

# One-Fourth of Bread Cost Reaches Farmer for Wheat

By H. O. BISHOP

The following is a complete list of the amount of wheat raised in each country during 1915:

	Bushels
North America—	
United States .....	1,025,801,000
Canada .....	426,747,000
Mexico .....	4,000,000
Total .....	1,456,548,000
South America—	
Argentina .....	169,166,000
Chile .....	19,000,000
Uruguay .....	3,596,000
Total .....	191,762,000
Europe—	
Austria-Hungary .....	199,220,000
Belgium .....	8,000,000
Bulgaria .....	46,212,000
Denmark .....	7,978,000
Finland .....	196,000
France .....	222,776,000
Germany .....	141,676,000
Greece .....	6,000,000
Italy .....	170,541,000
Montenegro .....	200,000
Netherlands .....	7,090,000
Norway .....	285,000
Portugal .....	6,571,000
Rumania .....	89,241,000
Russian Empire .....	826,784,000
Serbia .....	10,000,000
Spain .....	139,298,000
Sweden .....	9,170,000
Switzerland .....	3,957,000
Turkey (including Asia Minor) .....	53,000,000
United Kingdom .....	76,244,000
Total .....	2,024,439,000
Asia—	
British India .....	376,731,000
Cyprus .....	1,924,000
Japan .....	26,778,000
Formosa .....	161,000
Korea .....	5,851,000
Persia .....	16,000,000
Total .....	427,445,000
Africa—	
Algeria .....	34,654,000
Egypt .....	39,144,000
Tunis .....	11,023,000
Union of South Africa .....	7,076,000
Total .....	91,897,000
Australasia—	
Australia .....	25,677,000
New Zealand .....	6,854,000
Total .....	32,531,000
Grand total .....	4,224,622,000

IT IS claimed there is no man in public life in this country who knows more about wheat than United States Senator Asle J. Gronna, of North Dakota. Senator Gronna, who is the chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, started working on a farm at the early age of eight. From that day to the present his interest in agricultural pursuits has constantly increased. His crop specialty is wheat. In addition to painstakingly looking after his multitudinous duties at the national Capitol, Senator Gronna incidentally superintends the planting and harvesting of from ten to eleven thousand acres of wheat on his North Dakota farm.

There has been a good deal of loose talk recently—mostly from city dwellers whose agricultural knowledge was gained from looking at the posies in the parks—to the effect that wheat farmers were taking a low-down advantage of the public and lining the capacious pockets of their jeans with gold through the gentle process of charging exorbitant prices for the wheat they produced, thus forcing the bread eaters of the nation to pay outrageous prices for their daily loaves.

Senator Gronna has become a trifle weary of such slurs against the American farmers. The other day he hit upon an ingenious but conclusive plan for showing the fallacy of such extravagant—not to say untruthful—statements made by carelessly thinking people. On his way to his office he stopped at a bakery and purchased a few loaves of bread and borrowed a pair of scales. The unusual spectacle of a staid and dignified United States Senator ascending the steps at the entrance of the imposing Senate office building clutching two loaves of bread under one arm and a pair of scales under the other naturally brought forth looks of amazement and audible comments from bystanders and people passing on the street, all of which went unnoticed by Senator Gronna whose mind was occupied with a well-defined plan for showing how greatly wheat—popularly known as the staff of life—advanced in price between the time it was sold by the farmer and the time it was handed out in the form of a loaf of bread to the ultimate consumer at the bakery or grocery in the city.

Carefully balancing a loaf of bread on the scales, Senator Gronna turned to the writer and said: "Now this loaf of bread weighs just exactly twelve ounces. It is the kind of bread I have been buying all winter for use at my home. I paid nine

cents for this loaf. Of course you know there are 196 pounds of flour to the barrel. I am informed by the Bureau of Markets of the Department of Agriculture that to make a barrel of flour into bread they add 100 pounds of water, making 296 pounds, and they add enough other ingredients such as lard, yeast, sugar and salt to bring the weight up to approximately 314 pounds. When the bread is baked it loses about 14 pounds. Therefore a barrel of flour will produce 300 sixteen-ounce loaves. On that basis, this being a twelve-ounce loaf, a barrel of flour will enable a baker to produce 400 such loaves as you see on this scale.

"At nine cents per loaf, you will readily perceive that a barrel of flour brings an even \$36 when converted into 400 loaves of bread.

"The farmer who produced the wheat that goes into 400 loaves of bread received an average price of \$9 for it.

"No one can deny the fact that between the time the wheat leaves the farmer and the time it is sold in the form of bread to the consumers it advances in price four times as much as the farmer got for it.

"That's a tidy profit for some one!

"The average yield of wheat per acre throughout the United States is 12 bushels.

"The average price per bushel received by the farmer during the past three years has been \$2.06, a total of \$24.72 for each acre of wheat raised.

