

Our Grain Trade.

FIRST WHEAT EXPORTS—CROP OF 1877—500 BUSHELS.

EXPORTS FROM CROP OF 1887 NEARLY 12,000,000 BUSHELS.

PERHAPS 20,000,000 BUSHELS FOR CROP OF 1889.

The first wheat regularly exported from Manitoba was shipped out of the province by the Ogilvie Milling company, from the crop of 1877. It consisted of a consignment of about 500 bushels. It was forwarded in bags, and shipped by steamers up the Red River to Fargo, thence by the Northern Pacific railway to Duluth. From Duluth it was forwarded to Goderich, Ontario, and ground in the Ogilvie company's mill at that place. This small shipment was sufficient to establish the reputation of Manitoba wheat, and from that year onward shipments have continued to increase steadily. Almost every year has shown an increase in exports over the preceding year. In the crop year of 1886-87 there was some falling off in wheat exports, owing to the light crop, caused by an unusually dry season, but the following year again fully made up for the deficiency. From this small beginning, already great results have been attained. Starting with 500 bushels, exports from the wheat crop of 1877, in ten years exports have grown to well on to 12,000,000 bushels from the crop of 1887. This record is alone sufficient to convince any doubting Thomases of the grand future before Western Canada. It shows that in ten years from the date of the first wheat exports from the province, the quantity shipped out was just 24,000 times greater than for the first year in which exports were made.

From the crop of 1878 about 20,000 bushels were exported, by the same route as in 1877. In 1880 the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba railway was extended northward to the Manitoba boundary, where it was connected with what is now known as the Emerson branch of the C. P. R., and in that year the

FIRST SHIPMENTS BY RAILWAY

from the province were made, going via Chicago to Eastern Canada. The Ogilvie company has continued to ship wheat from Manitoba every year since 1877, and their shipments give a good idea of the growth of the grain trade of the province. In the year 1881 their shipments amounted to about 200,000 bushels. Other dealers commenced to handle grain in 1881, and in that crop year about 50,000 bushels of Manitoba wheat were shipped to Minneapolis, in addition to the exports of the Ogilvie company. The first shipments of flour from Manitoba were made in July, 1882, also by the Ogilvie company, shortly after the completion of their mill in Winnipeg. Prices paid for wheat in the early days of exports from the province, ranged from .80 cents to \$1.05 per bushel, which, considering the high freight rates then ruling, were pretty liberal prices.

An authentic record of the wheat shipments from the country has not been kept. In 1882 the Ogilvie company handled 400,000 bushels; in 1883, 650,000 bushels; in 1884, 1,000,000

bushels; in 1885, 1,250,000. A large portion of this was exported eastward, in the form of wheat and flour, and the figures will indicate the gradual growth of the trade. During the last few years named a number of dealers were exporting wheat, and quite a number of mills had been established in the country. From the crop of 1885 the exports were estimated at fully 5,000,000 bushels of wheat and flour, about 1,000,000 bushels being in flour. In the crop year of 1886-87, which was a short crop year, exports were estimated at between three and four million bushels. The year 1887 was a

BOOM YEAR FOR THE GRAIN TRADE.

Carefully prepared statistics for the Winnipeg board of trade, showed the crop of that year to amount to nearly 14,000,000 bushels of wheat, for Manitoba alone, without including wheat grown in the Territories. Of this crop 8,500,000 bushels of wheat were exported up to Aug. 1, 1888, as shown by the board of trade statistics. About 1,900,000 bushels was also exported, to the same date, in flour. The acreage under crop, in wheat, in 1887, was 432,000 acres, showing the average yield to have reached the enormous figures of 32.4 bushels per acre. In this year it was estimated that there were about 10,000 farmers in Manitoba. If 10,000 farmers in Manitoba can raise 14,000,000 bushels of wheat, what amount of wheat will the province produce when it has a population of a few hundred thousand farmers? Of course it is not expected that the average yield will frequently reach the figures of 1887, but what has occurred once may happen again. Indeed, from the results of past years, it is quite probable that these enormous yields may occur quite frequently. The average yield in 1885 would have been probably very nearly as large as in 1887, but for damage sustained during harvest, brought on by cold rains.

