

# Conditions in the West

By E. CORA HIND.

November 21, 1918.

The weather has turned sharply cold, and all over the West there has been light snow flurries in the past two weeks, but nothing to make a showing on the ground in Manitoba. Some places in Saskatchewan and Alberta have had nearly a foot of snow. The West is still considerably in the grip of influenza, and the ban has affected a great many lines of business very seriously. On the whole, however, people are taking the restrictions philosophically, and while there is much anxiety there has been no panic, and although the number of cases in Winnipeg is large, the percentage of deaths is relatively small. The death rate has been higher in some towns west, where they were slower in putting the ban on public gatherings. There is no doubt that the influenza affected the Victory Loan, but fortunately not so as to fall behind the objective which had been set. In view of the enormous amount of sickness and the total absence of any meetings in connection with the campaign, the results have been extremely gratifying. Of course, the actual figures of what the West raised are common property in the East now. One of the most noticeable subscriptions was that of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange;—a total of considerably over 5,000,000 gross and 4,550,000 actual cash. The Exchange is very proud of a telegram of appreciation direct from Sir Thomas White commending their work in connection with the Loan.

Grain markets are very quiet and dull. There is quite a heavy movement of wheat, and the outturn of this keeps a certain section of the trade busy, but of course, the price being fixed, there is neither activity or anxiety in the handling of the wheat. The forward movement from the Head of the Lakes has been very slow, and while the movement from the interior to the lake front is distinctly improved, it is still slower than it should be for this season of the year. No figures of the amount in interior elevators for the month of October have been published by the Canadian Board of Grain Commission, but it is known from other sources that over 30,000,000 bushels are in interior elevators at the present time, while the accumulation in terminals at the head of the Lakes is very considerably in excess of the same period last year.

### FLOUR.

It is understood here that recent conferences has led to an arrangement whereby Canadian mills will run to full capacity night and day all winter, and that their output will all be taken up by the Wheat Export Company for overseas. It would appear from this that while the Wheat Export Company expected to ship 25,000,000 bushels of wheat in bulk, that less than that amount may be shipped and more flour. This would probably mean a larger quantity of American wheat going over, but it would also be very dangerous to Canada in that it will increase the amount of mill feed which is urgently needed. At present the price of mill feed in the West is prohibitive. The price of mill feed east of the Lakes was fixed some time ago, but west of the Lakes it has not as yet been fixed, or if it has, no order to that effect has come to the Food Board at Winnipeg and prices ranging from \$4.00 to \$5.00 more than last year are being extorted from farmers who simply have to have a certain amount of these feeds. It is quite probable that a considerable amount of American wheat and oats will continue to reach seaboard through Canadian channels, and it should be possible to take advantage of this movement for the benefit of Canadian railroads and Canadian ports, without at the same time interfering with the movement of our own crop.

### LIVESTOCK.

The livestock situation continues to give great uneasiness in the West. There are many complaints from shippers of stock that they are not getting a fair price from the packers, and there are complaints from the packers that a very large percentage of the cattle received are of very undesirable quality and unprofitable to handle, being insufficiently finished. There is probably some truth in both statements. Men who bought feeder cattle at fairly high prices, at the urgent request of the Dominion Government, and took them out for feeding have, in many cases, had poor crops and poor pasturage all summer, and have not been in a position to finish this cattle properly, and felt obliged to liquidate them this Fall, and are certainly losing money, and this in the face of the iterated and reiterated statement of the Gov-

ernment that it would be impossible for them to lose if they would only go into the livestock game. The Government is not accountable for the dry year or for the short crop in certain sections, but there is a good deal of feeling that not so much has been done as might have been to secure supplies of feed and make them available for men with stock to feed. Another source of trouble has been that the range cattle moved into Northern Saskatchewan and Northern Manitoba have not done well. There was plenty of pasturage in these districts into which they were moved, but it was not the kind that these range cattle had been accustomed to, and has been dried up by frost, and when once frosted it retained little of the nutriment of the prairie wool, and many of these cattle have lost flesh and have come on the market in that condition.

The conference which is being held at Ottawa this week have passed some very wise resolutions, but it is noticeable that having presented their findings to Sir Thomas White that he "expressed approval for the movement to increase production of every kind, and while financial considerations prevented him from acceding to some of the points suggested, he asked that the plans for the necessary educational propaganda be submitted to the Minister of Agriculture, and if they proved feasible he had no doubt that the campaign would be approved by the government." Every western livestock man who reads this paragraph will say "another blooming production campaign" or something more emphatic. Any production campaign undertaken without first some definite provision for facilitating the marketing of the product will fall on deaf ears in the West. They have

heard this too often, and the government will get very little support or sympathy for any campaign of this kind from the agricultural press, until such time as work is done at the other end in the matter of providing marketing facilities and stabilizing the market. When the greater production campaign was on last year, all of these things were promised and very definitely promised. A year has gone by; another conference called, other resolutions passed and greater talk about production, while the results of last year's campaign are coming on the market in a half-finished condition for lack of feed. There is no doubt considerable in the claim of the packers that the light unfinished butcher cattle are not worth any more than they are paying for them, but these very cattle fed for a few months would be worth a very great deal more than is being paid for them at the present time, and there is abundance of feed in the country to finish them, the thing that has been lacking is a practical arrangement to bring the cattle and the feed together. During the month of October 10,000 head of butcher cattle, many of them light cattle, were taken across the line for further feeding, and in addition over 7,000 head of stocker and feeders, or nearly 50 per cent of all the feeder and stocker cattle marketed on the Winnipeg yards during the month. Eastern Canada, where there is presumably abundance of feed, took 3,230 head, or only a little over half taken in October, 1917.

