

The Rainfall Has Worked An Improvement in Crop Prospects

General Belief That Early Estimates Were Too Small Though the Abundance of Moisture Changed the Whole Situation --Chicago Prediction Now Places the Total Output of Wheat at 92,000,000 Bushels, and Final Returns May Show an Even Larger Production.

Winnipeg, Aug. 22.—A distinct improvement in what is known as business sentiment has followed a realization of what the crops of 1910 mean to western Canada. There was much uneasiness at the time of the dry spell in June, and there was indeed ground for some of the fears that were then expressed. The sensitiveness of the situation was reflected in the wheat markets, and a deliberate campaign in favor of higher prices there fostered the notion that the output for this year was to be a losing proposition. At the time of the Winnipeg Exhibition, for instance, there was plenty of ammunition for the bulls, and they did not hesitate to take advantage of it. The big show opened about the middle of last month, and, as usual, it attracted farmers and grain men from all parts of the three Provinces. These visitors were thoroughly conversant with the state of affairs up to that time, and they brought information which was discouraging to all who hoped for a big yield. The fact was that the full effects of the drought were being experienced in the wheat fields during the early part of July, and there was not much cause for confidence, especially in those parts of Manitoba whence the majority of the exhibition patrons came. The idea that the crop was far short of normal spread quickly, and the quotations on the various markets reflected it closely. After the Exhibition was over it was found that the whole of the story had not been told by the people who came here from points in Manitoba. The northern portion of this Province, almost the whole of Saskatchewan, and a large part of Alberta should have been taken into consideration, and in those portions of the grain-producing territory the outlook was bright enough. It was admitted that the production would not meet the hopes of the enthusiasts who look for steady increases from year to year, but it was thought that the plains as a whole should make a very creditable showing.

DRIPPING GRAIN REVIVED

Shortly after the farmers and grain men returned to their respective homes the rain began to fall, and it continued to fall intermittently, but heavily for two or three weeks. The aggregate precipitation was sufficient in many cases to revive the drooping grain and give reasonable expectation of a fair yield. The whole result of the rainfall was satisfactory, and it may be said to have worked a material change in the prospects. At any rate, little unfavorable news has percolated, through during the past

month. People in districts where the gloom had been deep and widespread began to believe that there was some chance of obtaining returns from the expenditures of time, money and labor, while in the other sections the enthusiasm was vastly increased. If the situation for the whole west were to be judged by the developments in the latter half of July and the first half of August, there would be small reason to complain. The damage that was wrought through the absence of moisture was complete, as far as it went, at least a month ago, and the hue has been entirely different during the interval.

WHEAT HEADED OUT WELL

The showing of the grain fields is irregular to a degree not known in any previous season, and the process of balancing-up must be used in the fullest measure before a fair conclusion regarding the general result may be reached. The comparative failures in certain portions must be matched with the excellent returns in some others, and it is in this way that it is possible to have confidence in the ultimate outcome of the year's crops. It seems to be conceded that even in those districts where the growth of the wheat plant has been hindered by the lack of rain the heading-out is more satisfactory than might have been anticipated. The nourishment derived from the soil did not permit the stalks to attain their usual height, but there was sufficient of it to fill the heads in good shape. This fact is revealed by a study of the earlier thrashing reports. Many farmers in various corners of the drought area have reported that the yield has been better than they expected it would be, and they ascribe the more favorable showing to the ability of the plant to head out well with the late rains. As the straw is generally regarded as a burden and nuisance on western farms, no concern need be felt over that phase of the situation. There are parts of the wheat belt where the crops are in better condition than they have ever been at this time of the year, and naturally the farmers there are jubilant. They are calling for harvest hands at an unprecedented rate, and their requirements in the way of implements and binder-twine are enormous. The disappointments felt by some of the husbandmen is overcome by the enthusiasm and gratification felt by so many others.

WEALTHY FARMERS BEAR STRAIN

The geographical distribution of the misfortunes this year gives room for a general supposition that the blow has fallen where the shoulders

are broadest. The dry regions are most plentiful in the older and more thickly settled portions of the west, and it is those that contain the largest number of comparatively wealthy farmers. A man who has gathered fifteen good crops in the last twenty years, may be considered as having done well, and while one may sympathize with him in his temporary loss, there is no occasion for pity. Chances are taken in all lines of business and when the weather is a prime factor in any of them, as it is in farming, the element of uncertainty preponderates. The rule of poor crops in the prosperous sections and good yields in the new settlements does not hold good in all cases this year, but enough instances of it may be found to show that it is the rule. The northern half of the grain belt is decidedly new by comparison with the south, and, generally speaking, it has made a better showing. The south, for its part, can withstand adversity on account of the almost uniform success that has attended its agricultural efforts in the past decade. It would be a very serious matter, indeed, for the whole country if the younger settlements, into which the great stream of immigration has been directed in recent seasons should suffer a sharp reaction. The effect upon all branches of commercial activity would be felt for many years. As it is, the older regions, including southern Manitoba, should be able to exist for a twelvemonth with ten bushels of wheat to the acre instead of twenty.

