

situation is too complicated to admit of any definite estimate as to its inception or scope. A further decline would not be surprising, but wheat is too cheap to count on this as a probability.

Crop conditions in the spring wheat states have never been better than now at this season. The plant has grown steadily, but the cool weather has prevented that rapid growth which results in too much straw, and a fairly good season will guarantee the largest and best crop of spring wheat ever raised.

Receipts have been quite large, and shipments above those of any week for some time.

The highest and lowest wheat prices by grade on 'change during the week ending to-day, closing prices, and the prices one year ago were:

				May 20.	1885.
Wheat.	Highest.	Lowest.	Closing		
No. 1 hard..	77	75	75	92½	
No 1 north'n	74	72	72	89	
" 2	71	69	69	86	

Futures have been quite active, the decline being about the same as in cash wheat, June 1 hard closing at 76 and July at 77½. Coarse grains have been in fair demand and firm, corn closing at 33 to 33½, oats at 32 to 33c and rye at 49 to 51c, all by sample.

MILLSTUFF—Has been weak and lower, bulk bran closing at \$6.25 to \$6.75, and shorts at \$6.50 to \$7 per ton.

FLOUR.—While buyers have apparently decided that flour is cheap, and are taking it more freely than for some time, the success they have met with in fighting for concessions has been so good that they continue the same policy, though with less vigor. Millers are not meeting them more than half way, however, and some complain that the demand is unsteady and not encouraging. The demand for Bakers' is a trifle lighter, while that for other grades shows some improvement, and this is a relief to the general market. Export inquiry is better, though at 2 to 3d. below the views of millers. Domestic demand is fairly active.

Quotations for car or round lots at the mills are as follows: Patents, \$4.35 to \$4.60; straights, \$4.10 to \$4.30; first bakers', \$3.35 to \$3.60; second bakers' \$2.90 to \$3.10; best low grades, \$2.00 to \$2.20, in bags; red dog, \$1.50 to \$1.60, in bags.

These quotations are on flour in barrels, except as stated. The rule is to discount 30c per bbl for 280 and 140 lb jute bags, 20c for 93lb cotton sacks, 15c for 19lb cotton sacks, 10c for 24lb cotton sacks, and 20c for 49lb paper sacks.

Nearly the full active milling capacity of Minneapolis is now in operation. The only mills idle being four, none of which have run very regularly for some time. The output last week showed a slight increase, and it will undoubtedly be still more augmented this week. The total product of the mills for the week ending Saturday was 120,700 bbls.—averaging 20,112 bbls.—against 116,000 bbls. the preceding week, and 132,920 bbls. for the corresponding time in 1885. One more mill with a working capacity of 1,760 bbls. was started up Monday, making a total number of 19 mills in operation to-day, with a maximum capacity of over 29,060 bbls. The daily production is well toward 23,000 bbls. The warmer weather causes the wheat to grind "tough," and the

milling capacity of a given amount of machinery is much below what it was last fall, which accounts for the difference between the maximum and working capacity. Most of the mills have a considerable number of orders ahead, and are making all the flour they can comfortably. There is some inquiry for flour reported, though at slightly lower prices, and more or less orders are being accepted. Some millers look upon the milling situation more favorably than for some time, and not a few express their belief of being able to run their mills steadily for some time.

The following were the receipts at and shipments from Minneapolis for the weeks ending on the dates given:

	RECEIPTS.	May 18.	May 11.	May 4.
Wheat, bus	421,300	443,300	510,400	
Flour, bbls	375	575	245	
Millstuff, tons	82	104	12	

	SHIPMENTS.	May 18.	May 11.	May 4.
Wheat, bus	149,550	93,205	105,600	
Flour, bbls	103,750	93,500	105,129	
Millstuff, tons	4,014	3,608	3,207	

The wheat in elevators in Minneapolis, as well as the stock at St. Paul and Duluth, is shown in the appended table:

	MINNEAPOLIS.	May 17.	May 10.
No. 1 hard, bus..	1,797,795	1,747,902	
No. 1 northern, bus	1,268,476	1,265,504	
No. 2 northern, bus	555,695	528,770	
No. 3, ..	5,340	6,805	
Rejected ..	33,095	33,855	
Special bins ..	795,431	933,238	

* 4,455,832 4,516,074
These figures do not include a considerable quantity of wheat in private elevators and sheds and annexes to regular elevators, nor that in mill bins.

