

HOW AMERICANS FARM IN CANADA.

PICTURES IN PEN AND PENCIL FROM THE NEW WHEAT BELT.

(Special Correspondence of the Desert News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

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BATTLEFORD, Saskatchewan.—I want to tell you how Americans farm in Canada. There are something like 100,000 ex-United States citizens in this British northwest and 50,000 came here last year. All own farms, and most of them are the prize farmers of their communities. They have been cultivating similar lands in Minnesota and the Dakotas, and have brought their farm machinery and household effects with them. They have imported their own horses and they began breaking the prairie the moment they landed. By way of illustration, one American, who came in last spring, arrived at Saskatoon, more than 200 miles north of the American boundary, at 10 o'clock one morning. The cars had hardly stopped before he was jerking his stuff out, and by two that afternoon he had three plows at work breaking the prairie. Many farmers who arrive in the spring live in tents until the crop is planted, others knock-up shacks while they are plowing and seeding, waiting for the summer to build their homes. Within a few months from now the plowing will be going on all over the wheat belt and the people will do nothing else until they get the grain planted.

Some of the farmers here who are anxious to get quick returns, sow wheat the same year that they break the soil. Others plow the land in the spring and back-set it in the summer, seeding it during the following spring. This process insures a good crop. Those who plant immediately upon breaking do not expect to get much the first year. Others plant flax for their first crop and wheat the next year.

SOWING THE WHEAT.
The old picture of the farmer going over the plowed ground sowing the grain broadcast is not to be seen in Canada. All grain here is planted with drills. The ordinary drill is pulled by three horses, and on the larger farms several drills follow one another over the fields. The drill plants the seed and covers it, and after this the farmer says off until the harvest.

HARVEST IN CANADA.
The most strenuous time of the year comes with the harvest. This is a land of short seasons. The crops grow faster than in the United States and harvest comes on all at once.

Along about the 15th of August these prairies become golden seas, which rise and fall under every wind. Each sea is composed of grain ready for cutting and all is ripe at just about the same time.

The farmers now go into their work with a rush. In many cases the women and girls join the men and boys in the fields. Nearly every man has his own harvesting machinery and the girls often drive the harvesters to cut the grain. Each harvester is drawn by three horses, but the husky wheat-fed American mailmen managers such a team without trouble. At the same time thousands of hands have been imported from the United States and eastern Canada. They have received reduced fares from the railroads and are sure of work at high wages from now on until the grain has been loaded upon the cars which will take it to the great lakes.

HOW ONE AMERICAN REAPS.
Harvesting on the larger farms is pushed from sunlight to dark, and even by twilight and moonlight. Thousands of bushels of grain must be reaped within a week or so and a little delay may ruin the crop. The grain must be cut when it is just so ripe, and no ripener. If left too long it will hull in the harvesting. If it becomes wet it will lose in quality, and an untimely frost may ruin it. Take, for instance, a farm like that of Emilie J. Melliche, which had last year one wheat field containing 1,600 acres, from which came 25,000 bushels of grain, worth \$20,000 and more. That farm is situated near Dundurn in Saskatchewan, several hundred miles north of the American boundary. It is owned by a Minnesota state senator, who probably got his experience in the United States. The moment his wheat was ripe he started a dozen harvesters into it, and worked his machines from daybreak to dark until every stalk was cut. He had relays of horses, and he instructed his men to push them to their utmost. There was no stop-

Breaking the Prairie—How Seeding is Done—Among the Threshers—Contract Labor and Big Wages—How Wheat is Marketed—The Elevator System—Canada's Mills Opposed to Reciprocity.



THRESHING TIME IN THE WHEAT BELT. Photographed for the Saturday News by Frank G. Carpenter.

ping for resting at the end of the field, but every four hours fresh teams were put into the harvesters and the work went on, the machines following each other over this vast tract, cutting down scores of acres at one swath. The result was that the wheat was all harvested in time, and it brought excellent prices.

AMONG THE THRESHERS.
I have seen considerable threshing during my trip through Canada. The work is done by steam, and in riding through the country last fall one was seldom out of sight of the smoke and the noise of the threshing machine.

The business is interesting. Let us visit a farm and see how it is done. The field which we enter contains 1,000 acres. It is spotted with wheat shocks, or stooks as they are called here. Each stook consists of a half dozen or more sheaves, stood upon end, with others on top so arranged as to shed the rain. In this form the stooks are thrown on the wagons, to be carried direct to the threshers. There are a half dozen teams moving over the field gathering them

up. Men stand on the wagons piling the sheaves. As soon as a wagon is loaded it is driven to the thresher. There are two there all the time, and the sheaves stream continuously into the threshers from sunrise to sunset.

At the same time there is a little river of grain flowing out. It comes from the thresher through a tin pipe, which has a flexible end of canvas. This end is placed in the wagon box and the wheat is not handled by man from the time it leaves the straw until it reaches the car. Wagon after wagon comes to the thresher and is filled with wheat, its driver carrying it on to the elevator or up to the platforms, which are provided at the stations, from where it may be shoveled into the cars.

