

Letter from Ness Gov't Crop Report

Below we print the first of a series of travel letters from G. K. Ness who is on his way from Petersburg, N. D., to Norway. This first letter was written from Minneapolis.

I promised to cook together a mess for this paper each week while on my trip. This time of course there is little to write about as the part of my journey this far completed has taken me through a territory we all know so well. What I write, therefore, will have little, if any, news value. But I have promised and here goes.

Sitting in the train nothing attracted my attention as being out of the ordinary before reaching Northwood. There the large number of people getting off and on the train reminded me that here is where the miracle doctor is located. Northwood has become the Mecca for believers in quackism. There they gather from east and from west, from north and from south, the lame and the halt and the blind. There are no ills but that Kirby has a cure for it. And the cure is the same for all sicknesses consisting in pickling your Adams apple. By dozens, people boarded the train at Northwood Wednesday. Not all had left behind the crutches, but all carried the sign of the faithful, a triangular catsup stain under the chin. Some had their necks done up in rags but most of them bore no other mark of the treatment than a painted throat.

Leaving Northwood I asked the conductor if they had traffic like that every day. He answered that it is usually much heavier.

As the train proceeded down the valley I noticed that harvest had been started in many places. Some fields were harvested, others are ready for the binder. Most places the crops look good, but occasionally a field could be seen from the train that seemed of poorer quality, and some of the low land is under water.

The harvest scenes reminded me of the first summer I spent in America, shocking and threshing for \$18.00 a month. Conditions have changed since then. The laborers are getting higher wages for shorter hours and are much more dissatisfied.

Arriving in Fargo, I noticed the street lights had not been turned on. The great white way was black, as it were. This, I was told, was because the city didn't have money to pay for street lights. Cheer up, you village dads, it isn't only the small villages that are hard up this year; the small cities are no better off. It was said, however, that Fargo will have the street lights on during Fair week and after that in the residence districts during the fall so hold-ups can see better to do their job—or that you may see better to dodge them.

On Friday morning I got to Day County, South Dakota, where I found all the people with crooked necks, having become that way looking to the sky for rain the past month. It was getting dry, I was told, and unless rain would come soon, crops were ruined. The crops are not quite as bad as that, however. But the lack of rain was felt and crops might be set back a little. Farther south conditions are worse, though. One thing I noticed was that corn is much farther advanced in South Dakota than in North Dakota.

Well, the people were wishing for rain and during early Saturday morning a good shower struck this

General crop conditions as reported by the Agricultural Statisticians of the Division of Crop Estimates, for the period July 1 to 15 are as follows:

Comparatively low temperatures and well distributed rains throughout the region during most of the period, were quite favorable for crop growth, especially the small grains and dry land crops, except that earlier seedings in north central Montana were too far damaged by June drouth for full recovery. Farm work proceeded during the period without serious interruption, except that first cutting of hay was somewhat delayed in North Dakota. Fair and warmer weather at the end of the period was favorable for the harvest of the rye crop which is now general.

The rains and cool weather of the first half of July were quite favorable for all crops, except corn and brought relief to local areas where need of rain was beginning to appear when the month opened. Farm work on the whole has progressed satisfactorily although some delay to haying has been occasioned. Corn growth has been checked and the crop now needs warmer weather. Some damage by frost was reported from northern and central counties on July 7 and 8. Spring wheat continues in promising condition and is generally reported well headed. Some damage has resulted in the extreme northwestern sections as a result of hot weather in June. There have been reports of rust infection, but weather conditions have prevented development of rust and no damage has been reported to date.

Rye harvest has started with favorable weather, early reports showing some very satisfactory yields. Oats and barley are maturing favorably although many weedy oat fields have had to be cut for hay. Flax was favorably affected by the weather of the first half of the month. The crop is now mostly in the bloom stage. Potatoes on the whole show further improvement, although scattered reports have been received of poor fields and some instances of "wilt" reported. Early seeded potatoes in the southern valley counties are now being marketed locally. Farm work with the approach of harvest is resulting in increased labor demands and local shortages. Crop damage to date has been relatively light, although losses from hail appear to be running above average. Grasshoppers have been working in small areas in western and north-central counties without serious damage.

While rushing through section. While rushing through space the rain-drops were crowded and froze into chunks of ice and a hail storm resulted. This swept over a territory about eight miles square doing more or less damage. Saturday the bankers in Pierpont were kept busy all day helping farmers fill out insurance claims. Everybody who carried hail insurance had naturally suffered total loss, but the rest would not admit having been hit bad. When threshing time comes more than half of the total loss grain will likely have been harvested.

If I write you next week, it will be from New York City.

G. K. NESS