

FARMING IN EDMONTON DISTRICT

How Northern Alberta Has Come Out in 1918 Season— Mixed Farming Grows

It is now apparent that there has been a good deal of misconception as to the results of the unusually dry season which prevailed in Alberta and Saskatchewan, in common with adjoining territory south of the international boundary, during the summer just passed. While undoubtedly there was a total failure of crops and pasture in some districts and a partial failure in others, these conditions do not by any means obtain throughout the whole territory, as is generally supposed. Throughout the Edmonton district, for instance, though rainfall was less than normal, there was almost the usual heavy growth of crops and pasture. It is now announced that up to November 15th, when the special cheap rates arranged by the government and the railways for the transportation of livestock, as a measure of relief for the dried-out sections expired, there had been shipped into the country of good grazing and abundance of winter feed, of which Edmonton may be considered the centre, from the less favored districts in the south, no less than 31,350 head of cattle and 66,535 sheep.

Information as to Crops

Throughout the Edmonton district and the north country damage was sustained, not from drought, which is unknown there, but as a result of a freak frost which arrived six weeks ahead of time, in July. It was supposed, at the time, that this had destroyed the crop; but it is now evident that so far as Edmonton's more immediate territory is concerned, the damage has been greatly over-estimated. In order to obtain authoritative and first-hand information as to actual conditions, the Edmonton Board of Trade sent out a series of questions to a large number of farmers in the district. These were not sent to a selected list, as results in such case might be misleading. On the contrary, they went to every farmer appearing in the Edmonton rural telephone directory. So far only 36 of these questionnaires have been returned, but as these are widely scattered and cover all directions, they may safely be accepted as thoroughly representative, and it is believed that if all were in the average results would not be materially different.

Each farmer was asked to supply answers to 15 questions. The answers to these were distinctly interesting, instructive and encouraging.

The questions as to grain crops resulted in the following information:—

These 36 farmers have thrashed 1,282 acres wheat, yielding 21,585 bushels, or 16.84 bushels per acre; 2,151, acres oats, yielding 100,160 bushels, or 45.56 bushels per acre; 1,067 acres barley, yielding 29,310 bushels, or 27.47 bushels per acre.

Grain of Good Quality

An interesting point is that nearly all report their wheat of high grade, generally 1, 2 or 3 Northern. Only two report having feed wheat. Similarly, the oats are almost all reported as being No. 1 or No. 2 Canada White or No. 1 feed. Barley, on the other hand, shows a considerable amount as of feed grade. It will be noticed that the total acreage under grain crop is 4,500 acres, which is exactly 125 acres for each farmer. In addition it was shown that there were on each farm 24 acres of green feed. With an average of something like 15 acres of timothy and two or three acres of potatoes, roots and garden, and allowing 12 or 13 acres for 1918 breaking, it would appear that the average Edmonton district farmer has about 180 acres under cultivation.

Livestock

Under the head of animal husbandry, the following questions were asked:—

Has pasture been good in 1918? Twenty-six replied "Yes"; 10 "Fair"; while none said "No."

Have you sufficient winter feed? "Yes," 35; "No," 1.

Have cows milked well? "Yes," 28; "Fair," 6; "No," 1.

Have dairying operations been profitable? "Yes," 27; "No," 2; others not dairying.

Has raising of beef been profitable? "Yes," 24; "No," 1; others not reporting or not raising beef.

These 36 farmers are carrying the following livestock: 398 horses; 377 milking cows; 777 other cattle; 1,103 hogs. Each farmer has, therefore, on the average 11 horses, 32 cattle and 31 hogs.

Under the heading general the following information was elicited:—

Thirty-four of these 36 farmers state that their total operations for 1918 have been profitable; one was not sure; and one said "No."

In reply to the question, "Have your operations for the past five years been profitable?" they made it unanimous; 36 said "Yes."

Another question brings the information that those 36 men have been farming in the Edmonton district, on the average just over 18 years. Asked as to whether during that time they have ever known a failure of crops and pasture from lack of moisture, 35 answer "No," and one says "Yes, in 1888."

Mixed Farming District

The last question was "Taking one season with another, do you know of any better country than the Edmonton district for mixed farming?" Thirty-three farmers answer "No" to this. One says: "Not on this side of the water." One says "Yes, in North Lancashire," and another answers, "not in Canada."

It will therefore be seen that though climatic conditions in 1918 were the most unfavorable that have been experienced in the Edmonton country for at least 30 years, farming operations have, on the whole, proved profitable even this year, and not one of these 36 Edmonton district farmers shows the slightest trace of discouragement. The explanation lies in the sound economic basis of farm operations in Edmonton territory: Small farms, averaging 320 acres, with a clear realization that it is beef, milk and pork, rather than wheat, that creates permanent prosperity and stable conditions; combined, of course, with the peculiarly favorable conditions of soil and climate found in the Edmonton country for the cheap production of those staples.

From the figures given above, regarding the operations of these 36 farmers, the limited extent to which they are dependent on production of wheat, is apparent, notwithstanding the good yields generally obtained. These men are evidently doing "real farming," and are taking no chances.

NEW ENGLAND FISH COMMISSION IN CANADA

A fish commission from Massachusetts is touring Canada in the interests of the fish industry of Massachusetts. It is composed of the following members of the state legislature:—Senator G. F. Hart, Senator C. D. Brown, J. Weston Allan, J. D. Bentley, F. A. Manning, A. L. Whitman, C. Boothman, J. Beatty, G. A. Hoyt.

When the delegation was in Montreal on the 12th instant, a luncheon was given to them by the city. Among the speakers was Mr. A. H. Brittain, president of the Canadian Fisheries Association. He said that if Montreal would spend enough money in improving market conditions, a marked reduction in the price of fish would result.

NO PURCHASING OF GERMAN-MADE PRODUCTS

The Executive Council of the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association has passed the following resolution:—

"Whereas the state of war existing between the British Empire and the Central Powers of Germany and Austria has demonstrated to the world the utter impossibility of reconciliation until such time as a change of mental attitude is shown towards the accepted standards of moral and commercial decency.

"Be it resolved that every pulp and paper manufacturer of Canada shall be asked to refuse to purchase any goods of German or Austrian manufacture and that the strictest scrutiny shall be given to all goods stated to be of Swedish, Dutch or Swiss origin, and

"Further that every purchasing agent shall be notified of this resolution.

"Be it also resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all Allied Trade Associations with the request that it receive similar attention."