

SOUTH HAS MADE BIG STRIDES.

Past Year Brought Almost Unbelievable Changes in Agriculture and Business. More Than Enough Corn. "Optimism Beyond Expression" Reigns in Some Sections Which a Year Ago Were Looking Ahead Only With Pessimism.

A review of business conditions throughout the country made public Monday by the committee of statistical experts of the United States chamber of commerce says: "The transformation within a twelve-month of certain sections of the South in agricultural and business seems almost unbelievable," and announces that with the exception of Texas and Oklahoma, southern states have raised more than enough corn for their own needs and are in position to ship it. "Throughout the country," the review says, "the extraordinary and abnormal demands made upon everyone, from farm boy to corporation head, have left the nation steady and with heavy reserves coming up for the new year."

The buying power of the nation is greater and more widespread than ever before and apparently the general volume of business seems assured at something like its present status during the coming winter months, the review adds.

Taking up the changed conditions in the south, the review points to conditions caused in certain sections a year ago by boll weevil, excessive rains and the fact that negroes, the staple agricultural laborers, were leaving by thousands for the east. The reports from those sections are "optimistic beyond expression."

The enlarged acreage of corn, which has been of excellent grade except in Texas and Oklahoma, the report says, has provided sufficient to ship and there is an "abundance of other feed for livestock, so that stockraising is becoming more and more a necessity and important adjunct of farming in the territory south of the Mason and Dixon line."

Regarding diversification of crops in the south, the review states, "the production of peanuts from Virginia along the Atlantic coast into southern Georgia and across into Oklahoma and Texas is becoming a matter of great import, the product running into many millions of dollars."

Cotton, it points out, is now being raised in a moderate way as far south as Tampa Bay.

Rice and sugar cane crops were not as large as in some past years, the review says, but brought higher prices. An unprecedented drought in Texas hurt cattle raising, and has not been entirely relieved, but it has served to give impetus to efforts to raise goats and sheep.

Rail Control in the Right Hands.

With unerring judgment and bold decision President Wilson has sent the United States forward toward earlier victory by unifying control of all the railroads under the strong hand of William G. McAdoo. It is the most important and far-reaching action taken by the President since the creation of the national army. It means that the national army is to be made effective by the prompt and adequate use of the national resources.

The bravery and skill of the army and navy would be of little avail without the aid and support of the nation's resources. In assuming governmental control of the railroads the President executes literally the mandate of Congress in the declaration of war, directing him to employ all the resources of the country in prosecuting the war to a successful termination. Without centralization of control over the railroads the nation's resources would be unavailable. One of the most important of these resources, coal, has already become unavailable in many parts of the country. The situation had reached a point where necessity compelled a change if the war was to be continued.

The President's statement accompanying his proclamation ought to have an instant beneficial effect upon the spirit of the country and upon the personnel of industry and finance. In one sentence Mr. Wilson thrusts aside all doubt as to the stability of railroad securities by stating that the government will be as scrupulous in protecting them as the railroad directors could be; and he outlines what he will recommend to Congress in this connection. With repairs and equipment maintained, and with net operating income fixed on an equality with the average net operating income for the three years ending last June, the railroads of the country will be in far better fortune than if they had remained under private control. At the same time, the nation will have the benefit of consolidation of transportation, which insures a speeding up of ship construction, munitions shipments, troop transportation, and general freight distribution, including coal and food. This freeing of the channels of transportation means,

therefore, not only increased efficiency in the war-making energies of the nation, but also an improved domestic condition, including a check upon high prices, if not an actual reduction.

No one except William G. McAdoo could have been safely chosen to undertake the stupendous work of directing the railroads of the United States. The financial questions involved are closely related to the finances of the government, and thus fall in a field wherein Mr. McAdoo is easily first among his countrymen. His skill and constructive force are unique in the history of the Treasury—at any rate, since Hamilton's time. American industry and finances will accept with perfect confidence the announcement that he is to supervise the finances of the railroads.

As for the practical problem of railroad direction, Mr. McAdoo is fortified by the experience gained before his service as Secretary of the Treasury, and by the broader experience obtained while sitting at the cabinet table considering national problems. He will be aided, also, by the railroad executives and managers, as well by the operating personnel in all branches. An immediate simplification of railroad operation may be looked for, together with prompt relief from congestion and inadequate service.