Wheat is not the only grain exported. From the crop of 1887, about 1,000,000 bushels of oats and 350,000 bushels of barley were shipped out of the province. The

VALUE OF CEREAL EXPORTS

for the crop year ending July 1, 1888, were estimated by the Winnipeg board of trade as follows: Wheat, \$4,675,000; flour and mill stuffs, \$1,250,000; flax and its product, \$120,000; oats and oatmeal, \$280,000; barley, \$140,000—a total of \$6,465,000.

The present crop year will not be completed until the 1st of August next, and full returns of exports from the crop of 1888 cannot therefore be given. A falling off in comparison with the last crop year is expected. Last season was the most backward which the country has experienced for many years. The spring was very late, and though the crops grew luxuriantly, they never made up for the late start. The straw was heavy, but the yield was not up to the average, and this, combined with the damage sustained in harvest, rendered the crop shorter than in 1887. Up to date about 2,000,000 bushels of Manitoba wheat from last year's crop have been handled at the elevators at Fort William, Lake Superior. A considerable quantity has also been shipped all rail to the East, which has not gone through these elevators. The amount handled in this way would be between 500,000 and 1,000,000 bushels. The

amount of wheat still held in store here and in farmers' hands cannot be closely estimated, but it is placed at about 2,000,000 bushels. Flour shipments, which are not included in the figures, should be considerably in excess of last year, or say equal to 2,500,000 bushels. This should be a very low estimate, as the new Keewatin mill alone, which was not in existence last year, can handle 1,500,000 bushels of wheat in a year.

LARGE INCREASE IN ACREAGE.

As previously stated, the acreage sown to wheat in 1887 was 432,000 acres. The wheat acreage in Manitoba in 1888 was estimated at an increase of 20 per cent., or 518,400 acres. The increase in the acreage for 1889 will of course depend upon weather conditions in the spring to a great extent. If the spring is at all favorable for seeding, the prospect is that the increase in the acreage will be the largest on record in the country. Last summer was very favorable for plowing, and an unusually large quantity of new land was broken. Old settlers, who have not increased their cultivated area for years, broke from ten to fifty acres of new land last summer. The high prices which have ruled this season for wheat will also stimulate farmers to put in as large a crop next spring as possible. The considerable number of new settlers who took up land in the country last summer, will also have some crop in next spring. Allowing for an increase in the wheat area of 30 per cent, for this year, which is considered a reasonable estimate, we would have 673,920 acres in Manitoba. Now, then, say that we have an average crop next summer of two bushels per acre less than in 1887, and Manitoba would produce 20,217,600 bushels of wheat. Of course favorable conditions for a large crop may not exist, but it is quite possible on the other hand that next summer may be favorable, and if it is, the figures named will almost certainly be reached. The estimates given only take in Manitoba. The Territories, added to Manitoba, should produce a sufficient quantity of wheat to make up the allowance for home requirements, leaving a clear

20,000,000 BUSHELS FOR EXPORT

for 1889. This cannot be said to be an over-drawn picture.

As to the quality of Manitoba wheat, it would be superfluous to go into argument on this point. Wherever it has gone it is recognized as the finest wheat in the world. Our other crops, however, are not so well known, though they rank high in excellence. Manitoba barley, for instance, was subjected to a series of tests at malting centres in the United States, during the fall of 1887, when it was shown to be the best malting barley grown on this continent. It was proved to be superior in vitality and malting strength to the highest grades of Eastern or California barley.

Notwithstanding the great progress made in in the past few years, everything has not been smooth sailing in connection with the grain business in this country. Serious difficulties have been met with, and both the grain growers and grain dealers have been obliged to put up with special hardships and submit to serious drawbacks. A new country has its disadvantages as well as its advantages, and some of the former have been felt in Manitoba. High