Amber Durum	2.24
No. 1 Durum Basic	2.20
No. 1 Red Durum	2.13
No. 1 Red Walla	2.13
No. 1 Hard White Basic	2.20
No. 1 Soft White	2.18
No. 1 White Club	2.16
No. 2 of grade, 3c less; No. 3 of grade, 6c less; No. 4 of grade, 10c less.	

INCREASED COST OF LIVING.

The list of comparative prices in 60 cities in Canada, contrasting those of June, 1914, 1916 and 1917, shows in a very marked way the reduced purchasing power of a dollar. Take, for instance, such everyday necessities as bread, butter and eggs. Family flour, 10 pounds of which cost 33 cents in 1914, now costs 73 cents, or nearly 2½ times as much. Dairy butter, of which 2 pounds might be purchased for 52.4 cents in 1914, now costs 83.4 cents, while a dozen fresh eggs, costing 25.8 cents in 1914, now bring 42½ cents. Meats, cheese and potatoes are also amongst the commodities which show the largest increases, and these also are every-day necessities.

Commodity.	lbs. or doz.	1914	1916	1917
Sirloin steak	2	48.8	52.0	63.2
Beef shoulder roast	2	33.2	35.0	43.6
Veal roast	1	17.1	18.8	22.6
Mutton roast	1	21.0	24.2	28.5
Pork roast	1	20.0	22.2	30.1
Pork, salt, mess	2	36.4	40.2	54.0
Bacon, breakfast	1	25.6	28.9	39.0
Lard, leaf	2	37.2	40.2	62.2
Eggs, fresh	1	25.8	28.6	42.5
Eggs, storage	1	25.	26.2	36.6
Milk	6 qts.	51.6	51.0	58.8
Butter, dairy	2	52.4	61.2	83.4
Butter, creamery	1	31.2	35.1	46.8
Cheese, old	1	21.4	25.5	34.0
Cheese, new	1	19.4	23.8	32.0
Bread, plain	15	64.5	70.5	111.0
Flour, family	10	33.0	37.0	73.0
Rolled oats	5	21.5	24.0	31.5
Rice, good	2	11.8	13.0	16.0
Beans	2	11.8	19.5	30.4
Prunes	1	12.3	13.2	15.1
Sugar, gran.	4	22.0	38.0	40.0
Sugar, yellow	2	10.2	17.6	19.0
Tea, black	¼	8.9	9.9	11.5
Coffee, med.	¼	9.4	9.9	10.1
Potatoes	2 pks.	40.2	60.5	127.0

BACON EXPORTS.

A Statement from the Food Controller's office, dated Sept 7, says:

"There is no foundation whatever for the report that exports of Canadian bacon to Great Britain are to be suspended. What has happened is merely that the British Food Controller, Lord Rhondda, will permit no importation without specially granted licenses. The British food ministry established on September 3rd a single Government buying agency in the United States for the purchase of Canadian and American bacon, butter, ham and lard. From that date no purchase will be made except through the official channel. Shipments of bacon, therefore, will continue, but it will now be possible for the British authorities to keep promptly and continuously informed as to quantities received, quantities in transit, and quantities consumed. Great Britain and our allies still require at least 25 per cent. of our output.

"A glance at the following figures will show what Canada has already done—Canadian exports of bacon to the United Kingdom, France and Italy, in pounds (fiscal years ending March 31st): 1913, 36,032,597; 1914, 23,620,861; 1915, 72,041,293; 1916, 144,228,501; 1917, 207,284,673."

BANKING AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS IN THE U.S.

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become apparent in helping turn the scale against Germany.

Both our own people and those in other lands who are accustomed to import goods from the United States are coming to realize that war demands must first be met. The process of shifting industrial activity from peace to war has not yet reached its culmination, and before the end of the struggle we must reconcile ourselves to the loss of many things still regarded by many as necessities, but which must be dispensed with when the nation strips itself for the final effort. The warning, recently uttered in the United States Senate by the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, that we may yet suffer from invasion, will serve as a stimulus to a still greater industrial and military effort in helping to win the war.

BUSINESS CONDITIONS.

Some of the salient facts regarding the business situation have been set forth above. To what has been said may be added the statement that there appears no good reason for doubting a continuance of prosperity, in the absence of some great and sudden change of an unfavorable character in the military situation. The depression in the stock market probably represents merely one of the fits of gloom to which Wall Street is peculiarly subject from one cause or another. Nobody would be surprised by a