

who cannot even be suspected of giving any over-commendation—these opinions are of far more value than anything which can be said by those who are not in the trade. If those statements mean anything they prove that the wheat of the Canadian North-West has a special value upon the British markets, and that larger importations are eagerly desired. The fact of Manitoba wheat being thus sought after by millers cannot fail to encourage its production, and this demand will help to maintain its market value. The increased production of wheat will be materially assisted as the means of transport to the British markets are improved, and as the costs are decreased. It is, however, most important that the farmers of the Canadian North-West should have increased facilities for selling direct in the British markets, because it will give them a free choice between the local buyers and an export of their wheat, thereby securing a fair competition. I am glad to be officially informed that such arrangements are daily becoming more within general command.

The increase in the number of flour mills in Manitoba is very marked, for whilst the cost of grinding profitably economises the cost of export, much valuable food is also taken back to the farm, and given to stock, which would otherwise have been sent away in the unground wheat. Each year also shows increasing accommodation alongside the railways in the form of elevators for storing wheat. At the end of 1884 there were accommodations in Manitoba alone for one and a half million bushels. And in addition to this there was storage at Port Arthur for another half a million. As these elevators give a cheap and good storage for wheat whilst it is being held over for sale, the convenience to farmers is very great. Closely associated with the value of the Manitoba wheat is the question of its cost in production. I see no reason to modify the cost I have already given for each acre under wheat, as a first crop after breaking the prairie, viz.: £2 (or say 10 dollars). . . regards the cost for the cultivation of subsequent crops, as there will be tillages on . . . summer fallow to provide for, it is fair to calculate upon somewhat similar expenditure. The cost per bushel will of course vary with the yield of the crop, but it is no uncommon thing to find 40 bushels produced at just the same cost by a good farmer, as twenty bushels are obtained by one who is "too late" in all his operations. I am not disposed to quote a very low cost for production, but it may be safely calculated as averaging about 20 pence per bushel, and in ordinary seasons it will leave a margin of profit ranging from £2 an acre downwards, according to the character of the management and various local conditions. The expenses incurred in the delivery of wheat to the railway station vary considerably, as will be evident if it be considered that some has to be drawn three miles and other wheat will require perhaps thirty miles carriage. This represents so much additional cost per bushel, and so much less profit to the grower, which he would do well to take into his calculations in selecting his land.

During the last three years (1883-4-5) the growth of wheat has been interfered with by summer frosts. I am perfectly satisfied that any injury which has arisen has been improperly magnified by two classes—namely—those who have opposing interests, and those who want to lower the market price of wheat. These reports are also remarkable for the fact that, generally speaking, whilst they refer to any damage done in the Canadian North-West in very exaggerated terms, they are remarkably silent about other districts in the States which may have suffered far more severely. Having visited the Canadian North-West during each of these three harvests, I have had very fair opportunities for learning the opinions of farmers in various parts of the district, and for personally inspecting the crops. Putting aside all exaggeration we must face the fact that much damage has undoubtedly arisen, and it is in the highest degree important for us to determine how far we can lessen or prevent these losses. I have not the least doubt on my mind but that the danger may be very greatly decreased by a better system of management, and I base that opinion upon facts which have come under my observation in this district. It may, however, be desirable to state at this point, that if the growth of the wheat crop has been unduly delayed by any cause, and frost (not necessarily severe frost) strikes the ear when in a milky state, considerable damage arises, but the liability to injury decreases just as the grain becomes firmer and more solid. The testimony of many of the oldest residents, and notably that of the Hudson's Bay officers, tends directly to show that these frosts are perfectly exceptional. This is satisfactory so far as it goes, but it is still very desirable to enquire fully into the facts of the case. Personally, I am satisfied that by such an enquiry we shall scatter our