

NEXT YEAR'S CROP OUTLOOK

Winter Wheat Promises a Bountiful Harvest.

AHEAD OF LAST YEAR'S ACREAGE

Best Showing Is Made by Pacific Coast States—Available Surplus Now on Hand, 315,000,000 Bushels.

New York, Jan. 6.—The special crop report of the New York Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin says: Final returns make the area of winter wheat 26,663,000 acres, as compared with 23,930,000 acres harvested last year, an increase of 11.4 per cent. The increase in California, Oregon and Washington is 4.5 per cent, the approximate acreage being 3,969,000, as against 3,789,000 acres last year. There has been a material increase in wheat seedling in the Southern states, due to the low price of cotton. Favorable weather during December improved the condition of wheat. The present average is 87.8 per cent, as against 84.1 per cent last month. In the six principal states east of the Rocky mountains the improvement has been more noticeable. The condition in those states now is 84.8 per cent, as compared with 79.5 per cent December 21.

On the Pacific coast plant life is in nearly perfect condition. The average for Oregon is 99; Washington, 98, and California, 96. The average for the three states is 96.6 per cent, as compared with 94.8 last month. Unfavorable results of drought and late seeding have been partially counteracted by favorable weather during the past two months. The temperature has been below the normal, and there has been no urgent need of snow protection. No damage is reported from ice or freezing. The condition at 87.8 per cent is equivalent to about 14.6 bushels per acre, indicating an aggregate winter wheat yield at date in the neighborhood of 390,000,000 bushels.

According to the January returns, there are 240,000,000 bushels of wheat held on farms, which is 41.4 per cent of last year's production. On the corresponding date last year there were held in the same position 190,000,000 bushels. Of this total six principal winter wheat states east of the Rockies have 83,000,000 bushels, or 44.4 per cent of the last crop; Minnesota and the Dakotas, 59,000,000 bushels, or 41 per cent, and the Pacific coast 30,000,000 bushels, or 38.9 per cent. The present estimated supply of wheat in all positions is 315,000,000 bushels. Domestic requirements for bread to next July are 150,000,000 bushels, and for spring seeding, say, 20,000,000 bushels more—in all 170,000,000 bushels, leaving a surplus for export during the ensuing six months and for home reserves at the end of June of 145,000,000 bushels.

APPEALS TO ENGLAND.

China Said to Be Negotiating in London for a Loan.

Berlin, Jan. 6.—The Cologne Gazette, on authority from the best-informed quarters in Paris, announces today that since Thursday last important negotiations have been proceeding in London for a Chinese loan, the attempts made in Paris and St. Petersburg to arrange for a loan having failed. China has offered to contract for £16,000,000 in London, at the same time asking the good offices of the British government in her present extremity.

China, it appears, contemplates offering as security the land tax, under control of Englishmen, and that furthermore an Englishman shall succeed Sir Robert Hart as director of the Chinese imperial maritime customs. In addition Great Britain will insist upon a concession of territory, relative to which secrecy, according to the informant of the Cologne Gazette, must be temporarily observed.

The Cologne Gazette adds that it is understood Russia has renewed her offer to China to conclude a loan in Germany on more favorable terms than are obtainable in Paris or London.

London, Jan. 6.—There is good reason to believe the British government considering the subject of assisting China to raise a loan. The Chinese proposals on the subject are generally supported by business men interested in China.

The evening News says it is reported in the city that the negotiations for a Chinese loan of £16,000,000, guaranteed by the British government, are practically concluded.

ANOTHER COUNTERFEIT.

The Government Compelled to Retire the Issue.

Philadelphia, Jan. 6.—There was discovered in one of the largest banks today another counterfeit \$100 silver certificate, making in all six of these worthless notes which have been found in this city during the past two weeks. This latest discovery has created quite a sensation among the cashiers and other banking officials here, and there has been an industrious search in financial circles to bring to light all of the spurious notes which may heretofore have escaped detection.

FOR AND AGAINST IT.

Another Day of the Civil Service Debate.