ESTIMATES ARE REVISED

The better crop conditions have led to a revision of some of the estimates of total yield made earlier in the season. The game of guessing started with the Chicago estimate of 70,000,000 bushels of wheat, and subsequently attempts have shown a gradual increase from that level. Some of the careful observers extending themselves by predicting that the production would be in the neighborhood of 90,000,000 bushels. Others, whose opinions are entitled to consideration, ventured to make an estimate of 100,000,000. The reports available now have made it more easily credible that the higher amounts may be correct. A recent Chicago estimate places the total at 92,000,000, and this does not take into account the possibility of continued improvement in the returns from the thrashers. A yield of 100,000,000 bushels would mean an average of only 12 bushels to the acre, and, considering the fertility of the western plains, this should make plenty of allowance for crop damage even in a dry year.

HAY AND CLOVER ARE BEST CROPS

Wheat and Barley Good, But Oats, Peas and Corn a Little Off

The Ontario Department of Agriculture has issued a statement on the condition of crops based on returns received up to the fifteenth of August. Fall wheat is classed as a good crop, although more shrunken grain is reported than for several years. Some smut and a little rust is complained of and this did considerable damage in strips. The straw is of better length than for some years past.

Spring wheat is steadily going out of favor in Ontario and where grown is chiefly of the "goose" variety. The yield will be about average. The barley crop will be good, although the straw is rather short. Some is discolored. Oats were so badly knocked down by the rain that much could be cut only one way by the binder. Most of it is fairly well filled out, the crop will be a satisfactory one. The rye crop is small but has done well as a whole. The pea crop has been rather disappointing. The crop did not get a good start in the spring owing to the excessive rain. The presence of a green aphid was reported in most parts of the province. Beans have not podded very well and rain came at a critical time and damaged the crop.

HAY AND CLOVER THE BEST

Hay and clover are relatively the best crop of the season. Corn got off to a bad start owing to the wet weather. But it is now making promising growth. Tobacco is backward. Drouth injured early planted potatoes, but the later ones will give a fair return. The root crop is below the average as the weather was dry at the time of planting and the germination was poor.

POOR FRUIT YEAR

"A poor fruit year," summarizes the general situation. It has been an off season with apples especially, more particularly in the case of desirable winter varieties, and the quality of much of the fruit now remaining on the trees is not up to the standard. Wet and cold weather when the young apples were setting is given as the chief cause of the remarkably light yield. Plums have borne unevenly—from poor to good—according to the degree of spraying practised. Peaches are doing better than apples, although not giving a full yield. Peaches will be about an average crop. Cherries were medium in yield, and grapes give fair promise. Strawberries suffered from drouth when maturing which prevented best results. Other small fruits are yielding moderately.

SHORTAGE IN STEERS AND COWS

Live stock of all classes have been remarkably free from disease. In most of the beef raising countries there will be a shortage of steers, and dairy cows are also fewer than in more recent years. Prices for both beef and dairy products have been most encouraging to farmers. Taking the season as a whole the milk flow has been a good one, for while it went down a little during the mid-summer period, it has recovered nicely, and for the time of year is considered to be excellent. The chief handicap to the comfort of cattle has been the presence in large numbers of the horn-fly. In some of the St. Lawrence counties several cheese factories are shipping cream to the State of New York and are also extracting the casein from the skim-milk. Fodder supplies promise to be abundant; and live stock owners will meet the winter with good prospects for the keep of their animals.

Mr. John R. Crawford, who has been visiting his sister, Mrs. Hanford Allen, for the past two months, left on Wednesday for Bangor, Me., where he will remain for a few days before returning to his work in St. Pamphile Quebec.

Mr. Fred C. Davis, our popular store keeper, is spending a few days at Armstrong's Corner, Queens Co. Mr. Adolphus Armstrong and daughter, Miss Lydia Armstrong, are visiting relatives in Fosterville, York County. Miss Ethel Boyd, of Fredericton, who has been the guest of Miss Nina Kimball, has returned home. Mrs. Frank Smith, of Centerville, Carleton Co., is the guest of her sister, Mrs. Harry Kimball.

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