

Railways and the Sample Market

C.P.R. Officials Say They Cannot Provide Necessary Facilities

The railway companies are opposed to the establishment of a sample market for grain. This was made plain at a session of the Dominion Board of Railway Commissioners held at Winnipeg on November 11 and 12. The Board had before it the question of what it would be necessary for the railways to do, and what regulations would have to be made in order to prepare for the handling of grain under sample market conditions when the law establishing sample markets at Winnipeg and Fort William comes into force in September, 1913. As Chairman Drayton pointed out, however, it is not a question of whether or not the railways are in favor of a sample market. The establishment of sample markets has been decided upon by Parliament and the Government, and it consequently only remains for all concerned, including the railways, to make the necessary preparations.

The members of the Dominion Board of Grain Commissioners were present at the inquiry, and Professor Magill, chairman of that body, opened the discussion. Professor Magill said there were a number of preparations which had to be made by the Grain Commission, the terminal elevators, the Grain Exchange and the Railways. The railways would probably need increased yard accommodation at Fort William and Winnipeg, and would have to make arrangements to hold cars at either Winnipeg or Fort William for 24 hours after arrival waiting instructions as to destination. It was probable, he said, that arrangements would be made to take samples at points west of Winnipeg, and these could then be forwarded by express and many of the cars sold before the grain arrived, which would prevent a great deal of delay.

Predicted a Breakdown
Grant Hall, assistant general manager

of the C.P.R., when asked by Chairman Drayton what preparations his road was making, said he could not undertake to provide the accommodation required by next fall. The C.P.R. was handling from 700 to 800 cars a day at present, and if they had to hold these for 24 hours and also over Sundays and holidays there would be a weekly tie up and a complete breakdown when a holiday came on a Monday.

The chairman asked if the C.P.R. had not new yards which would have double the capacity of those in use at present, and Mr. Hall said it was contemplated that the new yards would have that capacity when completed, but it was expected that this accommodation would be required by the ordinary growth of traffic without the sample market.

W. B. Langan, assistant general freight manager of the C.P.R., said his company had no desire to say that a man should not have the privilege of selling his grain on a sample market or in any other way, but he must point out that if a sample market was established under conditions that caused delay in transportation, it would mean that very much less grain would reach the lake front before the close of navigation. To provide the necessary facilities by next fall would take more men and material than they could get, and if the sample market was established he was confident that it would result in the worst grain blockade and congestion of traffic that had ever been seen in the West.

A. S. Bond, solicitor for the C.P.R., maintained that in spite of the Grain Act and the proclamation bringing the sample market clauses into effect it was still open to the grain commission to establish sample markets or not as they chose.

Mr. Langley's Views

Hon. George Langley, of Regina, said he did not think the question should be discussed entirely from the point of view of the railways, because if that was done they would never have a sample market. The sample market would be of great advantage to the farmer in enabling him to secure the full value of his grain, but it was not anticipated that the whole of the grain crop of the West would be handled by the sample market. Certain cars of grain which were just below the line and consequently went into the lower grade, and grain which had good milling qualities but nevertheless had to be placed in a low grade under the grading system, would be particularly suitable for sale on the sample market, and he suggested that the inspectors should be required to designate such cars as suitable to be exhibited on the sample market. The remainder could be sold on grade as at present, and only one-fifth or one-quarter of the cars would have to be held.

Andrew Kelly, president of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, said that body would be ready for the sample market when it was established, plans being already under way to provide the necessary additional accommodation. He believed that a sample market was the only means by which the producer could obtain the full value of his grain, and there would also be a great advantage to millers in being able to select the cars that suited their requirements. He predicted that the sample market would result in a large increase of flour milling in Winnipeg.

Conference Held

The chairman said the railways must understand that a sample market, to be opened on September 1, 1913, had already been established by law, and it was for them to make the necessary arrangements to handle the traffic. They seemed to be seized of all the difficulties in the way, and he thought they should be able to give some indication as to how they proposed to overcome those difficulties. He suggested that a conference should be held between the representatives of the railways, the members of the Grain Commission and the operating expert of the Railway Commission, and that the matter should be brought up again next day.

A conference was accordingly held,

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but on the following day Professor Magill reported that little progress had been made, and the matter was adjourned to a future sitting of the Railway Commission. The representatives

of the C.N.R. took no part in the discussion before the Railway Commission, but it is understood that at the conference they took the same position as the C.P.R. in the matter.