

WESTERN FARMERS HAVE 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.

By Chas. E. Compton.

The crops! This is the absorbing question in Canada to-day. As this country is commonly known as the "granary of the Empire," everyone wants to know if she is going to sustain her reputation again this year. Perhaps there never was a time in the history of the Dominion when the eyes of the world—especially those of the British Empire—were focused upon Canadian crops as at the present time. The vast armies of the Britannie allies are depending, to a large extent, upon Canadian grain for their subsistence. Russia is feeding her own multitudes, but grain from Canada must help feed the millions of hungry mouths in Great Britain, France and Belgium.

While the older provinces of Canada have produced millions of bushels of grain annually, the recent rapid development in agriculture in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, has so far eclipsed the productive qualities of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime provinces that the Northwest provincial trio is ever more and more in the limelight of the grain markets of the world.

Somewhat Precarious.

Owing to the frost and hail possibilities and unfortunately present realities, the growing of grain in the Canadian northwest has always been considered, to a certain degree, more or less precarious.

With the yawning mouth of Europe stretched wide open for food and the war demand from other places, the grain crops from Canada this season will probably be a greater factor in deciding this war than most people anticipate.

A splendid grain crop in the west will mean greatly improved commercial conditions there, which will have a stimulating effect upon Ontario.

This is why everyone from the farm or city, is so greatly interested in this year's crop prospects.

In Western Canada the crop prospects is the absorbing question and as grain growing is the foundation upon which that country was built, all know one year's destiny at least, will be decided by the output of grain.

What are the prospects? Will this year's yield compare favorably with that of last? Has the hail (so far) materially damaged the aggregate yield and will the demand for labor necessary for harvesting, be much greater than the supply?

The Real Facts.

By inquiries 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 2 1-2 feet to 4 ft. 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 eke out a mere existence in some of the rock pits of Ontario, when so much valuable land is going to waste?" But there's no account