THE TRAVELING THRESHERS.
The work here, as on most of the Canadian farms, is done by contract threshers. Few farmers own such machines, but there are contractors who go from farm to farm carrying gangs of men with them. They thresh the wheat at so much per bushel. They have threshing machines, many of

which come from the United States, and American traction engines by which they move their outfit from one farm to another. Every thresher carries with him a little caboose upon wheels, which constitutes the cooking and eating places of the men. There is also a water tank wagon in which the water for the engine is carried. The ordinary threshing outfit requires a force of about 18 men who are hired for the season at wages of about \$2.50 a day, including board. The food is supplied by the threshers, and all that the farmers need do is to furnish the wagons to carry away the grain.

MARKETING THE WHEAT.
In the eastern part of the United States the wheat is often stored in granaries, and the farmers watch the market until the price is just right, when they haul it to the station and ship it. In the new Canada there are practically no barns or granaries. The wheat goes direct from the threshers to the elevators, or it is sent to the cars and shipped to the storage elevators upon the great lakes. Throughout

the wheat region there are now more than 1,000 elevators. There are several at every station; they stand out on the landscape, marking the value of the wheat districts surrounding. There are 300 different stations, which have such granaries, and altogether they have a storage capacity of 30,000,000 bushels. This is outside the great elevators at Port William and Port Arthur, at the head of Lake Superior, which will hold something like 20,000,000 bushels more.

THE CANADIAN ELEVATOR SYSTEM.

These elevators are largely owned by companies which buy, ship and store wheat. One company will own thirty or forty elevators located at different points, and its agents will make summer and winter rates of storage and sale. The number of elevators is rapidly increasing. It has doubled within the past five years, and new buildings are going up every day. All these elevators are under government supervision. Each has a license, and it is inspected regularly by the warehouse commissioner. Every bit of grain which is sold in Canada has to pass through such inspection. It must be weighed under the government weighmaster, and all grain put into vessels has to be passed upon by the government. This is to maintain the high standard of western Canadian wheat.

These elevator companies will hold the farmer's wheat and sell it as he orders, or they will agree to handle it on commission and get what they think is the highest price. If the wheat is shipped on the train the railroads will charge in the neighborhood of 25 cents for hauling a hundred pounds 1,000 miles, and it can be taken down the great lakes by water a thousand miles farther for about five cents per bushel.

HIGH CHARGES.
The elevator companies are much criticised by the farmers, who claim that they delay the shipment of wheat in order to increase storage charges. The wheat begins to come to the elevators about the 1st of September, and the elevators are pretty well filled up by the middle or latter part of October. As the season goes on they charge a margin of a few cents a bushel to cover the risk of a possible non-shipment down the lakes, and this margin is sometimes increased to 10 cents a bushel if the wheat has to be held over. It actually costs between seven and eight cents to keep a bushel of wheat in the elevator from winter to the opening of navigation on the great lakes.

CANADA'S BIG FLOUR BUSINESS.
Many of the country elevators are owned by the milling companies. They are used for receiving, cleaning and shipping the grain, and also for storing it over winter.

Winnipeg is the chief milling center for the northwest, although there are other mills now building throughout the wheat belt, and large mills have been constructed in the Rainy river country, 150 miles east of Winnipeg. One of these mills has a capacity of 5,000 barrels of flour per day, and it is now shipping its product to Great Britain, Australia, South Africa and Japan, as well as to all parts of Canada. The Ogilvie Milling company has an establishment at Winnipeg which grinds 3,000 barrels of flour a day, and

altogether there are mills here which are turning out something like 14,000 barrels of flour every twenty-four hours. All of these mills are making money. Canada has a tariff which keeps out American flour, and its home consumption requires about 30,000,000 bushels of wheat per annum. The exports amount to two or three millions barrels yearly.

Within the past twelve months four mills have been constructed in the west not far from the foothills of the Rockies to grind winter wheat for the Asiatic trade. There are mills at Calgary which will soon be producing 2,000 barrels per day, and others will be constructed as the area of winter wheat increases. Winter wheat flour is especially desired by the Japanese, and the region where it is being raised lies within about 1,000 miles of the Pacific coast.

CANADA DON'T WANT AMERICAN FLOUR.

The Canadians don't want American flour, and find some of them object to our taking the Canadian wheat and manufacturing it in bond. I met at Montreal Mr. Robert Meighen, president of the Lake of the Woods Milling company, which has some of the largest mills in Canada, and talked with him as to reciprocity. Said he: "I am opposed to having our wheat go into the United States to be ground for shipment to Europe. I believe in high duties on American flour and would make you Americans come to Canada, and build mills if you want to manufacture flour."

"But, Mr. Meighen," said I, "would not Canada profit by reciprocity with Uncle Sam?"

"No," was the reply. "We would rather have commercial war with the United States than commercial peace. If Uncle Sam would build a trade wall ninety-nine feet high across his northern boundary it would suit us down to the ground. We believe it is best for the North American continent and for the world that we should be opposed to each other, as far as trade is concerned. We want a protective tariff high enough to force your people to establish branch factories here and make with Canadian labor such goods as we use. That is what is going on now and what will be done more and more in the future."

ENGLAND AND PROTECTION.
"Your ideas are different from those of your mother country, Mr. Meighen," said I. "She is for free trade."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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