

Conditions in the West

Wheat Crop Estimated at 170,000,000 Bushels. Threshing General in Manitoba and Southern Saskatchewan

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Winnipeg, September 14, 1916.—Rapid travelling from town to town in the West during the past month has materially interfered with anything like regular weekly letters. However, having just completed the annual crop estimate for the Manitoba Free Press, I am able to give the Journal the benefit of my experiences in collecting data for the same. I have put the estimate of wheat at 170,000,000 bushels, with a possibility of it going to 200,000,000 if all the present outstanding late crop is secured without further damage. This is an estimate of 12 bushels an acre in Manitoba, 15 in Saskatchewan and approximately 25 in Southern and 18 in Northern Alberta. On the provincial acreages this would mean a yield of 100,000,000 for Saskatchewan, 36,000,000 for Manitoba and 5,000,000 for Alberta.

How the Crop Will Grade.

Of course the grade is very unsatisfactory, and I question if in the whole of the Canadian West there will be more than 10,000,000 bushels of No. 1. Northern wheat. By the way it may be of interest to Eastern readers to know that that is the utmost amount of No. 1 Northern wheat estimated for the three States to the South of us, Minnesota and the two Dakotas. The Canadian West will have a very considerable amount of No. 2 a great deal of No. 3 and 4 and everything else down to No. 2 feed. Much wheat which really, from its color and perfect formation of berry, should go into No. 2 will fall short on account of weight, and considerable that should be No. 2 will be No. 3 for the same reason. Oats are very generally a good crop and there is reason to believe that the yield will be around 259,000,000. Flax is a very small crop, the area originally was much reduced and very considerable of the flax seed was put in late in North and Central Saskatchewan, and owing to unfavorable weather has been very slow in ripening. Some of it has been already injured by frost and the balance of it is hardly likely to mature in a satisfactory way. In South-western Saskatchewan, however, the flax is an excellent crop. The straw is comparatively short, but it is well balled and the seed is large, plump and a good color.

There is an abundance of feed of all kinds. Hay has never been more plentiful, either the native or the cultivated and a very large quantity of it has been stacked. Very much excellent summer-fallowing has been done.

Threshing.

Threshing is very general throughout Manitoba and quite general in Southern Saskatchewan, where there is a steady stream of tank wagons hauling to the elevators. Very little threshing has as yet been done in Southern Alberta, and practically none in either Northern Alberta or Northern Saskatchewan.

The weather in the Southern part of the three western provinces has been very favorable on the whole, but in the North they have suffered considerable delay from late and unseasonable rains, and the weather at the present time is broken. There was a feeling that once we are passed the full of the September moon the weather would probably be colder, but more settled. It is colder all right, but far from being settled at present.

Flour.

The extremely excited markets which have prevailed, owing to the very bullish reports of the spring wheat crop in the States, as well as the damage to our own, have boosted the price of flour, and No. 1 Patents today is 60 cents per barrel higher than it has been at any previous time since the war opened. The previous high water mark was \$7.70 a barrel in February, 1915. No. 1 Patents today is quoted at \$8.30.

Business Conditions.

Business is extremely active in all the smaller towns of the West, and while people are disappointed at the damage to the crop, there is no feeling of pessimism or is there any lack of business being done. The change made in business by the abolition of the bars in all the Western Provinces is very marked indeed. Country merchants everywhere are emphatic in their statements that business is much better, and that the percentage of cash received is very greatly in excess of any previous

year for the same months. There is an air of brisk thrift about the small towns and villages that is most encouraging.

Live Stock.

The West has a large quantity of cattle to sell, although the number is relatively small in comparison with the known shortage of live stock on the American Continent. For a short time our markets were demoralized by the threatened railway strike in the United States, but are now getting back to normal. Hogs are not plentiful and while there is a prevailing idea that next month will see a very big hog movement, I think that there are considerably fewer hogs in the country than is generally realized, and that while there will undoubtedly be some falling off in prices during the next six weeks, the demand will be sufficient to keep the market pretty steady. The extreme cold of the winter of 1915-16 had its effect on hog production. Many of the sows apparently took too little exercise and when their litters came they were weak and the percentage of loss was heavy. On the other hand the cattle and sheep wintered remarkably well, and both the lamb, calf and foal crops are all large. There is an abundance of feed to fatten and finish far more cattle than are actually available for that work, and the feeling is strong that no female stock at least should be allowed to go to the United States among the stockers and feeders. Last year out of 68,000 head going South from the Union stockyards at Winnipeg, 40 per cent. was young heifers. The West is getting quite worked up over this question, and it is probable that when the Imperial Commission sits here next month that some schemes, whereby these young heifers can be kept in the country and distributed to men who are in a position to buy and feed them, will be laid before that August body.

