

Forthcoming Books of Science.

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Anthropology and Archæology.

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Press.—More Chats on British Mammals, Dr. J. J. Simpson. *F. Warne and Co., Ltd.*—The Fishes of the British Isles: a Complete Pocket Guide dealing with the characteristics and habits of British Fish, both Fresh Water and Salt, Dr. J. T. Jenkins.

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World Wheat Production.

DURING the past ten years it has been realised that all the countries in the world have a common bond in the international trade in wheat. Various adjustments in relationships have perforce been necessary, but the six years which have elapsed since the War have given wheat-growing countries time to stabilise their positions and in some degree to accommodate themselves, on one hand, to the cessation of export from Russia, and, on the other hand, to the discontinuance of the artificially enhanced production prevalent during the War years. For this reason the agricultural statistics for 1923¹ published by the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, with their comparisons with pre-War years, are of special interest, since they do at this stage indicate the trend which agriculture in general and wheat production in particular is taking throughout the world.

The situation as revealed by the year-book is, on the whole, reassuring. Except in Europe, both area and production in wheat show an increase over the corresponding figures for the period 1909–1913. In North America the increases in area and production are approximately 40 per cent. The year 1923 was admittedly a favourable one for wheat growing, but an examination of the annual returns shows that this increase is not an isolated instance. Europe is still 7.3 per cent. below its pre-War average in production of wheat, and 9.5 per cent. below its average area in that crop over the same period; but the area has increased steadily since 1920, and the production, notwithstanding fluctuations, has never fallen lower than it was then.

Russia is omitted from these returns, but the decrease in wheat production in that country during 1922, when famine conditions were at their worst, is now authoritatively stated as fifty-five and a half million quarters, or 65 per cent. of the pre-War average. In 1923 Russia had a small export trade. It will be remembered that, before the War, Russia was one of the chief sources of the world's wheat supply.

A good deal of attention has recently been directed towards the wheat production and crop balance-sheets of Canada and the United States. No appreciable decrease in area under cultivation in either country is

¹ International Year-book of Agricultural Statistics for 1923. Rome: Imprimerie de l'Institut International d'Agriculture, pp. xcv+471.