Washington, Jan. 8.—The friends and enemies of the civil service law exchanged broadsides in the house today. The heaviest guns on each side were brought into action. Grosvener and Johnson each made exhaustive speeches and kept their respective sides in a constant furor. The interest in the debate was much more evident than yesterday. The crowded galleries, which were plainly in sympathy with the opponents of the law, became so noisy in their demonstrations of approval at one juncture that the chair was compelled to call them to order. Johnson was warmly sustained by the friends of the law on the floor, but he got very little applause from the galleries. Lloyd was the only other speaker. He favored the repeal of the law.

While the senate was in session two hours today, practically no business was transacted beyond the passage of a few bills. Among the measures which received favorable consideration were bills providing for a congress of representatives of the Indian tribes of the United States, to be held at Omaha during the international exposition this year; bills providing for the erection of public buildings at Fergus Falls, Minn., and Newport News, Va., and a measure to protect the name and insignia of the Red Cross Society. At 2 o'clock the senate adjourned.

A Compromise Bill.

Washington, Jan. 8.—Representative Overstreet, of Indiana, introduced in the house today a compromise bill for carrying out the plan of the monetary commission for reform of the currency. The bill was referred to the committee on banking and currency. The bill contains 47 sections, and embodies in legislative form every feature of the recommendations made. The portions relating to the maintenance of the gold standard, the creation of a bureau of issue and redemption, and the gradual retirement of legal tender notes are embodied in the bill in almost the same language as in the Indianapolis report. In the banking features are more elaborately and carefully defined the character of the guaranty fund for the protection of notes issued upon assets, and the manner of redeeming the notes of banks.

Abolishing the Peace Commission.

Washington, Jan. 8.—The house committee on Indian affairs today decided, by a vote of 8 to 4, to omit from the Indian appropriation the item for carrying on the work of the board of Indian commissioners, made up of President Gates, of Amherst college; Bishop Whipple, of Minnesota; and Walker, of Western New York; Messrs. Garrett, of Philadelphia; James, of Brooklyn, and others, who serve without compensation beyond expenses. The board was originally known as the peace commission, and was instituted under the Grant regime for the avowed purpose of guarding against frauds in Indian contracts.

CLIPPERTON ISLAND.

A Mexican Version of the Recent Affair There.

City of Mexico, Jan. 8.—A high official of the department of foreign relations said today regarding the Clipperton island incident:

"The sending of the gunboat Demarata on a visit of inspection to portions of the Mexican territory was attended with no conflict or difficulty with the Americans found there, and in no event could that visit give rise to international questions, inasmuch as the occupation of the island, if occupation it can be called, was the act of private persons, having no official character. The American flag was found flying there, but the Americans themselves, on hearing from the lips of Mexican officers that the island was Mexican territory, hauled it down, and allowed the party of Mexicans to run up the flag of this country without the slightest opposition."

Appeals From Alaska Courts.

Washington, Jan. 8.—Representative Tongue, of Oregon, introduced a bill today providing that all civil and criminal cases appealed from the district court of Alaska to the United States court of appeals for the ninth judicial district, and pending an appeal on or prior to December 30, 1897, are to be considered as regularly filed on appeal in the United States supreme court, as of date of filing in the appellate court, and court clerks are instructed to transmit papers accordingly. This is to meet a recent decision of the court that such was not the case.

Hellman's Claim Paid.

Washington, Jan. 8.—The senate passed a bill to pay M. S. Hellman, of Uniontown, Wash., \$5,000 for flour furnished the troops at Camp Watson, Oregon. Captain Hellman formerly lived at Canyon City, Or., and was once a delegate to the Democratic national convention.

To Amend Copyright Law.

Washington, Jan. 8.—Representative Shafroth, of Colorado, introduced a bill today to amend the copyright law so as to except photographs in publications from the list of subjects which can be copyrighted.

THE DEBATE RENEWED.

Both Houses of Congress Take Up the Civil Service Question.

