

West Held Up By Late Spring

**Cattle in West are Starving Owing to Lack of Food Supplies—
Government has Exhausted Sources of Supply—Europe
Wants Wheat, Not Flour**

By E. CORA HIND.

Winnipeg, April 14: Conditions in the west are very far from ideal at the moment. The stormiest March and the coldest April almost on record. Practically all of central and northern Alberta, northern Saskatchewan and parts of northern Manitoba are lying under a heavy blanket of snow and while the sun is bright and the skies clear, piercing winds from the north have blown for days. Even should warm weather set in immediately, seeding will be fully three weeks behind the average and old timers say it reminds them of the spring of 1879 when all the seeding had to be done after the fourth of May. It is not seeding that the farmers are worrying about particularly, long experience having taught them that the spring slow to come often brings steady fine and suitable weather when at last it appears. The acreage will be reduced, of course, but what of that?

The real worry at present is the feed for cattle and horses. The feed supply, short on the start and a feeding period unduly prolonged has practically exhausted available supplies and both cattle and horses in many sections are literally starving and if the present weather continues even another week the loss will be very heavy. Even in Manitoba where the feed supply was abundant early in the season, there is now a shortage as farmers figuring on the usual feeding period have sold too much of their supposed surplus to Saskatchewan and Alberta and now find themselves in perilous conditions with regard to their own stock. In the range country there is much apprehension of heavy loss in the calf crop and of unduly thin cows at calving time, while stock and mix farms are finding great difficulty in dealing with newly arrived calves, pigs and lambs as in addition to shortage of hay there is a great shortage of straw for bedding and this combined with the exceptionally cold weather makes it difficult to protect young lambs, pigs and calves.

Honorable Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture for Alberta speaking in the house at the end of last week said "we are facing a most serious situation. The government has obtained practically all the hay it can buy in the East. Nearly 800 cars of hay are on order in Ontario and these are coming west at the rate of 25 cars daily but we are being deluged with orders from 700 to 800 points right now and we simply cannot supply the feed that is required.

We have done everything possible but owing to the unprecedented conditions we simply cannot provide relief for all at the present time. The policy of the government all winter has been to purchase hay outside the province so that feed reserves in Alberta would be available for the people of all Alberta. However the limit of purchasing seems to be reached in the east. Between 2300 and 2400 cars of hay have been purchased outside the province during the winter." The special rate for feed shipments has been extended from April first to the middle of May.

Hay in Edmonton of April third was nominally \$50 per ton but offers of \$60 per ton for small lots found no takers.

The Board of Trade of Edmonton held a special session to consider the situation but having canvassed what has already been done by the government decided that there were apparently no steps which they could take to relieve the situation.

In spite of these serious conditions the annual bull sale at Edmonton on the last of March and

the first of April was an unqualified success, as the quality of bulls offered was better, the numbers disposed of larger and the average of price very much higher than 1919. It is hard to reconcile this apparent contradiction in terms.

Farm work, when once the thaw comes, will be considerably handicapped by the lack of concentrated food for working horses and the high price of both gasoline and coal oil for the tractors.

A census as to prices being asked by farm help reports the average at \$70 to \$80 and board. A few points report the average at \$80 to \$90.

Rural Credits Tangle.

The Manitoba Rural credit tangle has been adjusted to the extent of the Provincial Government finding the money to complete the applications accepted for the present year, and the power to accept deposits has been accorded the Rural Credits Association. George Prout, member of Selkirk, who is the father of Rural Credits in Manitoba was not satisfied with the arrangements made and has resigned from charge of Rural Credits. It was not with him a salaried position and he has also retired from the local house. Further developments will be awaited with a good deal of interest.

J. L. Clarke, manager of rural service department for the prairie provinces with headquarters at Regina, has issued a warning to farmers to be prepared for a period of tight money. He states that the banks will combine to lend for ordinary farm needs but advises against any large programmes of extension.

