

BIG PROBLEM SECURING LABORERS FOR HARVEST

One Ruralist Believes Rust Rumors Are Circulated to Influence Stock Markets—General Opinion Is That Crop Will be an Average One.

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The crops! This is the absorbing question in Canada today. By enquiries made in different parts of the country, from different individuals, ruralists and urbanites, I have endeavored to find out the real facts, regardless of what land boomers, grain speculators, or stock squelchers may report.

Passing from Winnipeg to the western extremity of Alberta by the Canadian Northern Railway and touching at Prince Albert, about the beginning of August, general observations revealed the fact that the straw on an average was from 3½ feet to 4 feet high, the heads ranging from six to eight inches. The wheat was beginning to reach the "milk" stage; the barley had been "milked," and was ripening while the oats were not as far advanced. On all sides in the settled districts one sees not acres but miles of waving grain. To a person who has never seen the prairies the sight first appals one then fascinates him, the first question that suggests itself is: "Why do people make out a mere existence in some of the rock piles of Ontario, when so much valuable land is going to waste?" But there's no accounting for taste and perhaps the man who lives on a rock pile is just as happy, though poor, as the man who is willing to take chances of hail and frost and expects to make \$25,000 with one good season's crop. This may seem like an exaggeration but it is a fact that not a few farmers in Southern Saskatchewan are looking forward to a crop this season that will bring them in \$25,000. Precarious it may seem, to dodge frost and hail, but where is the farm in Ontario that will produce \$25,000 worth of wheat in a single year?

An Average Yield

From conversation with those in a position to know, I have learned that prospects indicated an average yield but would not come up to the bumper yield of last year.

Mrs. A. Graham, of Kinistino, in the northern part of Saskatchewan, a woman versed in the agricultural productiveness of that province and whose brother writes the crop reports for the district, was of the

opinion that there would be an average yield, if grain was harvested before it was caught by the frost, but owing to the late seeding she feared. She, however, had good reason to believe that 25 bushels of wheat would be a fair estimate for this year.

A man who had spent sixteen years on the prairies of Manitoba was Mr. Walter Scott, of Strathclair. In the past he had known of land producing 60 bushels of wheat and 120 of oats per acre. He judged an average yield this year would be about 25 of wheat and 60 of oats.

Asked about the black rust, he said he thought it had been exaggerated by American grain holders who had circulated these reports for their own purposes, and he pointed out how thousands of dollars had been made daily by controlling the American stock markets by this means.

Miss Cora Hind, an expert from Winnipeg whose opinion is Dominion wide, said it was customary to have hail every year, and gave an opinion that while it was serious in individual sections it would not greatly effect the aggregate output. She judged the damage would probably amount to three per cent.

Miles Of Grain

Miles of the finest wheat fields is to be seen at Baldworth, Sask. One of the most progressive farmers of the place, Mr. John Butler, who cultivates 1,600 acres of land there, in addition to other huge farms in adjoining localities, has some 700 acres in wheat and this year summer-fallowd 300 acres. He is very well satisfied with the crop this year and thinks threshing will reveal an average yield. Formerly Mr. Butler lived at Renfrew, Ont.

When I passed through the great grain belt, cutting had not commenced, and only in Ontario did I see harvesting operations in progress. The western farmer is, however, up against the biggest problem of his life—that of securing labor to take off his grain. Thousands of men are required for the work and the west apparently has not anything like the required number. Consequently they must come from the east or the United States if the crop is to be properly harvested.