

# The Car Shortage

Letters and coupons giving details of the loss and hardship being suffered by farmers as a result of the failure of the railway companies to furnish sufficient cars for the shipment of grain or to handle expeditiously the cars that are loaded by farmers, continue to pour into The Guide office from almost every part of Western Canada. There is also a very general complaint that where the elevators are able to buy grain, the prices which they pay to farmers who are compelled to sell by the wagon load show a very large spread below track and Fort William prices. Elevator men, according to the letters received at this office, are taking advantage of the farmers in three ways—in grading, in dockage and in price, and in some cases in weights—the elevators as a result making from ten to twenty-five cents over and above their usual profits. Farmers who cannot get cars and who must have money for the necessities of life, are obliged to sell at the line elevators and are consequently at their mercy. In other places even the elevators cannot take wheat, and the condition of the farmers is desperate. The following are extracts from some of the many letters received.

## C.P.R. SASKATCHEWAN

**Moose Jaw—Outlook.**—There has been a very serious car shortage all along the Moose Jaw—Outlook line nearly ever since there was any threshing done. After a car is shipped, it takes nearly a month before you get the grade of it. Sometimes they go out as soon as they are filled, and sometimes stop in for nearly two weeks. I shipped a car over four weeks ago and have not heard from it yet. At Bridgeford the loading platform is only big enough to load two cars at once. Could the railway company be made to lengthen it out, and if so what steps would it be necessary to take to do so?

**Salvador.**—I took a sample of wheat to the elevator on the 19th of December, and the buyer graded it No. 6 and offered me 37 cents. I noticed from the market quotations that No. 6 was 60 cents per bushel at Fort William, a difference of 23 cents. I am a stockholder in the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator company, who are building an elevator here, and I will wait till they open up before marketing any more grain.

**Tyvan.**—Very few of the farmers here have been able to get any wheat on the market, and everyone is pushing for settlement, the machine men especially. I have not been able to sell one bushel

of wheat yet, and there is no room to get it where I could realize on it. I have had my name on the car order book for over two months and there have only been eight or ten cars loaded in that time, with dozens of names on the book.

## C.N.R., Manitoba

**Cordova.**—All our neighbors within two and three miles of the local elevators are drawing to Minnedosa, eleven or twelve miles. I am told they are never short of cars there.

Another writer says:—I have been in Manitoba twenty years and have never seen so much dissatisfaction as exists today among the farmers in this district. We have land at Scott, Saskatchewan, and here in Manitoba. Things are worse in the West than they are here. Many farmers we met out there would sell at a great sacrifice, and they say they will leave the country for good. Here, in Manitoba, most farmers want to sell. We think the government should bring pressure to bear on the railway companies to bear a little of our loss and reduce the rates on grain, instead of raising them, as they have done. They should also make it easier to get cheap money to help in times like the present, and the railway companies should also be made to pay storage on the grain when we have to pay two or three months' storage on the grain, instead of two or three days as we intended. The railway companies claim they will get the stuff to carry, anyway; it makes no difference when they carry it. Our loss is nothing to them. Another point is that the railway companies discriminate against the government elevators and are endeavoring to put them out of business for some reason or other, as cars are coming past our siding every time the train goes West. There is no agent here and no order book either, and there has been some trouble through this. Men who were there when cars arrived, took them and caused hard feelings, as others had had grain in the elevators before they threshed.

**Dunrea.**—No cars here from November 14 until December 13, except a few that came in loaded.

**Gateside.**—No cars at this point for eight weeks. Have ordered car seven weeks ago and no sign of any yet. Orders from this point appear to be ignored.

**Gilbert Plains.**—Have had order on books for six weeks. Still forty cars ahead of me. Lean Xmas here this year. No money to buy anything for the kids.

**Grandview.**—A good many farmers here are tied up and cannot pay their debts. There are complaints and machine men are pressing for their money—charging 10 per cent. I waited six weeks for a car.

**McConnell.**—The car order book is stuffed with the names of farmers' boys and hired men; even one name of a child less than two years old has been on the order book for a car.

Another writer says:—I have had a car on order since the first week in November and have not received it yet, though many cars are coming in. I will have my grain in the granary till next harvest.

**Minotnas.**—This place is badly tied up. No sale for street grain. Only on elevator, and they do just as they please. Like all other concerns, they have their favorites and use their bins for their friends only. Small farmers cannot sell street grain, and large farmers cannot get cars.

**Oakburn.**—The lack of cars and of the United States market for our grain deprives people here of at least fifty per cent. of their comfort and possible prosperity, and the tariff of twenty-five per cent. more.

**Swan Lake.**—I have had my name down for two months and am thirty behind yet. At the rate cars are coming it will mean waiting till spring. I want four cars badly. Some weeks we do not get one car.

**Dropmore.**—Have 2,500 bushels of wheat to ship yet and have been waiting for a car since November 10.

**McNutt.**—I booked for a car on November 3 and I did not get one until December 23.



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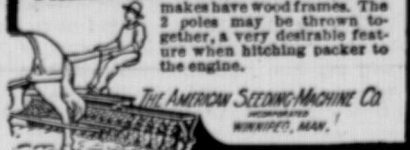
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