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MONTHLY REPORT
CROP AND BUSINESS CONDITIONS IN
NINTH FEDERAL RESERVE DISTRICT.

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General:

Conditions over the district as a whole are excellent. Trade is brisk, both in the larger centers and at rural points. Manufacturing enterprises are fully employed with orders, and the majority of them have business in sight which will occupy their capacity well into the year. The opening up of spring farm work has had a beneficial effect. Both skilled and unskilled labor is fully employed at good wages, and the district is free from anything more than minor labor disturbances.

Exceptional activity will characterize mining operations in this district this year. It is anticipated that shipments of iron ore from the northern Minnesota ranges will reach 45,000,000 tons. The shipping season has already opened, and the ore boats are moving down the Lakes. The iron mines of northern Michigan will present the same activity and make heavy shipments.

Remarkable activity in the copper producing sections continues, and the spring months are witnessing a larger amount of work in the Black Hills region of South Dakota.

A new zinc smelter is under construction at Great Falls to take care of the production of Montana mines, and when completed will be the most modern and the best that has ever been built.

There is an encouraging activity in both urban and farm property. The spring movement of settlers is bringing many new farmers into Minnesota and the Dakotas.

There has been comparatively little change in rates for money, although the demand has improved somewhat.

Agricultural Conditions -

Unfavorable reports of large damage to winter wheat in Montana, and prospective injury to northwestern production because of late planting in Minnesota and the Dakotas should be discounted. In common with other wheat sections, Montana has suffered damage, which in some localities has been severe. This has already been overcome by active spring planting, and it is improbable that the wheat acreage or total production will be seriously impaired.

Seeding is practically completed over all of South Dakota, excepting the northwestern corner of the state. The southern two-thirds of the eastern half of North Dakota is well along with spring work, and some planting has been done in the western half. Seeding is general in the southern half of Minnesota, and in the northwestern part of the state a considerable amount of work has been done; although the Red River Valley will be late on account of high water and a very wet spring.

Experienced farmers and agricultural experts admit that planting as late as May 10th is allowable in northern Minnesota and the northern section of North Dakota. It is probable that this additional ten days will enable farmers to complete their work, unless handicapped by bad weather.

It is probable that there will be some decrease in the total wheat acreage of this district for 1916, and some reduction in the crop, but it is unlikely that this will be serious, since the shortage of fall plowing and the disadvantages of a late season, has been offset in a large part by great activity and a special effort to accomplish a maximum amount of spring work. Discing has been resorted to in some sections, and while this is not regarded as the best method of wheat planting, the fields may show a very good crop if weather conditions are favorable. As a whole, the planting is from ten days to two weeks late, but it is pointed out that while planting was earlier last year, it was followed by cold, disagreeable weather, during which the crop made no progress. There seems to be no reason to believe that with favorable weather the crop now going into the ground, which is in excellent condition and shows plenty of moisture, will not make as good progress as last year.

Wheat receipts at Minneapolis and Duluth continue to show a decrease from week to week. Terminal stocks amount to 26,300,000 bushels, or approximately 10,000,000 bushels more than a year ago at the same date.

The grain fleet has moved down the Lakes with heavy cargoes for Buffalo.

Live Stock Conditions -

Live stock conditions in the Western part of the district are the best that we have known in many years. Winter fed beef is going out at very satisfactory prices. The demand for stock cattle is very heavy. Small farmers are buying in lots of from ten to twenty-five, and dealers are offering to contract for calves at \$30 a head at weaning time. Prices on horses are stronger, and at the Miles City sale the supply did not meet the demand. Montana has sold about double the number of horses during the past year than usually goes out. Prices for sheep and wool are extraordinary. Ewes are bringing \$8.00 a head, lambs \$7.00 to \$7.25 per hundred, for October 1st delivery, and wool 30 cents a pound. Comparatively little wool has been contracted for this spring, the growers showing a disposition to wait until the clip is in the sack.

Lumber and Paper Industries -

There has been a perceptible improvement in the demand for northern lumber, and some increase in the price. Business for the next six months is very promising. The mills have all the business they can handle. The paper and pulp business is very active. An unusual development in the paper business is that the supply of dyes used for bleaching is very short, and manufacturers of news print have been compelled to deliver paper in its natural color. Practically all the deliveries that are now being made by mills turning out this class of stock are of this character.