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## FOREWORD

by

JOHN W. DAFOE

Editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*

The origins of this book go far back—to 1901 when E. Cora Hind (now Dr. Cora Hind) joined the editorial staff of the *Free Press* as a special writer on agricultural and marketing matters. The two years' journey, from June 1935 to June 1937, around the world visiting the wheat lands—of which this volume is a partial record—was the crowning achievement of this long period of distinguished service by Dr. Hind. Into the articles, in which she conveyed to the readers of the *Free Press* her impressions of and her judgments upon what she saw of interest and value to Canadians, there went the experience of more than three decades in the study of agricultural conditions, experiments and developments in Canada. This volume, by processes of selection and condensation, has been compiled from these contributions to the *Free Press*; and it is published in response to a widespread and persistent demand that they should be made available in convenient form.

Miss Hind brought to the *Free Press* a considerable reputation as an accurate and competent reporter of agricultural matters based upon secretarial work done for farming organizations, and her association with the newspaper was at the outset in this branch of newspaper work. But her field rapidly widened until she became the paper's expert authority on agricultural and marketing questions, and the adviser in these fields in the shaping of editorial policies. The years of her service with the *Free Press* cover the whole period of transformation of

the West from a primitive economy to a state of high development. It early became only too evident that the growth of the West was not to be steady and orderly; but that the era was to be one of alternating triumphs and disasters, of high hopes and disappointments. The West was—and still is—subject to the mischances of a wide range of variables, and the responsibility which rested upon Miss Hind in appraising and interpreting the phases of this often chaotic scene made heavy demands upon her knowledge and capacity. But to these demands she was always equal.

An incident typical of these demands marked the beginning of the series of crop estimates which made Dr Hind's name known in every part of the world where wheat is grown. In 1904 a promising wheat crop in Western Canada was attacked by black rust—the first appearance of this plague. So-called wheat “experts” from Chicago rushed into Western Canada and proceeded to “Kill the crop” in keeping with the custom of those days, and finally they got the wheat yield for the season whittled down to 35 million bushels. It was the desire of the *Free Press* to challenge this estimate, which it believed was made for speculative purposes, but a bare general denial, it was recognized, would not do. Miss Hind thereupon undertook to make an estimate for the *Free Press* based upon an actual inspection of the crop; and after such an inspection, necessarily hurried, an estimate of 55 million bushels was given to the world. This was the joke of the year with the Chicago “experts” but when the official figures at the close of the crop year showed a yield of something over 54 million bushels the reputation of Miss Hind as a real expert was made, subject of course to the possibility that subsequently she might lose it. But in fact this she never did. For the

next 29 years, with the exception of one year, when weather conditions made adequate inspection an impossibility, Miss Hind made estimates, based on personal inspection, involving annually thousands of miles of travelling and reports from correspondents, carefully chosen, which were accepted in the wheat marts of the world as reliable. These reports became part of the world data on wheat, which affected prices and production.

This work of crop inspection made heavy demands upon her moral courage: for it often happened that her reports, as they appeared, were obnoxious to the “boosters”, or to the “knockers”, or sometimes to both groups at the same time—because they affected the market adversely to their interests. In one particular season when she could not find the superb crops pictured by the optimists she was christened “Calamity Cora” by her enraged critics. It was in that season that the editor of the *Free Press* was waited upon by a very distinguished person indeed with a demand that Miss Hind and her reports should be summarily suppressed. not because the reports were wrong but because their publication was, from his point of view, inexpedient. In the sequel Miss Hind's estimate was justified almost to the last bushel. Under these assaults Miss Hind remained cool and philosophical. Once, making a public defence of her course, she said that the West was big enough to have the truth told about it whether it was good or bad.

While her crop estimates and market reporting have identified Miss Hind in the public mind with wheat, her knowledge covers the whole field of agriculture. Her technical equipment qualified her for honorary membership in the very exclusive Association of Technical Agriculturists, and other honours were showered upon her



by livestock and other farming organizations. In 1935 she was made a Doctor of Law, *honoris causa*, by the University of Manitoba, in recognition of her services to Western agriculture.

On various occasions Miss Hind carried on special enquiries and made reports at the instance of the *Free Press*. Thus she was commissioned in 1922 to make a study in Great Britain of the handling and marketing of Canadian wheat, and the market possibilities for other Canadian farm products, especially cattle. The success of this mission left with the editorial management of the *Free Press* a very definite feeling that if opportunity ever offered, a series of studies by Miss Hind of conditions and methods in countries which competed with Canada in agricultural products in world markets would be of interest to the readers of the paper and of great value to Canadian agriculture generally. This impression was deepened when Miss Hind again surveyed the British scene in 1932.

It was not, however, until 1935 that the *Free Press* felt that it could spare Dr Hind (as by this time she had become) from her exacting and difficult duties as the chief of an important department and free her for the task of a world-wide mission. Her instructions, as she departed joyfully on her assignment, were simple and direct. Subject to the general instruction that she was to look into agricultural conditions of the world wherever a study of them would be of interest and advantage to Canada she was advised that she could go where she wished and take whatever time she deemed necessary to complete her studies. Any doubts that may have been entertained as to the advisability of asking Dr Hind to undertake in her 74th year a task of this magnitude were qualified by the recollection that she had once been

known to say that she never started for any place that she did not succeed in reaching. Moreover, it was realized that she would not be an unknown traveller in strange lands. Everywhere her name would be known to influential persons who would be interested in seeing that she received all necessary attention. So with the consent and approval of all parties interested Dr. Hind departed upon her grand tour.

In the sequel all the hopes that attended the trip were fulfilled. Dr. Hind visited 27 countries, including practically every land in which wheat is grown, taking two years for the journey; and the hopes and expectations of her associates were exceeded by the range and quality of her contributions to the *Free Press*. In addition to dealing with the serious purposes of her mission Dr. Hind found topics to write about in the social conditions, the historical associations, the scenic beauties, the outstanding personalities of the various countries visited. Requests that the letters be made available in book form have been insistent and numerous. It is in response to this demand that this volume has been prepared. Complete publication of the articles was not possible as they run in the aggregate into hundreds of thousands of words; but there is here as general a selection dealing with the main purposes of Dr Hind's journey, as is possible in a single volume. It is published in the confident belief that it will be of value and of interest to its readers.

JOHN W. DAFOE.