	ST. PAUL.	May 19.	May 12.	May 5.
In elevators—	955,000	960,000	982,000	

	DULUTH.	May 17.	May 10.	May 3.
In store, bus. ..	6,491,390	7,114,308	7,440,485	
Afloat, bus. ..	—	124,521	124,521	

Total, bus.. 6,491,390 7,238,829 7,565,006
—Northwest Miller.

Scotch Fife.

A Canadian paper, evidently at a loss to find matter for its many columns, gravely announces that Scotch fife wheat has become worthless and calls for a "thoroughly good spring wheat" for the farmers of Ontario. This paper says that "the days of the old fife, with its fine quality, heavy yield, and remarkable ability to resist the parasitic enemies of the grain crops, are looked back to with regret. That wheat, at first, seemed to have lost none of its characteristics by transference to Canada; but like other varieties away from certain conditions of climate and soil, it deteriorated, and in many localities fife is not now cultivated." The latter statement is undoubtedly true, but the cause is to be found in the fact that farmers have abandoned fife because, after long cropping, the soil became exhausted and they tried new and soft varieties in the hope of getting

larger yields. It has been demonstrated that no wheat grown on this earth is so free from disease of every sort as Scotch fife, that with careful selection of seed, proper care of the soil and wise rotation in cropping, it will yield well for an indefinite period. This being true, we deny that Scotch fife has deteriorated and affirm that it is the best and most reliable variety of spring wheat known on this continent. Farmers or newspapers taking an opposite view merely expose ignorance which should be concealed.—Northwestern Miller.

Prices Then and Now.

There are still persons who cherish the delusion that the prices of farm products have either declined or not much improved, while manufactured articles have increased in cost. This delusion came partly from the almost universal belief that the golden age was during our grandfather's time, and partly from the false statements in the doctrinaire prints. If we go back seventy years, and compare prices then with prices now, the delusion disappears. The prices of what the farmer had to sell then and what he has to sell now, as well as the price of farm labor, will be found in the subjoined table:

	1816.	1886.
Wheat, per bushel ..	\$0.44	\$0.99
Oats, per bushel ..	.15	.41
Corn, per bushel ..	.20	.46
Barley, per bushel ..	.25	.80
Butter, per pound ..	.12	.32
Cheese, per pound ..	.16	.10
Eggs, per dozen ..	.05	.12
Cows, per head ..	15.00	50.00
Hay, per ton ..	5.00	17.00
Straw, per ton ..	4.00	15.50
Sheep, per head ..	.75	2.00
Farm labor, per month ..	8.00	18.00

As this would be an imperfect showing without a comparison of prices for some of the articles the farmer must buy, we append the following table:

	1816.	1886.
Steel, per pound ..	\$0.17	\$0.12
Nails, per pound ..	.12	.04
Broadcloth, per yard ..	16.00	4.00
Wool blankets, per pair ..	15.00	7.00
Cotton cloth, per yard ..	.30	.12
Calico, per yard ..	.25	.06
Salt, per bushel ..	\$1.00 to \$4.00	15 to 25c.

It will be seen that the cost of farm labor has increased rather more than 100 per cent. But the selling price of farm products has increased all the way from 100 to 400 per cent. At the same time the cost of most of the staples the farmer must buy has decreased from 20 to 50 per cent. Were we to compare the dwellings of the farmers of to-day with those of the farmer of even fifty years ago, it would be seen that he is not only able to live better and more comfortably but quite willing to do so. If we examine his tool house, we shall find single implements there worth the entire lot his grandfather owned and thought sufficient.—Philadelphia North American.

Montreal wholesale merchants are moving to have a court established for the investigation of customs cases, and to do away with special agents.