Winnipeg Grain Exchange.

The annual meeting of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange was a feature of the week, and in his address, President W. E. Milner expressed his belief the wheat crop of the present year would run to 190,000,000. He gave some very interesting figures with regard to last year's crop, showing that the wheat of the three western provinces had amounted to 376,000,000 bushels. This enormous crop was produced in a territory where the total population is less than two million souls, while the United States with a population of 100,000,000 had produced only a billion, or about 2 2-3 more than the young Western provinces. Mr. Milner also pointed out that the interior storage of the West is now 4,000 elevators with a total capacity of 120,000,000 bushels, with 47,000,000 bushels storage capacity at the Head of the Lakes. In addition to that there is a storage capacity of 10,000,000 in the mills. The business of the Grain Exchange for the year just closed was over \$500,000,000.

Dairy Products.

The increase in the make of creamery butter in the West is very marked indeed. The abundant rain and luxuriant pasture, together with the large supply of succulent feed has kept up the flow of milk, and many western creameries are now churning four times a day, and a number of new creameries in both Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are weekly shipping carloads to the Coast and to Montreal. It is many months now since the Coast has had any New Zealand butter and she appears quite satisfied with the quality furnished her from the prairie provinces. Many creameries in the Canadian West that have not hitherto kept open during the winter, will do so this year, not only on account of the demand and the high prices, but because the abundance of feed and the good prices paid for milk is stimulating production and they are able to get supplies which hitherto were not available. The standardizing of our butter grades has been an unqualified success and has enabled the producers of creamery butter to obtain a much better price than in any former season.

Looking over the whole field of activities in the West, there is great cause for rejoicing and little or no cause for lamenting. There is undoubtedly a heavy loss on the crop, but it is not a disaster, and it is to a very great extent mitigated by the abundance which prevails in other directions.

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JUTE AND HEMP.

According to latest advices from Dundee, Scotland, the jute market is in a state of stagnation unusual at this time of the year when the trade is always at the height of its activity. The condition is attributed to the effect of the war which takes precedence over all normal circumstances. The demand from the United States for hessian cloth, however, is very keen and offerings are made at a ten per cent advance for this year's delivery. The high freight rates prevailing are adding considerably to the price of raw stock which otherwise would be most modest under existing circumstances. Stocks in store of flax and tow are considered favorable for the present, but there promises to be some difficulty with regard to adequate supplies of these materials.

The receipts of hemp at Manila since the first of the year are 852,000 bales, as against 781,000 for the same period last year and 711,000 in 1914. The shipments to the United States are 435,000 bales, comparing with 367,000 in 1915 and 318,000 in 1914. The net stocks of Manila are 177,000 bales as against 206,000 in 1915.

New York reports that jute is quiet in that market. The Calcutta market is firm.

Current prices are quoted as follows in New York:

	per lb.
Manila hemp, current spot	0.12½
Shipments	0.12 0.13½
Midway shipments	0.15% 0.16
Sisal hemp shipments	0.10%
Isle of Palma	0.03½ 0.03%
Tula	0.03% 0.04
Juamava	0.04% 0.05
Jute, September	0.07%

THE WORLD'S WHEAT CROP.

The London "Grain, Seed & Oil Reporter" estimates the world's wheat crop for 1916 at 446,500,000 quarters of 480 pounds. This amount comprises the following items:

Europe—	1916.	1915.
Allies	178,100,000	187,900,000
Central Powers	53,500,000	53,800,000
Neutrals	22,300,000	20,400,000
United States	76,500,000	126,000,000
Canada	25,000,000	48,000,000
Argentina	21,000,000	23,000,000
Australasia	15,000,000	23,500,000
India	39,700,000	47,900,000
Miscellaneous	15,400,000	17,300,000

Totals 446,500,000 547,800,000

The indicated surplus of the exporting countries, excluding Russia and Roumania, is unusually small, amounting to 20,000,000 quarters, against the estimated world's import requirements, excluding Germany and Austria-Hungary, of 67,000,000 quarters.

Fortunately the world's reserves of old wheat amount to 35,000,000 quarters, making the total surplus 75,000,000. Russia and Roumania probably hold a surplus of 40,000,000 quarters, which is unavailable until the Dardanelles are reopened.

Los Angeles is estimated to be paying \$2,000,000 yearly in increased railroad rates on freight that would ordinarily go by water were ships available. Japan turned out a steamships of 4,500 gross tons in 90 days and is constructing 80 more.