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CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE.

	Page.
Editorial:	
Shipping Wheat Westward	1345
Canada's Fourth Stock Exchange	1346
Fire: and a Needed Commissioner.	1346
Banking and Financial:	
Statements and Reports	1348
Canadian Bank Branches	1348
British Columbia Packers' Association	1350
Insurance:	
January Fire Loss in Canada	1353
Amorous Incendiarism	1366
Government Hail Insurance	1366
Prudential Life in Canada	1366
Compensation Act	1366
Railroad Accidents	1367
Life Underwriters' Association	1371
Earthquake Litigation	1375
Mining:	
Cobalt Shipments for January	1354
Crown Reserve Affairs	1363
Miscellaneous:	
Review of the Month	1353
Public Money:	
Municipal Accounting	1351
Bond Awards During January	1353
Special Correspondence:	
Crown Reserve	1363
Winnipeg Real Estate Active	1376
Transportation:	
Toronto Street Railway	1349
Montreal Street Railway	1363
C. N. R. in British Columbia	1374

SHIPPING WHEAT WESTWARD.

The question of shipping wheat to our Pacific coast has, as yet, scarcely passed the stage of discussion. The only tangible feature is that the Canadian Pacific Railway has inaugurated a new rate on grain of 22½ cents per hundred pounds from all points in Alberta. The present methods of handling the Canadian crop have more or less sufficed. There have been car shortages, and in the fall of 1907 it was deemed necessary to make special financial provision to expedite the movement. In view of increased crop area and the excellent harvest of 1908, our wheat and grain last year was handled remarkably well. Car shortages will probably occur always. The railroads do not desire their cars to lie idle and they fairly distribute their rolling stock each autumn.

Last year, many happy influences helped to unravel out crop movement problems. Weather conditions generally were ideal and gave a start of at least three weeks over 1907. Heavy winter was late in arriving, thus making clear roads for long strings of cars and open navigation until a late date. Port Arthur and Fort William have borne the brunt of the burden. From present appearances, they will always bear as heavy a share of Canada's crop movement as location, navigation and other facilities will allow. Their future, as an important grain outlet, is indisputable.

But every few decades this country must feel the significance of development. As practically unexplored territory becomes known, and settlers begin to take advantage of some of the best new lands extant, the financial, commercial, agricultural and transportation spheres will change their orbits. Not long ago, Western Canada was a negligible quantity in Canadian affairs. Its progress within the last quarter century has altered the economical aspect of the Dominion. As Manitoba and Saskatchewan become still further peopled and Alberta's

rich uncultivated soil, north and west of the area in which Calgary, Edmonton and other cities have helped so much to build, consideration of the crop movement will be of vast importance. Even now difficulty there is in taking care of the large stores of grain after the close of navigation. This is warehoused at terminal points.

The Canadian crop area is increasing year by year. The movement will have to be handled more quickly by the railroads, but despite this there will still be stored at terminal points an immense amount of grain. It is evident that railroad directors, bankers and agriculturists are already seeking solutions to these problems. Their solving, they argue, is neither by shipment to the east only or to the west only, but to east and west both. Several important factors have influence, the chief perhaps being increase of crop area, railroad development and enlargement of the market for Canadian wheat.

For the year ended August, 1907, the Canadian Pacific Railroad handled in Alberta, 4,540,000 bushels of grain. For the three months, September to December, 1907, they handled 2,064,000 bushels. During the same three months' period in 1908, they carried 6,616,000 bushels—an increase of about 45 per cent. for the three-months' period of 1908 over the twelve-months' period of 1907. The gain of the three-months' period of 1908 over that of 1907 is 220 per cent. The general superintendent of the Canadian Pacific Railroad has estimated that the company will handle 14,000,000 bushels this year. These are significant figures. Add to these, the heavy shipments on the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk and that part of the Grand Trunk Pacific ready for the 1909 crop movement, and the beginning of the problem is apparent. Between and including the towns of Claresholm and High River, Alberta, a distance of forty-two miles, the Canadian Pacific handled 2,050,000 bushels. That is 48,809 bushels per track mile. It is doubtful whether any other stretch of forty-two