It is gratifying to know that the railroad employes welcome the President's action and will gladly do their share toward winning the war by serving in their respective places under Government direction. They are soldiers of victory when they keep the railroads in good order and push trains through on time.

Every American has reason to be elated at the action which means so much for the speedy winning of the war.—Washington Post.

BROGDEN SCHOOL NOTES.

Brogden School opened Monday for the spring term. Owing to the bad weather the attendance is not so good.

Everybody in this community seems to have had a good Christmas in spite of the disagreeable weather.

Mrs. Lizzie Edgerton, of Kenly, spent the holidays with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Mozingo.

Miss Irene Creech, of Goldsboro, spent a few days last week with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Creech.

Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Gardner, of Hopewell, Va., spent the holidays with Mr. and Mrs. B. E. Gardner.

Miss Lelia Creech, who is attending Pineland School at Salemburg, spent the holidays with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Creech.

Mr. Leslie Whitley, of Camp Pike, Kansas, is home visiting friends and relatives for a few days. He brings many interesting stories of camp life.

Miss Rachel Creech has returned home after spending a week with her grandmother, Mrs. G. L. Jones, in Smithfield.

Mr. Paul Gardner, who is in service in the Navy spent a few days at home during the holidays.

Miss Pauline Gardner has returned to Buies Creek after spending the holidays at home.

Miss Beatrice Gardner, who is in school at Goldsboro, is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Gardner.

Mrs. R. H. Howell has returned after spending a week with her daughter, Mrs. S. A. Godwin, in Selma.

Mr. Junius T. Creech has returned to Buies Creek after spending the holidays at home.

Mr. Robert Whitley, of Camp Jackson, spent a few days with home folks last week.

Miss Alice McGee has returned after spending the holidays at her home in Mt. Olive.

Mr. and Mrs. John E. Creech, who have been at Carthage for the past year, are moving back to this community. We are glad to welcome them back.

Mr. Joe Royall will move soon to his new home near Wilson's Mills. We regret very much to see him leave.

The Christmas tree at Tee's Chapel was a decided success.

The Christmas tree at Stevens' Chapel was a very enjoyable occasion in spite of the very disagreeable weather.—Sally.

There is no use for a man to kick against high prices. High prices haven't started yet in some lines. Better make up your mind to take what comes, and then there will not be so much danger of heart failure when you look over your grocery bill.—Everything.

God's commandments do for us what rails do for a train; they may keep us from going where we please; but they assure our safety.—Kings' Treasuries.

Life would be less complicated for us and frequent embarrassments would be saved if we were the only ones to suffer for our little neglects.—Boyland.

ABOUT FERTILIZER PRICES.

No Hope of Any Reduction for This Coming Spring's Supply. Part of Wisdom to Buy Fertilizers and Get Them on the Farm Ready for Use.

It now seems almost certain that the war will not end before fertilizers must be used on next year's crops. If the unexpected happens and the war ends by January or February, it is possible, or even probable, that the prices of commercial fertilizers might go down some for they are now unusually high as everything else. It must be stated, however, that with the exception of potash, fertilizer materials have not advanced more in price than many other materials, which the farmers buy. Before the war nitrogen generally cost around 20 cents a pound and in mixed fertilizers around 25 cents a pound. In ready-mixed fertilizers it now costs around 40 cents a pound, or when supplied by cottonseed meal about 36 to 37 cents a pound, which is about a 60 per cent increase. The white paper upon which this is printed has increased in price about the same per cent.

Before the war, phosphoric acid cost above 4 cents a pound in acid phosphate and around 5 cents in ready-mixed fertilizers. It now costs 6½ cents to 7 cents in acid phosphate, or an increase of a pound 50 per cent, which is a much smaller increase than the increase in hogs, wheat, cotton and corn.

Of course, the price of potash has gone out of bounds, but this product, being largely controlled by Germany, is not subject to normal war conditions, as are the other fertilizer materials. We understand that there is considerable potash available for fertilizers, but that it will cost around 40 cents a pound in mixed fertilizers as against 5 or 6 cents before the war.

According to the Geological Survey, Mineral Resources 1916, the amount of actual potash (K₂O) produced in this country during 1916 was 9,720 tons, while the amount imported during the year 1913, the year before the war began, was 267,970 tons. It is probable that the potash produced during 1917 will be fully double what was produced in 1916. If we estimate that 20,000 tons have been produced during 1917, that is only one ton to thirteen produced before the war. Under such conditions the price of potash is bound to be high, especially as the supply in this country at the time shipments from Germany were stopped has practically all been used up by this time.

