

Conditions in the West

**Manitoba Threshing Returns. Flour from Low Grade Wheats.
The Late Samuel Spinks. Live Stock Clearing House to
Protect Live Stock Industry**

Special Correspondence by E. CORA HIND, Commercial and Agricultural Editor, Free Press, Winnipeg, Man.

WINNIPEG, Man., Sept. 22.—The Manitoba Government has just issued a report on crop conditions in Manitoba, which is just a month and four days later than the one which I issued for the Free Press, and it is very interesting to note that my predictions of that time are being almost absolutely borne out by threshing returns. The Southern part of the province gave about 8 bushels to the acre and the Northern about 20, which, adjusting the scale of acreages will bring the average of the whole province to about 11 to 12 bushels. Oats are placed at 35 to 40. It is remarked that there is an abundance of feed all over the province and that the live stock industry will not suffer in any way from the lessening grain yield. In the districts more badly infected by rust, threshing is being done by the day, instead of being done by the bushel. Wages generally are reported as high and labor as rather scarce.

Weather throughout the west for the past week has not been very favorable to field work, there being a good deal of rain, and some very high winds. In spite of this, however, a great amount of threshing has been done and returns coming into the elevators are on the whole much more satisfactory than was anticipated. The percentage of contract grain is increasing steadily each day. Inspections at Winnipeg are running from between 500 and 600 cars, or a little less than one-half of the receipts at the same time last year.

Testing Low Grade.

The mills have been making some tests of low grade wheats, Nos. 5 and 6, for example, and so far as reports that can be secured from them, they indicate that they would prefer to pay the higher prices of the contract grades, rather than attempt to use the lower ones. Apparently Canadian mills are not equipped to mill such wheats, or else they have not an outlet for the resultant flour. The Minneapolis mills, on the contrary, are showing a very considerable interest in our low grades and even one or two cargoes of feed wheat have been shipped to Minneapolis mills, via Duluth. It is claimed by western millers that it will take 5½ bushels of our low grades to make a barrel of flour, and that with the spread of 36 cents which exists at the present time between No. 1 Northern and No. 6, that it is cheaper to buy the No. 1 Northern. No. 1 Northern closed today at \$1.62½ and No. 6 wheat at \$1.29½.

Advance in Bread.

The price of bread has been advanced 1 cent per loaf in Winnipeg, and bakers claim that, as they renew their contracts for flour at the advanced price even this will not be sufficient to cover the additional cost. No. 1 patents is still quoted at \$8.40, but should the sharp advance in wheat which took place today be maintained, it is quite possible that there may be a further advance in flour early in the week. Domestic flour trade has been very dull, but millers now report an improved enquiry; the fact of the matter being that bakers and housewives alike were looking for a lower price on the new crop and now that there is no likelihood of it coming, but rather the reverse, they are beginning to stock up again, fearing that a yet worse thing may happen.

Death of Samuel Spink.

During the week the death occurred of Samuel Spink, a prominent member of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, and the first grain commission merchant to do business in Winnipeg. Mr. Spink was not an old man, being only in his 67 year, but he had been ailing for some time and passed quietly away last Wednesday evening. He was a man of singularly lovable disposition and was greatly liked and respected by the members of the Exchange. He was a very strict Methodist and held rigid views on the matter of Sunday observances and for this he was nicknamed the censor of morals for the Exchange, and there was always much laughing and jesting about this title.

Mr. Spink was closely allied with the milling interests. He was a practical miller, many of his family have been in the milling and grain business, and at 17 years of age entered the employ of the Whitevale Mills Company and served his full time as a miller's apprentice. As a journeyman he worked for several of the largest mills in Canada and the

United States. After that he joined his brother James and carried on mills at Alliston and Utopia, Ont. He came West in 1882 and the following year established his grain commission business and immediately began to do business for the Ontario millers. His knowledge of Ontario milling conditions on the one hand and his knowledge of Western wheat on the other, placing him in the most advantageous position for such a trade. When the Grain Exchange was organized in 1887 he was a member of the first Council. He was the second man to be elected President of the Exchange and in the years that followed he held almost every elective position in the gift of the exchange. He was member, from its first inception, of the Western Grain Standards Board and was one of the members of the survey board most frequently called upon to act. He was born in Kettleby, 30 miles north of Toronto. His wife was Miss Agnes McGinnis, by whom he had six daughters, all of whom are living and residing in Winnipeg.

Seats Advance in Price.

The Winnipeg Grain Exchange is having a wonderful run of applications for membership. Since the opening of the new grain year they have had something like thirty applications, and the present price of the seats is \$5,000 each and a meeting has been called to consider the advisability of raising the price to \$7,500.

