

orn and the Northwestern lines by this Company has become an accomplished fact adding 450 miles to the Grand Trunk system.

THERE is one important feature of the present grain blockade which has not received much attention. This is the danger of an enormous loss to the Province as soon as soft weather sets in. The thousands of bushels which lie on the ground in bags at the various railway stations, exposed to the weather, are liable to destruction almost any day after this time of year, by a sudden thaw. But this is not all. A very large majority of the farmers are yet without facilities for storing their grain, and when the grain is thrashed, it is simply piled up loose and covered with straw. No damage can result from this mode so long as the grain is marketed in the winter, but once a thaw sets in, it is ruined. Many farmers are now threatened with the destruction of their crops, owing to their inability to dispose of the grain, on account of the car shortage. The grain might as well be exposed at the farm, as piled up in bags at the stations, for in the latter case it could not be sold often for weeks. Farmers who had grain lying in bags out doors at the railway stations, have been obliged to make trips for long distances and in the worst of weather, repeatedly, before they could get a buyer to touch the grain, and then they were often obliged to sell the wheat as a merchant would do an awkward length of remnant of cloth, namely, any price to get rid of it. One poor farmer writes: "I had a stack of bagged wheat among others at one of the stations and got tired of running (a day's journey) to see when I could get it into a car, get it weighed and get my money. I was on hand at daylight one morning when three cars were run off to load. I begged each of the buyers to take my lot (about 500 bushels) but no, there were others who had waited several weeks longer than I had, and the only way I could get that sold and rid of the expense and trouble of racing about was to say "give me what you like for it, I would rather lose five or ten cents a bushel than be running here every day for a month to catch a supply of cars;" and then I had to hire five or six men to throw it into the car quick to prevent others crowding me out, and selling for less than I did." Another farmer writes: "This grain blockade will be a very serious loss to the country as well as a ruinous loss to individuals. If you look about anywhere that grain is stored, and more especially where it is thrashed, you will see good No. 1 wheat wasting wholesale simply because it cannot be marketed with reasonable labor, and it looks to me as if one-half of last year's crop would not find a market at all, for it cannot now be got out before the snow goes off. Talk about keeping in condition and marketing in spring and summer during the time the frost is coming out of the ground and in the June rains; I tried it in a small way twice and found it was all wheat was worth to market it any time but in the fall and winter." From another quarter comes the statement that "farmers report thousands of bushels of grain laying in the country surrounding this point, protected only by a straw covering, which in the event of a thaw will be totally destroyed unless

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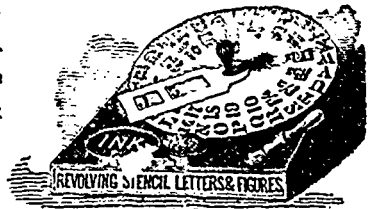
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marketed forthwith." Another farmer writes: "Fortunately a large number of farmers in the municipality have good granaries; but numbers of farmers are less fortunate. They have hundreds of bushels piled on the ground in a rough square pen made of poles and firewood and covered with straw. So long as the weather remains cold the grain is all right; but all grain so stored will be spoiled when the thaw begins to melt the snow. The prospects are that many thousands of bushels of fine hard grain will sprout and be utterly lost. Under these circumstances the farmers are naturally very much disheartened." A country merchant, in a letter, after describing the situation says: "Such a near-sighted policy is far from being beneficial to Manitoba or the C. P. R.; it will not only have a very serious effect on immigration, but it will have a serious effect on the increase of acreage under cultivation, as farmers will decrease, instead of increase, the number of acres, as many of them will be obliged to draw grain when they ought to be at their spring work." Hundreds of similar utterances coming directly from the sufferers, could be given, if space would permit. These statements should be sufficient to draw forth the sympathy and support of all classes of people throughout Canada, for the struggling pioneer farmers of the west. And all this trouble is caused by the narrow-minded trade policy of the Dominion Government, and the dog-in-the-manger policy of the C. P. Ry. corporation.

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