Washington, Jan. 7.—The presentation of replies of the members of the cabinet to the resolution calling for information as to the application of the civil service law to the various departments, together with the consideration of the bill establishing a bureau for the 12th census, precipitated a sharp civil service debate in the senate today. Cullom of Illinois, the author of the resolution, thought that modification of the law ought to be made, as the authorities have drifted far away from the original intention of the authors of the civil service law. Allen charged that the law was openly and daily violated, and said it was a hiss and by-word among the people. Cockrell declared it was presumptuous in Secretary Sherman to make recommendations to congress that certain positions in his department should be excepted from the classified service when the president had full authority to make the exceptions he recommended. He thought an effort was being made to tie the president's hands. Davis, chairman of the committee on foreign relations, gave notice that he would next Monday and daily thereafter move that the senate consider in executive session the Hawaiian annexation treaty until it was disposed of finally.

The civil service debate began in the house today, based on the item in the legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill for the maintenance of the commission. It promises to continue at least until the end of this week, with a possibility that it may run longer. But it is generally admitted on both sides that the appropriation in the bill will stand, as the anti-civil service reformers do not seriously contemplate an attempt to strike it out. The debate, therefore, is only preliminary to any programme which the enemies of the law may agree upon. The members of the house are divided into three camps on this question, those who stand by the law, those who advocate its entire repeal, and those who desire its modification. These divisions were apparent in the debate today, the nature of which was not as stirring as has been anticipated. Moody, Grow and Green defended the law; Robb, Dockery and Pearson opposed it outright, while Landis favored modification of the law.

FELL DOWN A SHAFT.

Terrible Death of an Inspector in the Le Roi Mine.

Roseland, B. C., Jan. 7.—Captain Hall fell from the surface to the 600-foot level today in the Le Roi mine. His body was crushed almost beyond recognition. He had been making his daily inspection of the mine, and, coming to the surface, stepped from the skip to a narrow beam dividing the double compartment shaft. He lost his footing and plunged down to death. Captain Hall was a native of Ireland, aged 61 years. For 17 years he was superintendent of the Alice mine, near Butte. He leaves a wife and five children in this city. The remains will be taken to Butte for burial.

The only witness of the tragedy was the engineer. He saw Mr. Hall stumble and fall, catch desperately at the timbers, and vanish into the pit. A man working on the 800-foot level near the shaft heard a cry, and caught a fleeting glimpse of the falling form. The alarm was given, and men descended immediately to the 600-foot level. The body had fallen across a skip, and was mangled beyond recognition.

Spokane, Wash., Jan. 7.—Officers of the Le Roi Company in Spokane bore the sad news to the family this evening. The daughters, Pearl and Rose, aged 17 and 19, who were the father's pets, were prostrated, and medical attendance was necessary.

Although born in the north of Ireland, Captain Hall was reared in the Cornwall mining district. He came to America when 21 years of age, and for eight years operated in the iron mines of the Lake Superior region. Then he went to Salt Lake, and became superintendent of the Antelope and Prince of Wales mines. His next move was to Walkerville, Mont., where he served as the superintendent of the famous Alice mine. He was a candidate for presidential elector on the Republican ticket in 1892, and served several terms as county commissioner and mayor. The Le Roi will be shut down until after the funeral out of respect to the dead superintendent.

Death List Not Increased.

London, Ont., Jan. 7.—It now appears that there were but 20 deaths from the collapse of the floor in the city hall. To the list of dead the name of John Hamilton Fortner has been added. The boy Allen Lowe, although seriously injured, is still alive. The others heretofore reported dead, but who are still alive, are Wilson Carrothers, John Burgess, Herman Hilbert, John Fellows and James McLean.

A Head-End Collision.

Kansas City, Jan. 7.—At Rock Island Junction this morning a west-bound Union Pacific train and an east-bound Rock Island stock train collided, head on. The engineers and firemen of both trains were injured, but not seriously.

COTTON FOR THE NORTHWEST.

New Crop to Be Tried East of Cascades Other Plants Will Be Tried.

Oregon and Washington will raise cotton next season. Their cotton crop will probably not "bear" the market the first year, but there is no telling what effect cotton will have on the industrial conditions of the future. The cotton production of this year will be under the fostering care of the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company, which has just opened an industrial department that will experiment with various things to develop the country reached by its transportation lines. This is a far-sighted scheme of President Mohler. H. C. Judson, who has had considerable experience in such matters in the East, has been put at the head of the department. He will be guided to a great extent in his operations by the agricultural colleges of Oregon and Washington.