### DEATH OF MR. TARR.

During the week the death occurred in Eastern Canada of S. A. Tarr, editor of Canadian Finance. Mr. Tarr has since his residence in Winnipeg taken an extremely active interest, not only through his paper, but personally in all the movements for the advancement of the city. He was very highly esteemed by all sections of the community who came in contact with him, but more especially by the financial and commercial men with whom he had daily intercourse.

### PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF UNDEVELOPED LAND.

The objects of the land settlement policy proposed by Hon. J. A. Calder, will be:

1. Development of a national sentiment in favor of increased production.
2. The encouragement of a movement from urban to rural districts.
3. Avoidance of congestion of labor in urban centres.
4. Securing of a large influx of settlers to vacant lands.
5. Creation of a condition under which small holders might become owners.
6. Securing of a supply of farm labor.

### BUSINESS FAILURES IN CANADA.

With the single exception of September, the failure total for October in the United States and Canada, having total assets amounting to \$303,914, and years past, and the increase over September is so slight that the statements that failures are down to the minimum is correct.

In October, 1918, there were 69 failures in Canada, having total assets amounting to \$33,914, and total liabilities amounting to \$704,803, as compared with 93 failures, having \$482,099 assets, and \$1,330,268 liabilities in October, 1917.

Canadian soldiers overseas will be returned at the rate of two thousand per month.

### LAST WEEK'S RECORD OF ACTIVE MONTREAL STOCKS.

						Last Net		—YEAR—	
Sales.		Open.	High.	Low.	sale.	ch'ge.	High.	Low.	
295	Asbestos, pfd. . . . .	60	60	59½	60	+1	61¾	45	
2,754	Brazilian . . . . .	55	55½	53	53½	-2	60	32	
1,025	Brompton . . . . .	59	60	58	60	+1½	63¼	41¾	
120	Can. Car. . . . .	32	32	32	32	-1½	38¼	18½	
160	Do. pfd. . . . .	83	83	83	83	-1	92	49½	
999	Can. Cement . . . . .	60	62½	60	62½	+2½	69½	*57	
340	Can. Cottons . . . . .	68¾	68½	68	68½	½	70	48½	
102	Do. pfd. . . . .	76	76	76	76	unch.	*76	76	
1,030	Can. Loco. . . . .	66½	67	66½	66	-1	69	58	
189	Can. Steamship . . . . .	45½	45½	45¼	45¼	+ ¾	48¼	39¼	
225	Do. pfd. . . . .	76½	76½	76½	76½	+ ¾	78½	76	
110	D. Iron, pfd. . . . .	94	94	94	94	-1	*97	88	
6,069	Dom. Steel . . . . .	60½	63	60	61½	+1¼	65	*53	
1,150	Dom. Textile . . . . .	96	98½	96	97½	+1½	99	80¾	
150	Maple Leaf . . . . .	138	138½	137½	137½	-2½	140	94	
100	Mont. Cottons, pfd. . . . .	100	100	100	100	unch.	100	99½	
1,799	Mont. Power . . . . .	82½	82½	81½	81½	-1¼	88½	68½	
395	Shawinigan . . . . .	116½	117	116¼	116¼	- ¼	118½	107	
411	Spanish River . . . . .	15	15	15	15	- ½	20	13	
2,229	Steel of Canada . . . . .	59	61½	59	59½	+ ¾	74¼	*49¾	
126	Wabasso . . . . .	60	60	58½	60	+3	60	21	
135	Wayagmack . . . . .	50	50	50	50	unch.	52½	50	
250	Woods M'f'g pfd. . . . .	86	86	86	86	—	86	86	
BANKS									
82	Montreal. . . . .	*210	*210	*210	*210	+3½	*210	210	
BONDS									
\$114,800	Can. Loan (1927) . . . . .	95½	96	95½	95½	- ½	96	91½	
56,000	Cedars Rapids . . . . .	87¾	87½	87¼	87½	+ ¼	87½	80	
UNLISTED SHARES									
100	Dominion Glass . . . . .	35	35	35	35	-1¼	38	26	
817	Laurentide Power . . . . .	60	61	60	60	+1	61	50	
200	N.A. Pulp . . . . .	3	3	3	3	unch.	4½	2½	

\*—Ex-dividend.