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Burneau, Currie and Co., Ltd., Montreal, whole-sale flour dealers, have taken out a Quebec Charter. William McDonald is managing director.

The Federal Government propose erecting a new terminal elevator at Winnipeg, to cost \$500,000. The elevator will be erected on the Government railway line.

Conditions in the West

Crop Condition. The Grain and Flour Markets. Live Stock Trade Active. The Western Wool Clip

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

Winnipeg, May 19th, 1916.

The first of the week was marked by the issue of the fortnightly Government crop report at Regina. This indicates that according to the Department's returns 90 per cent of the Saskatchewan wheat crop was seeded on the 15th, and that the early sown wheat was coming through the ground and was in some places two to three inches in height. The report indicates that the damage from drifting by heavy winds has been comparatively slight. The report is indefinite and rather unsatisfactory, as it says that the decrease in wheat acreage will be partly overcome by the increase in oats and barley, but that the total acreage will be less than in 1915, but does not say how much less.

The weather is reported as generally fine, but cold, with slight frosts. Very considerable amount of ploughing has still to be done for coarse grains.

Conditions, so far as the amount of seeding is concerned are very similar in Manitoba. The weather since my last writing has been cold and decidedly unfavorable to growth. However, samples of wheat brought in show that it is at least acquiring a splendid root, which will enable it to withstand a great deal of adversity in the future.

Conditions in Alberta are more favorable than they are in either of the other Provinces, and more progress has been made in the matter of growth, though even there things are very late. None of the Provincial Governments in reporting on conditions have made any estimate of the amounts of grain put in on stubble without ploughing, but the percentage of this is extremely heavy, and it is in this direction that the greatest danger of poor crops will lie. There is nothing, however, up to the present time to indicate that we may not have a good average crop, though it is not reasonable to look for any such returns as we had last year.

The weather reports since the 1st of May indicate that the highest temperature which has been enjoyed in the Canadian West was 84 deg., and that only at one town and one day, while the minimum temperatures have been around 30 to 35, with a number of drops as low as 14 deg. and 16 deg.

Grain Markets.

The grain markets have been rather interesting to watch during the past week. The agent for the Allied Governments did not leave us last Monday. He is still here and rumor hath it that he will remain another week. His long drawn out prophecy of lower prices seems about to be fulfilled, as we have had a very decided break. The week opened with May and July wheat running \$1.19 1/4. To-day May closed at \$1.15 1/2, and July at \$1.15, while October has dropped from \$1.15 1/2 on the 15th, to \$1.12 1/4. Not only that, but the market is much weaker in tone. It is somewhat difficult to see just why this should be, as reports from the winter wheat in the South are very far from encouraging. Indeed, reports of damage have been so serious that it is possible they are being overdone.

A private report, for business purposes, of conditions in the Dakotas and Minnesota, gives the reduction of acreage in wheat in these States of over 25 per cent. There is a considerable reduction in our own acreage, and conditions are not favorable. The falling of price, however, must be due to a steady slackening of interest on the part of the buyers for export. It is worthy of note that James Carruthers, of the James Carruthers Co., of Montreal, to-day issued an interview in which he held out strongly for higher prices, stating that our wheat would all be wanted, and would be worth its present price. Of course, receipts have been very heavy in this market during the past week, and it is noticeable that the breaks have come mostly near the close of the market, indicating that considerable wheat is being bought now by country elevators and that the daily hedging is once more taking place in the Winnipeg pit. Yesterday and to-day, however, export houses were sellers, not buyers.

Oats.

One very noticeable feature of the market throughout the week has been the enormous demand for oats: oats of all grades and in all positions. On May 15th, May oats closed at 47 1/4; July at 46 1/2 and October at 42 cents, and in spite of the weakening of wheat in the interval, oats closed to-day with May at 47 1/4; July at 46 1/2 bid, and October 41 1/2.

While there is no doubt that a considerable quantity have been bought on Government contracts, the oat trade has been much broader than that. Indeed, it has very general. It was stated more than once during the week that a million bushels were taken off the market in a single day and while this may be some slight exaggeration, there is no doubt that an extremely heavy trade in oats has been done at very profitable prices.

Flour.

The flour trade continues phenomenally dull. Millers state that this is the dullest May trade in ten years, and some of the big mills have shut down since the first of the month. Millers declare that both the export and domestic trade are equally bad, and no one seems to be able to exactly account for the situation.

Live Stock.

Live stock prices have held firm until to-day when there has been a sharp decline in hog values, although they are still high. \$10.75 per hundred-weight being offered for "select" hogs.

Indications are not lacking that cattle are really scarce in the West. The movement of our stockers and feeders South has been very heavy, and it has not been possible to fill some of the orders placed. It is gratifying to note, however, that in the past few weeks the bulk of stockers and feeders sold have gone on the Western farms and ranches, rather than to Southern feed lots, and this is very much as it should be. With the abundance of moisture in the soil, pasturage should be luxuriant, and the hay crop heavy. There is still an abundance of coarse grains in the country for feed purposes. There is a lot of refuse wheat and plenty of oats that are more or less damaged by frost, and while the price of oats is high enough to be tempting, the Western feeder has begun to realize that he can make more money out of feeding them at home than selling them abroad.

Wool Grading.

Speaking of the Dominion Government, it looks as if the Department of Agriculture was liable to fall down on its pledge of furnishing wool graders to wool growers' associations or for growers having large quantities of wool to grade.

Last fall the Department sent out Geo. T. Willingmyre, a man with an excellent business training in the wool business, capable, energetic and enthusiastic. He spent the winter in the West, laboring with the wool growers on the subject of having their wool properly graded and sold in bulk, and as an outcome of his labors there have been applications for some 12 or 15 graders, and now within a week of the shearing season only five have been furnished.

The Southern Alberta Wool Growers' Association want four graders. They expect the clip of the members of that Association will be about one million pounds. Raymond Knight, of Raymond, Alta., has requested a grader. He is shearing 20,000 head of sheep at Chanvin. The Maple Creek Wool Growers, with a clipping of approximately a quarter of a million pounds, have asked for one. The Vancouver Island Wool Growers' Association, with a clip of 35,000 pounds want another. The Co-operative Departments of the Provincial Government of Saskatchewan, which looks after the co-operative selling of the wool from the growers of that Province, require at least two graders, as they will handle half a million pounds. These are all new applicants for whom the Government have never graded before, but who have been lead to see the desirability of it by Mr. Willingmyre. Manitoba will need at least one grader, as the wool which is being sold co-operatively under the Provincial Government auspices, will amount to at least 160,000 pounds.

If the Dominion Government fails now to provide graders, the work that has been so carefully built up in the last eighteen months or two years, will practically fall to the ground. Every grader should be on his job by Monday, the 29th, at the latest, and as far as can be ascertained the Department has no additional graders on which to put their hands.

The outlook for prices is very good, and with proper grading there is little doubt that medium combings will net the growers over 30 cents per pound this year, but if it is not properly graded they certainly will not get that price.