

From Western Fields.

RECORD RAILROAD EARNINGS.

The Stream of Wheat—Are Farmers Holding too Long?—Live Stock Shipments—A Serious Fire.

During the last ten days of October, C.P.R. earnings ran to well over three million dollars, thus continuing the record-breaking of several preceding weeks. The mileage of the road has now almost reached the 10,000-mark, being reported at 9,916 miles. With the continuance of heavy grain shipments and the return hauling of goods that wheat sales enable the West to purchase in increasing quantity, the outlook for C.P.R. earnings during coming months is bright indeed.

While wheat farmers in the Western States are complaining of car shortage, no grumbling is heard in Canada, despite the year's bumper crop, and the lateness of the harvest. With the G. T. P. and C. N. R. this year supplementing the C. P. R. to an important degree, transportation problems have been solved more satisfactorily than ever before.

Inspector Gibbs, of Fort William, has compiled some interesting data as to the receipts of cars at the lake terminals this season, compared with 1908. From September 1 to October 21, 21,771 cars of wheat, 2,050 cars of oats, 1,022 cars of barley, and 104 cars of flax reached the waterfront, making a grand total of 25,195 cars, against 15,884 for the same period in 1908. Of these cars the C.P.R. carried 16,702, an increase over last year of 60 per cent., and the C. N. R. 8,494 cars, an increase of 41 per cent. over last year. Of this enormous total of cars only 614 were consigned to King's elevator, which is known as the hospital elevator. This speaks volumes for the condition of the crop.

Farmers Holding Wheat.

The Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture has been scoring some of the farmers for holding their wheat. Many farmers have undoubtedly obeyed the advice of the Grain Growers' Association to hold back for the present. The Minister says that for a farmer to hold his wheat when he is in a position to do so is proper and legitimate, but for a man to hold his grain when obligations are pressing upon him, is simply to speculate on the other man's money, and is nothing short of dishonesty.

Commenting on this, the Winnipeg Commercial says very pointedly:

"The farmer that owes bills to the merchants should not handicap the trade by preventing his crop from going into the regular channels. Again, the principle of holding back the wheat to force prices higher is akin to the methods of combines that these same farmers are criticizing continually. We wish the farmers all success in breaking up any plan to squeeze down their income, but at the same time we must uphold fairness to all, including consumer and merchant, and when the price of wheat is reasonable, it should be marketed."

British Columbia and its Railroads.

It is reported that Mackenzie, Mann & Co., have bought the charter of the Portland Canal Short Line Railway Co., incorporated by the provincial legislature last session. Passing as the route does through an important mining district the move is

considered an important one in the C. N. R.'s British Columbia activities.

The terms of the bargain between the McBride Government and the Canadian Northern Railway are giving rise to heated discussion, and promise to form the main issue in the coming British Columbia legislative elections.

According to a Victoria despatch, Mr. Wainwright of the G.T.P., is none too well pleased with Premier McBride's railway policy. While using very guarded language, he makes it clear that his company is disappointed that the government made no overtures to the G. T. P. for branch lines in British Columbia. The G. T. P. Company would be agreeable to construct lines at once for the same assistance as accorded the Canadian Northern. Mr. Wainwright argues that G. T. P. branch lines would open up much larger territory than the Canadian Northern can do. He announces that, owing to inability to get labour in sufficient quantity, the G. T. P. will have to apply to Ottawa this session for an extension of time in which to complete the line to the coast for two years more.

The live stock shipping business of the West has lately been given careful study by the Railway Commissions operating expert, Mr. A. F. Dillinger. In his report upon the matter he suggests that the railways should establish a stock shipping day once a week on the branch lines, on which day trains conveying live stock should be given the right of way over all other freight trains. He points out, however, that to make such a service possible it might be necessary to give the railways power to refuse shipments of live stock except on the days fixed for the different branches.

The Menace of Overhead Wires.

The \$50,000 fire in the Newton block on Portage Avenue, was particularly hard to fight, on account of the nature of the contents. On the top floor was an envelope factory, on the floor beneath was stored a quantity of rope, canvas and fishing nets, and oil and floor finishes, while below that were several carloads of crated stoves, all of which made a fuel which water would not quench. The building, which is estimated to be worth \$40,000, was insured for \$32,000, and the damage is estimated at approximately \$18,000. The stock carried by the various tenants is estimated at \$50,000, about half of which is a loss by fire and water. The greater part of it is covered by insurance.

The Free Press draws attention to the fact that one of the most dangerous features of the fire was the network of electric wires carried on the poles running along the south side of Portage avenue. This is the main artery for power transmission from the Winnipeg Electric Street Railway Company's substation on Mill street, and there were between 35 and 40 power wires on the poles. The firemen were forced to work over and through this network, though the voltage carried by the wires was from 500 to 2,000 volts, contact with any one of which meant instantaneous death.

THE HOME BANK OF CANADA will pay its regular quarterly dividend at the rate of 6 p.c. per annum on December 1.