In the old days when the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange operated under a provincial charter, the membership was limited to 300. Some years ago when the Provincial Government of Manitoba cancelled certain privileges under their charter, the Exchange became a voluntary organization, with no arbitrary limit on the membership, but the high price of the seats made them prohibitive to all but those who wished to do active trading, until last year. The fact of the big crop stimulated speculation, and a number of people sought membership, in order to give them the privilege of trading and speculating, and this seems to be more than ever the case this year. Evidently the Exchange fears the body becoming unwieldy, and at the same time they may become loaded up with a great deal of dead wood. An Exchange does not wish to have a large number of members who are not regularly and actively engaged in the grain business. They do not wish to keep any legitimate trader out, and the money obtained from the sale of seats will be bonded and will form a fund which the Exchange can use for the purchase of seats when from time to time the owners wish to sell, the idea being that it is in the interests of the Exchange for there to be always a market for exchange seats, not necessarily at the full price paid, but at a price which will recompense a man for his investment when it is considered that along with it he may have had the privilege of trading for a longer or a shorter period of time. Until after the meeting it will not be definitely known whether the advance will take place, but it is believed to be very generally favored by the members.

Grain Standards Board.

The Western Grain Standard Board meets on the 28th of September to consider the question of the commercial grades of grain. This is always necessary in a season when there is much off grade wheat, and there is an abundance of it this year. It is not possible to call the Board together very early, because in order to make the sample equitable for all the country, it is necessary to obtain threshing samples of grain from practically every district, and as there is fully a month between the threshing in the South and in the North, the end of September is about the earliest that it is possible to get the board together. One of the difficulties with the low grades wheat of the present crop is their light weight, something very new in the west.

Live Stock Clearing House.

A very distinct advance in the live stock industry was made this week by the Department of Agriculture for the Province of Saskatchewan. Many people interested in live stock and live stock production have been viewing with alarm the steady drain

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of young "she" stock to the South. Last year and this year, thousands of head of young heifers have been bought, particularly for Montana. These females are all tested and any that react for tuberculosis are sent back on to western farms, while the healthy stuff is shipped across the line. W. J. Rutherford, Dean of the Agriculture for the University of Saskatchewan, recently returned from a trip to the States, and was horrified on his return journey to see the extent to which this drainage is taking place, especially in view of the fact that the Canadian west is itself short of this breeding stock. He thought the matter over then and talked it up with the Department of Agriculture and together with the deputy minister he visited the Union Stock Yards at Winnipeg and later the president of the sub-section of the Canadian Bankers Association for the west, and a plan of action was decided upon. The Department of Agriculture for Saskatchewan decided to put in an expert live stock man at the Union Stock yards to act really as a clearing house agent, and the bankers in Winnipeg have circularized their local branches, outlining the scheme to them, instructing them how to proceed where men wish to purchase cattle in Winnipeg and pay for them through their local bankers. The agent for the Saskatchewan Government is not to do the buying. The man who wants live stock, goes to his local banker and arranges the matter of credit and payment with him, and buys through a commission house but he also instructs the Government agent on the yards of what he wants to buy and that agent sees to it that he gets the class of cattle he wants, also that if he wishes it they are duly tested for tuberculosis. This is really the first practical step that has been taken in this matter of preserving our female stock, and its operation will be watched with very keen interest. Whatever have been the sins of our bankers in the past, it must be said for them that when this very practical scheme was laid before them they lost not a moment in assisting to put in an expert live stock man at the Union Stock place where a business of this kind could be established, as it is the only large sorting market in the west. The Union Stock yard market at Winnipeg has peculiar advantages; in fact it is today the freest livestock market on the continent of America. Nobody has a string on it and any man can go there and buy cattle and all it will cost him is the ordinary yardage charge and 50 cents per car for loading. The yards are really owned by the three railway companies, and are operated by what is known as the Public Markets Limited, and they are apparently out to give the public excellent service. The Manitoba farmer has a great advantage over the other provinces, in that he is close to these yards and can, if he wishes, buy the best feeder stock and ship it out at a low rate. He is also so near to the market that when he returns the finished cattle he has practically no shrink.

I shall keep readers of the JOURNAL OF COMMERCE informed of the success of this new venture, as I believe it is one of the most important for the live stock industry that has been yet attempted.

THE 1915 WESTERN GRAIN MOVEMENT.

The total movement of the wheat crop of the three western provinces for the crop year 1915-16 amounted to 376,448,400 bushels, according to a summary by F. O. Fowler, secretary of the Northwest Grain Dealers' Association.