

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, NOVEMBER 11, 1895.

WHEAT SITUATION IN CANADA.

Ontario farmers are holding on to their wheat very tenaciously this year, to such an extent that the millers have scarcely been able to get sufficient wheat to meet their requirements. In the first place the crop is not a heavy one. The official crop report places the winter wheat crop of Ontario at 18,251,000 bushels, or about 8,500,000 bushels less than last year, and last year's crop was 1,500,000 bushels under the average of the previous ten years. This shows altogether a shortage of about 5,000,000 bushels in the winter wheat crop of this year, as compared with an average crop. The spring wheat crop this year is placed at 3,821,000 bushels, as compared with 3,367,000 bushels for the previous year; but the average spring wheat crop for the ten years previous to 1894 was 8,051,000 bushels. While the spring wheat crop this year is about the same as last year, it is about 4,700,000 bushels under an average crop. This shows a total shortage in the combined winter and spring wheat crops of Ontario this year of well up to 10,000,000 bushels, when compared with the average crop for the ten years previous to 1894, and a shortage of over 8,500,000 bushels as compared with last year.

This decrease in the wheat crop is due to a decreased area sown, the winter wheat area having fallen to 743,199 acres in 1895, compared with 778,992 acres in 1894 and an average of 899,071 acres in the ten years previous to 1894. The area of spring wheat was 223,957 acres in 1895; 230,010 in 1894 and an average of 528,731 acres in the ten years previous to 1894.

The knowledge of this decreased production no doubt has something to do with the tendency shown by farmers to hold their wheat for higher prices. Certain it is that they are holding onto it most tenaciously, and in order to get sufficient wheat to meet their requirements, Ontario millers have been forced to continually advance prices to a point far beyond a parity with United States or import markets. To show the comparatively high prices in Ontario, we may state that at the time of writing Ontario wheats are selling at about 70 cents per bushel, equal to 10 to 12c above prices in the United States. The duty on wheat imported into Canada is 15 cents per bushel, so that it will be seen the price in Ontario cannot advance much further or wheat will be coming in from the United States. This is one of the exceptional cases in which our protective policy operates to benefit the farmer, but at the expense of the home consumer of flour.

The comparatively high price of wheat in Eastern Canada has been a material advantage to Manitoba farmers and shippers, as eastern millers have been obliged to buy Manitoba wheats more largely than usual, also at a price above a parity with United States and other export markets. The price of the higher grades of wheat in Manitoba has ranged well above an export basis ever

since the season opened. The comparatively high prices in Ontario have therefore enabled Manitoba shippers to sell considerable wheat to Ontario millers at a fair margin of profit, notwithstanding the fact that prices paid to farmers here were above an export basis. The comparatively high prices in Ontario has opened a market for the comparatively dear wheat bought here, while the lower grades of Manitoba wheat are available for export. A larger quantity than usual of Manitoba wheat has been shipped to storage points in Ontario, such as Owen Sound, Midland or Sarnia, to be held there for the winter trade, after navigation closes. One feature of the present situation that will be noticed, is the fact that No. 1 Manitoba wheat is selling in Ontario at about on a par with the eastern grown wheat. Our wheat therefore does not command the usual premium over the eastern wheat. This is due to the scarcity of the latter and the plentiful supply of the former.

The comparatively high price of wheats in Ontario will also help the Manitoba millers, in their competition in eastern Canada markets with eastern millers. The eastern millers are paying comparatively higher prices for their wheat than the western millers are obliged to pay, consequently the Manitoba millers are in a good position to compete in eastern markets. Prices of Ontario grades of flour have already been forced up to a higher level as compared with Manitoba flour, and the result should be to increase the consumption of Manitoba flour in the eastern provinces.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE United States has appointed a commission composed of three persons to confer with a similar commission to be appointed by Canada regarding the question of a deep waterway from the head of the St. Lawrence lakes to the ocean. The United States commissioners are James B. Angel, of Michigan, John E. Russell, of Massachusetts, and Lyman E. Cooley, of Illinois. The Canadian commissioners have not yet been appointed. This is a result of the international deep waterways convention, held in Toronto in 1894, when an association was formed to further the great project. At the convention a resolution was passed asking for an international commission to investigate and report upon the question. Both the Washington and Canadian governments complied by passing acts providing for the appointment of commissioners. The appointment of the United States commissioners is the first step of a practical nature in looking into this great undertaking.

THE Seneca root season is about over, but it is perhaps not too late to refer to some matters of interest in this trade. They will at any rate be of service another season. The trade is becoming quite an important item in the commerce of Winnipeg, by reason of the increasing quantity of root handled here, and anything which will improve the methods of handling the commodity should therefore be of value. One point we wish to mention is, that considerable loss has been occasioned by packing the root before it was thoroughly dried. Bales are frequently opened here which contain great masses of mouldy root,

the value of which is destroyed. The root has been packed damp and it moulds and forms into a solid mass in the sack. A little care will avoid this loss, which of course falls back on the country shipper. Another cause of complaint from dealers here is the presence of dirt in the root. One lot received recently contained over 200 pounds of sand and dirt in about 2,000 pounds of root, equal to 10 per cent. Dockage had to be made for this, and the country shipper would be out the freight on the dirt. Shippers are also advised to keep nice, clean, fine lots of root separate from the coarse, bulky stuff, instead of mixing it all together as they often do.

THE Liberal newspaper of Portage la Prairie becomes indignant in explaining a case which it terms a gross injustice. If the particulars are as stated there is certainly reason for indignation. The particulars are as follows: A loan company had a first mortgage on a farm and a resident of Portage had a second mortgage against the property. The company sold the property and claimed that there was no balance coming to the holder of the second mortgage. The holder of the second mortgage believed that the company had overcharged the items of expenses in winding up the mortgage and that there should be a balance coming to him. He took proceedings at law and was awarded \$64.16, the company's solicitor having overcharged expenses to this extent. Now comes in the injustice. The plaintiff is compelled under the law, it appears, to pay the costs, both his own and those of the defendant's, which in the case in question amount to considerably more than the sum recovered. This simply puts a premium on dishonesty on the part of a mortgagee or his solicitors, knowing as they do that any one taking proceedings will be compelled to pay all costs, and the costs would amount to more than the sum involved, where the balance claimed was under say \$100 to \$150. It is such absurdities as these which are every now and again cropping up in the law which lead the lay mind to believe sometimes that it would be better if the whole fabric of law could be utterly swept out of existence.

IN spite of the enormous quantity of cheap feed in the country The Commercial is informed that the cattle exporting firm of Gordon & Ironside have purchased about 2,000 head of young cattle in Manitoba this season, which they have sent west to the range country. This does seem peculiar. Here we have more feed grain than we know what to do with, yet farmers have been disposing of their young stock in an unfinished state. The animals sent west were mostly too young to export, though some were old enough, but too lean to make profitable shippers. The firm mentioned were not anxious to buy this class of cattle, but they were often obliged to take them when purchasing shipping stock. The sale of such animals certainly represents a loss to the farmer. It is said that there is more money in finishing an animal for the market than in raising it. Certainly with feed so abundant and cheap as it is in Manitoba this year, it would have been far more profitable to have fattened up these animals