"The cost of producing an acre of wheat, from the plowing of the land and sowing of the seed on through to the harvesting and threshing of the wheat, ranges from \$18 to \$24 per acre. Surely that is convincing proof that the margin of profit made by wheat farmers is mighty small as compared with profits made by others between the farmer and the bakery."

After leaving Senator Gronna's office I visited the Department of Agriculture in order to secure more details on the subject of wheat and flour. I was told that each individual in this country consumes an average of one barrel of flour annually. Inasmuch as it takes four and a half bushels of wheat to make a barrel of flour, you will perceive that, no matter how much each member of our population pays annually for his bread, only \$9 of it goes to the farmer. The remainder is gobbled up during the process of milling, transporting, wholesaling and retailing.

It is rather surprising what a small proportion of the total wages of the public is necessary to be utilized for the payment of the farmers' wheat bill. Electricians, for instance, in Washington, D. C., receive \$1 per hour, which enables them to pay their annual wheat bill by working one day and one hour. A Washington hod-carrier earns 62 cents per hour, enabling him to buy his yearly wheat with the earnings of less than two days' work. Carpenters, plumbers, painters, printers and many other mechanics are likewise able to pay for their wheat with less than two days' wages. Bankers, merchants, moving picture proprietors and performers,



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SENATOR ASLE J. GRONNA

and professional men with large incomes can pay for their share of wheat, based on the amount that goes to the farmers, with the vest pocket change they get from small purchases.

Have you any idea how much wheat is produced by the farmers of the United States? Last year the crop (according to official figures subject to slight revision) totaled 918,471,000 bushels. Of this amount, 178,582,673 bushels were exported to foreign countries. Also 24,190,092 barrels of wheat flour were exported to foreign countries during 1919.

It has been impossible to compile complete figures of wheat production throughout the world since 1915. In that year the world production was 4,224,622,000 bushels.

## Mother Earth Always Comes Across at the Right Time

JUST when the supply of raw asbestos was running low and manufacturers and users of that well-nigh indispensable fire-proof article were beginning to worry about the future supply, mother earth came across with an abundant supply in new localities.

Arizona, China, Africa and Italy are separated by thousands of miles; nevertheless, they all figure in the latest asbestos news.

Out in Apache County, Arizona, an asbestos claim has been located. The deposit is said to be extensive, having been traced a distance of more than 20 miles. Vein exposures are so prominent that, according to reports, one can without the aid of miner's tools pick up a ton or more of crude asbestos that has broken down from the exposures. Material from the deposits examined at the United States Bureau of Mines shows it to be strong, flexible and silky. It occurs in cross-fiber veins with a fiber length of from one to one and a quarter inches, while fiber two and a half inches has been reported.

The deposit, however, occurs on an Indian reservation and unfortunately the present law does not permit the development of asbestos deposits on unallotted Indian lands. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, through the Secretary of the Interior, has recommended that authority be granted to develop such lands for the purpose of mining asbestos, coal, oil and gas, as well as metalliferous minerals.

The American Consul at Chungking, China, reports that asbestos has been found in various parts of the wealthy province of Ssu-Chuan, particularly in the district of Yachow, the Chien-chang Valley and the mountains around Ta-chien-lu. The asbestos was found by people who were searching the mountains for fuel and medicinal roots. Claims have been located and specimens sent out for examination. If favorable reports are received, it is understood that mining operations will be commenced at once. A com-

munication from the Assistant Director of the Geological Survey of South Africa conveys the information that America is at present the principal buyer of South African "Amosite." This type of fiber, which is commonly six inches in length, has aroused considerable interest among asbestos manufacturers. Some of it is shipped as long fiber, but certain manufacturers prefer to have it cut into material of one inch length, the purpose evidently being to adapt it to carding and spinning machinery now in use. It would seem, however, that the superior product obtainable from the long fiber would justify such a modification of machinery as would be necessary for successful spinning of full-length fiber.

Coincident with the above discoveries comes the announcement from Genoa, Italy, of the development of an important invention that will be of especial interest to Americans, particularly those in the oil boom sections where it has been extremely difficult to obtain a sufficient supply of iron pipe to transport oil from the wells to the refineries or to vessels. A company has lately begun the manufacture of a new asbestos product known as asbestos pipe. This pipe is made of 85 per cent Portland cement and 15 per cent asbestos fiber. Pipes are made in various sizes from 4 to 10 inches in diameter, and up to 12 feet in length. The thickness increases with the size of the pipe from about one-half inch for the four inch to about fifteen-sixteenths inch for the 10 inch. Four machines are now being operated, each turning out 3,000 feet of pipe every 24 hours. The pipe is seasoned under water for 90 days before being used. It is much lighter in weight than iron pipe, will bear a maximum pressure of 450 pounds to the square inch and is acid and corrosive proof. Even with the high cost of Portland cement in Italy, it is claimed that the cost of manufacturing asbestos pipe is not more than one-third of the net selling price of English iron pipe.