Cotton is successfully grown in the pan-handle of Texas, at altitudes ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 feet above the sea, where frosts occur in April. In some parts of Eastern Oregon frost has been absent through the entire year. Portions of Umatilla county are especially favored in this respect. The experiments with cotton will be made in the arid and semi-arid sections of Eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington—in Wasco, Sherman, Morrow and Umatilla counties, of Oregon, and Whitman and Adams counties, of Washington. While the cotton plant will stand a great deal of moisture, it can also endure drought. It sends roots deep into the ground. In many places where wheat is not a reliable crop, or cannot be grown at all on account of the lack of moisture, it is believed cotton will flourish. If so, it will solve the irrigation problem for those sections. A thorough test will be made the coming season.

Among the other things in view by the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company's industrial department is the introduction of tobacco raising. A considerable colony of Cubans in Florida are negotiating to come out to the Pacific Northwest to raise and manufacture tobacco, and the parts of Oregon and Washington lying east of the Cascade mountains are believed to possess all of the conditions suited to the business. The destruction of the trade in Cuba has turned the attention of these people to other fields of operation, and they have sent agents here to look the matter up. Martinez, the great cigar man of Key West, examined the country east of the mountains recently, and he did not doubt that tobacco of a superior quality could be produced in the vicinity of Blalock, in Gilliam county.

The production of forage plants in the inland Empire will also engage the attention of this move for industrial development. Incidental to this will come a thorough investigation of the possibilities of dairying and raising livestock under different conditions than now prevail—conditions that will admit of a fuller development of the country. A number of new trees will also be experimented with, to see if they will not have the effect of precipitating moisture, so as to make arable areas now arid. Among the exotics is a tree that is said to have redeemed a portion of France from desert conditions ages ago—a gum tree that is a native of Assyria. It is reasonable to suppose that the tree would be valuable in the dry sections of the inland Empire, and it will be given a trial there.

The mechanical device of a Boise man for raising water from streams for irrigating purposes will also be thoroughly tested. It consists of a cylinder, on the outside of which are buckets that fold automatically, and the contrivance is said to work well in a current so slow even as two miles an hour.

The excitement over gold in Alaska will bring thousands and thousands of men, many of whom will for the first time see the great natural advantages of the farming country and not go to the Yukon at all, stopping to plant their own vines and fig trees, under which they will repose in comfort and happiness, while the goldhunters suffer the hardships and uncertainties of the chase for sudden affluence.

In speaking of the proposed enterprise a prominent business man said recently:

"Many will go up the Alaska coast and return to Oregon and Washington to make their homes. Still others will go to the gold fields and then return to engage in more sober pursuits. Practically all will have to pass through the Northwest country, and the trip will educate them. A new era is opening for these states, and the far-seeing and energetic ones are preparing to meet the new conditions. Prosperity and progress are not in the dim distance, but are at the door, and it is common sense and business sagacity to take these steps for opening and developing the resources of the country."

Northwest Notes.

A Coos county paper says that there are a number of Chinese pheasants in the vicinity of Remote, in that county.

The close of 1897 witnessed an improvement in Olympia trade of at least 25 per cent over the corresponding period of 1896.

Garfield has shipped more than 20 carloads of apples to the mining camps this season, besides large quantities of pears and other fruits.

WEEKLY MARKET LETTER.

(Office of Downing, Hopkins & Co., Chicago Board of Trade Brokers, 711-714 Chamber of Commerce Building, Portland, Oregon.)

What will Leiter do with his wheat, is the question that is evidently bothering traders more than it is him. He has about 8,000,000 bushels cash wheat. He is also long about 4,000,000 bushels May. He has wheat enough to make him the power in the market, and it depends upon how he handles it as to the extent of his profit or loss. If trade falls off he will be forced to keep the market alive, as he did during October and November, by trading on both sides. If outside speculation increases he will certainly have the best of it. There is a large shortage in May, which gives him a chance to scalp the market on a liberal scale to his profit. There is talk of trade getting into July, and leaving May alone. This might help the short sellers by prolonging the time of delivery, but figuring on the probable stocks, the chances for large supplies by the last of July are decidedly poor for a bear. Were the trade to switch to September and leave the intervening months alone, Leiter would be left with his cash and May in a position where it would not be easy to swing a large line at a profit, and the wheat might have to be shipped out to find a market for it. All these questions are being discussed by the traders and nearly every one has a different theory.