We can see no prospect of lower prices unless the war ends quickly. However, the materials having already been largely bought and on hand for next year's use, even if the war ended at once, prices of mixed commercial fertilizers for the spring of 1918 could not be very much reduced.

In short, we think the question of the needed supplies of nitrate and potash is a much more important problem than any probable decrease in prices for fertilizers next year.

It, therefore, seems to us that it is the part of wisdom for any man who has the money and facilities for properly housing or storing his fertilizers to lay in his supplies as early as possible.

The problem of transportation is becoming greater as our war activities increase, and it may become more acute at any time. At the time fertilizers are usually bought in the spring the roads are generally at their worst and the hauling of the fertilizers from the station or town to the farm is done at the greatest cost to the farmer. In fact, all considerations favor the early purchase and hauling of the fertilizers to be used next spring.

The United States Department of Agriculture was given an appropriation by Congress for aiding in furnishing the needed supplies of nitrogen, but it seems to us that any results from the use of this fund is more likely to be in the direction of securing the needed supplies for increasing production, rather than toward materially lowering prices.—Progressive Farmer.

A Captain of the Commissary.

The county agents constitute American agriculture's first line of defense. They are men in the first line trenches, zealously guarding the farmer's interests and bringing to his attention all that is of immediate practical value in our scientific teaching, and fortifying this with results from the experience of the most successful, hard-headed, practical farmers of each county.

At a time like the present when the Nation is engaged in a great war wherein food production is of vital military importance, the value of the county agent to the Government can hardly be over-emphasized.

Since the United States became a belligerent, the county agent has done valiant war service. In counties having agents, it was possible during the past summer to secure truly wonder-

ful results, in quickly and adequately meeting a difficult labor situation; in locating available seed stocks; in arranging for farm credits for the purchase of machinery and fertilizers; in supplying tractor power, and in other forms of effective leadership, all contributing to a great increase in the production of spring wheat, oats, corn, potatoes and other food crops; and, finally, in assisting in facilitating marketing.

Some of the most important battles of this war will be won during 1918 in the furrows and fields of America. The county agents will be the captains of the soldiers of the commissary who will make these victories possible.—Carl Shurz Vrooman, Assistant Secretary United States Department of Agriculture.

Condition of Winter Wheat Poor.

According to an estimate issued on Wednesday by the Department of Agriculture, the condition of the new winter wheat crop on December 1 was only 79.3 per cent of normal, the lowest on record for the period and comparing with a ten-year average on the same date ever reported, the low condition makes the indicated yield disappointing, though December forecasts are of little value. In a statement interpreting this week's report, the Department says:

"The acreage planted to winter wheat is estimated to be 42,170,000 acres, an increase of 4 per cent over the area planted a year ago. In the campaign to produce a billion bushels of wheat next year to help feed our Allies, an acreage of 47,337,000 of winter wheat was advocated. Failure to reach this amount was not due apparently to the intention of farmers, but to the adverse conditions, unfavorable weather, late harvest of other crops and shortage of farm help, preventing the putting out of the full acreage desired.

"The fall was exceedingly dry in many important sections, particularly in the Southwest—Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, also in the far Northwest—Idaho and Washington. Although the increase is less than hoped, the acreage is the largest ever planted.

"The condition of the plant on December 1, which was 79.3 per cent of normal compares with a ten-year average condition on same date of 89.3. The lowest condition ever reported in previous years on December 1 was 81.4, in 1895.

"A quantitative forecast is not usually made from the December condition reports, because great changes can occur between now and harvest, for better or worse. But it may be observed that in the past ten years the yield per acre on the planted acreage was 14.4 bushels. On this basis a condition of 79.3 would forecast a yield of about 12.8 bushels, which on 42,170,000 acres, would produce about 540,000,000 bushels. It may be assumed that the outturn of the crop will be above or below this figure, according as conditions hereafter are better or worse than average conditions. In 1917 the crop was about 418,000,000 bushels, in 1916 it was 481,000,000, and the average of the preceding five years was 543,000,000 bushels.—Dun's Review.

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Polly and the Princess, by Emma C. Dowd.
The preacher of Cedar Mountain, by E. S. Thompson.
In Happy Valley, by John Fox, Jr.
The White Ladies of Worcester, by Florence Barclay.
Anne's House of Dreams, by Eleanor H. Porter.
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