The Alberta Government has made a brave attempt to put a stop to wild catting in real estate by amending the act re subdivisions so that permission of the public utilities board must be obtained before a new subdivision can be put on the market.

Millers in Session.

A delegation of millers from both eastern and western Canada are in Winnipeg consulting with the chairman of the wheat board. It is understood they are seeking increased prices for both flour and offal or the decontrolling of flour and the opportunity to sell when and where they can.

There is really no great surplus of flour in Canada at the moment. If all the mills were to stop grinding at once there is enough on hand for 4 or 5 weeks only.

The real crux of the flour situation lies on the continent. These countries want wheat but do not want flour. Take France for example; up to the early part of this year France took a considerable quantity of Canadian flour, now it would be impossible to get France to take flour if it were given for nothing because the trade unions of France are determined that only raw materials shall come in and that French workmen shall have the benefit of the manufacturing, in the case of wheat that French cows shall have the benefit of the offal. Belgium also wants wheat and not flour, and practically all the flour eaten in Belgium today is ground in their own mills.

Julius Barnes in selling to Belgium last year stipulated that for every 100,000 bushels of wheat sold to them they should take so many sacks of flour, but it appears they did not consume this flour in Belgium but traded it to the Czechs Slovaks for sugar.

The United Kingdom also wants wheat and not flour and of late she is taking little interest even in Canadian wheat and is buying heavily from

Argentina. Recently she secured five cargoes which only cost \$2.50 per bushel on board New York. With the rate of exchange so heavily against them, it is reasonable to suppose they will take as little of our wheat as possible.

Canada is not the only country finding difficulty in disposing of flour. At the end of the first week in March, Julius Barnes reported that the American wheat corporation had 5,000,000 barrels on hand and that every effort had been exhausted to find a market for it and the only available market for even a portion of it would be credit sales to those countries unable to pay cash. It is understood that Mr. Barnes in order to maintain the guaranty level on American wheat will have to absorb and find a market for an additional 2,000,000 barrels. These facts make the rumors that the United States would have bought large quantities of our flour to keep it off the British market, look rather silly. Neither the British or the American market want our flour at present.

Another unfounded rumor is that there is an opening for Canadian flour in the Orient today, if millers were permitted to ship to it. This rumour was given the lie recently when the delegation of millers from B. C. admitted that there was no market in the Orient at present.

Milling is one of Canada's most natural industries and every true Canadian is glad to see it prosper. One of its troubles just at the moment is the extraordinary extent to which our milling has developed, the biggest per capita milling capacity in the world, in fact nearly twice as large in proportion to population as that of any other country. Even supposing we have attained to 9,000,000 of a population our domestic consumption will not exceed 45,000,000 so that in a very ordinary year the Canadian mills with their capacity of over 100,000,000 bushels must have a heavy surplus to export. At the moment no one wants it though some might take it in larger or smaller quantities if they considered the price right.

New British Internal-Combustion Locomotives.

Internal-combustion engine locomotives have many advantages over steam locomotives for long distance railways in countries where water and coal are scarce. They possess the drawback, however, that their efficiency is notably reduced at high altitudes, owing to the lower density of the atmosphere and the consequent difficulty of getting a full charge of air into the cylinder. A British engineer has got over this obstacle by designing an internal-combustion engine whose efficiency is not affected by altitude. It has the further advantage that the exhaust is practically silent. A locomotive with this type of engine and electric transmission gear is now being constructed. Clearly enough, the same engine has striking advantages for aeroplane work.

The British Columbia government intends extending the scope of the Industries Act to provide \$3,000,000 this year to loan to infant industries in place of the \$2,000,000 which was the figure set last year. Many new industries which were established in 1919 through loans from this department are developing satisfactorily.

The undersized horses of the Alberta ranches find a ready market in Ontario, according to the manager of the horse department of the Union Stock Yards, Toronto, who is looking into the supply of this type of animal in the west. The horse of under 1,200 pounds, so common on the range here, and of late years found undesirable from a breeding standpoint, is eagerly picked up in the eastern provinces, he states.