Those who stand between the speculator and consumer, the cash handlers and the millers, are almost to a man bullish on wheat, and are talking higher prices, some predicting \$1.25 for May. Armour and Weare expect that Leiter will win out in good shape. They figure on the milling demand reaching such proportion that, combined with the export business, it will absorb the stocks so readily in the season that the cash holders can dictate prices. The question of supply and demand becomes a factor. This, however, has not always in the past been a benefit to the bulls. Last winter and spring the cash demand was heavy, stocks were light, but the visible was 2,000,000 bushels more than at present. Millers bought the wheat readily and decreased prices steadily, but in the face of the reduction prices did not respond, owing to the lack of speculation. A supply and demand market is generally a slow affair, and it may not be an exception this year.

Portland Market.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 74@75c; Valley and Bluestem, 77@78c per bushel. Four—Best grades, \$4.25; graham, \$3.40; superfine, \$3.25 per barrel.

Oats—Choice white, 35@36c; choice gray, 33@34c per bushel.

Barley—Feed barley, \$19@20; brewing, \$20 per ton.

Millstuffs—Bran, \$17 per ton; middlings, \$21; shorts, \$18.

Hay—Timothy, \$12.50@13; clover, \$10@11; California wheat, \$10; do oat, \$11; Oregon wild hay, \$9@10 per ton.

Eggs—17½@22½c per dozen.

Butter—Fancy creamery, 55@60c; fair to good, 45@50c; dairy, 40@50c per roll.

Cheese—Oregon, 11½c; Young America, 12½c; California, 9@10c per pound.

Poultry—Chickens, mixed, \$1.75@2.25 per dozen; broilers, \$2.00@2.50; geese, \$5.50@6.50; ducks, \$4.00@5.00 per dozen; turkeys, live, 10c per pound.

Potatoes—Oregon Burbanks, 35@45c per sack; sweets, \$1.25 per cental.

Onions—Oregon, new, red, 90c; yellow, 80c per cental.

Hops—5@14c per pound for new crop; 1896 crop, 4@6c.

Wool—Valley, 14@16c per pound; Eastern Oregon, 7@8c; mohair, 20@22c per pound.

Mutton—Gross, best sheep, wethers and ewes, \$3.50; dressed mutton, 6½c; spring lambs, 5½c per pound.

Hogs—Gross, choice heavy, \$4.00; light and feeders, \$3.00@4.00; dressed, \$4.50@5.00 per 100 pounds.

Beef—Gross, top steers, \$2.75@3.00; cows, \$2.50; dressed beef, 4½@6c per pound.

Veal—Large, 4½@5c; small, 5½@6c per pound.

Seattle Market.

Butter—Fancy native creamery, brick, 28c; ranch, 16@18c.

Cheese—Native Washington, 13c; California, 9½c.

Eggs—Fresh ranch, 25c.

Poultry—Chickens, live, per pound, hens, 10c; spring chickens, \$2.50@3.00; ducks, \$3.50@3.75.

Wheat—Feed wheat, \$23 per ton. Oats—Choice, per ton, \$19@20. Corn—Whole, \$23; cracked, per ton, \$23; feed meal, \$23 per ton.

Barley—Rolled or ground, per ton, \$22; whole, \$22.

Fresh Meats—Choice dressed beef, steers, 6c; cows, 5½c; mutton sheep, 7c; pork, 6c; veal, small, 7c.

Fresh Fish—Halibut, 5@6c; salmon, 8c; salmon trout, 7@10c; flounders and sole, 3@4c; ling cod, 4@5c; rock cod, 5c; smelt, 2½@4c.

Fresh Fruit—Apples, 50@90c per box; peaches, 75@80c; prunes, 35@40c; pears, 75c@1 per box.

San Francisco Market.

Wool—Nevada 11@13c; Oregon, 12@14c; Northern 7@8c per pound.

Hops—12½@16c per pound.