

navigation, particularly owing to the probability of a storage blockade here. If this proves to be the case, the fact that only three grades can be exported will seriously hamper shippers here, owing to the very mixed nature of our crop this year. Perhaps an outlet for some other grades via Boston or some other port may be found. It may also be noted that an elevator was established last year at one of our maritime province ports, with the very object in view of handling Canadian grain for export in winter, thus avoiding the bonding and other difficulties in shipping via New York. Possibly rates can be arranged to export via the Canadian winter port, but exporters have their agents at New York and prefer to export via the latter port, owing to the special commercial facilities there existing.

Grain Trade Gossip

We hear grumbling sometimes about the dockage of weight for dirt in wheat. Possibly in some cases the dockage may be excessive, but no complaint can be justly made against a reasonable dockage. Some papers advise the farmers to clean their own grain rather than submit to dockage. This may read nice on paper, but it would not pay the farmer in many cases to clean the grain. It is said that it would take two days at the least of hard work for two men to clean a car of wheat. For this purpose they would have to have a hand machine, and they would also require extra granary accommodation to give them room for the work. Altogether when we come to figure the thing up the farmer who has a large crop to handle would be in pocket by submitting to a reasonable dockage for dirt. There is also the question of weeds. The dirt in wheat for which dockage is made is seeds of weeds, and no good farmer would want these seeds about his place. Of course, the seeds could be burned after being cleaned out of the wheat, but there would be a great possibility that they would get scattered about the farm. These seeds cannot be fed to animals, as they pass through the animals without being destroyed and will grow afterwards.

The point principally urged on behalf of the farmers against the elevator restrictions is, that in shipping through the elevator the farmer is not sure of getting his own wheat out as it went in. Therefore, it is urged, the farmer should be allowed to load his wheat directly into the cars, instead of being compelled to ship through the elevators. But even if the farmer were allowed to load his wheat into cars at the country point, his wheat would in all probability lose its identity before it reached market. It is a commercial impossibility to keep each shipment of wheat separate. As soon as the wheat reached a terminal point it would be inspected and thrown in with other wheat of the same grade. No system of handling wheat could be brought into practice, which would provide for the separate handling of each shipment. The very best that can be done is to keep the different grades separate. In fact we have more grades now than can be handled. One of the greatest difficulties the grain trade has to contend with is to secure shipping facilities or so many different grades. It is quite natural that the farmer should like to keep his wheat separate, as in many cases it would be hard to convince him that his grain was not just a little better than another lot of the same class. At the same time, if the farmer desires to be the shipper of his own grain, we cannot see any possible way of providing special commercial facilities for him, and he will just have to accept the

same transportation conditions as the regular grain shippers are subjected to.

As Manitoba wheat becomes better known in British markets its value increases in proportion to other wheats. One difficulty heretofore has been to keep up a regular supply in British markets, and this operated to depreciate the price. This accounts for the fact that Manitoba wheat often sold lower than similar Duluth grades. Duluth wheats were better known and were consequently in better demand. Manitoba might be just as good, but millers who were not acquainted with it, would not order a wheat with which they were not familiar. Hence Duluth has had the preference in British markets. Now, however, with increasing receipts of Manitoba wheat and better acquaintance with the grain, we find that Manitoba wheat is beginning to sell on a par with Duluth grades. The Commercial has noticed a number of sales recently at London and Liverpool, where the seller had the option of delivering either Duluth or Manitoba wheat at the same price. This, it will be borne in mind, is old wheat of the mixed class. This proves that the mixing is not the cause of the fact that Manitoba wheat frequently sold under Duluth in British markets, though some here, who were opposed to mixing, claimed that it was. The reason for the premium sometimes paid for Duluth, as frequently stated in The Commercial, was first the larger domestic market which the Duluth grain enjoyed, and secondly the greater familiarity British consumers had with Duluth wheats. It is quite reasonable to suppose that a British miller in an interior town would not order a grade of wheat with which he was not familiar. It was first necessary to make them acquainted with the grain. The fact that our wheat, mixed and all as it has been, has been steadily gaining in favor and now practically stands on a par with Duluth, abundantly proves the ground The Commercial took a year ago, when the hubbub was first started about mixing. As mixing is now prohibited, it will be interesting to see if Manitoba wheat will sell at a premium over Duluth during the present crop year.

They have been having a little excitement in the trade at Austin, a Manitoba town on the Canadian Pacific railway main line west. There is only one elevator at that point, owned by W. Clifford. Like all other points where there is only one elevator, the usual suspicion prevailed among many of the farmers that they could do better if there were more competition. The railway authorities were strongly importuned to remove the elevator restrictions at this point, and it is alleged that misrepresentation was resorted to to secure this end. Finally the railway people gave in and allowed the privilege of loading on cars, and also allowed a small flat warehouse to be built. Recently the warehouse collapsed. Mr. Clifford decided that if he could not have the same privileges as were extended to elevators in other places, he would withdraw from accepting grain on storage, accordingly the elevator was suddenly closed to the public, and a notice put up to the effect that if the elevator was to remain a public one, it must have the same privileges as is accorded elevators at other points. "If it is to be a private one," the notice further reads, "the public and the Canadian Pacific Railway cannot take advantage of it just when it suits them." At the time the elevator was closed to the public, a large quantity of grain was coming in to store, from machines threshing in the vicinity and the consequence was a blockade, as there was no storage for the grain. Just about this time the farmers no doubt thought the elevator was not such a bad thing after all, monopoly and all. They did not know

the value of the water until the well went dry. The farmers at Austin would have a taste of what the situation would be all over Manitoba if the elevators were all made private and were used only for the benefit of their proprietors. It will no doubt be a great hardship to the farmers at Austin to have the advantages of the elevator suddenly taken from them, but at the same time they cannot blame Mr. Clifford, who has a perfect right to do what he likes with his own property. The situation is the same all over Manitoba. So long as the elevator privileges remain, the proprietors are obliged to receive grain in store; but if the elevator privileges were removed, it would be hardly just to compel the owners to keep their elevators public. At the same time, we think that most elevator owners would be willing to handle grain in store for farmers, regardless of what the railway authorities might do in the matter of allowing farmers to load wheat directly upon cars.

If the grain crops of Manitoba are as large as popular estimates, there is certainly danger of a grain blockade this winter for lack of storage accommodation. In speaking of the slow exports of wheat during the earlier part of this season, The Commercial intimated a few weeks ago that a blockade was looming up in the future. Since then the shipment out of wheat has been more active, but the danger of a blockade has not yet been removed. Up to the first of this week only 2,661,654 bushels of wheat had been shipped east from Fort William, which makes but a trifling impression on the present crop. There remained in store on the same date over two million bushels, which takes up about half the storage accommodation at our lake ports. At some country points storage accommodation is already filled up. Allowing for heavy shipments up to the end of the season, it still looks as though there will be no room left to store wheat before the winter is over, and it will not be profitable to ship out all rail at the high winter freight rates. As soon after the close of navigation as storage space is filled, farmers will be obliged to either cease marketing grain, or take a price which will permit of shipping all rail, at the higher winter freight rates. It is rumored that the Canadian Pacific Railway company will build more elevators at our lake ports. More storage will certainly be needed there at once, but it cannot be provided in time to be of any value for this crop.

The government has decided to reduce the inspection fee at Winnipeg and Fort William to 40 cents per car, as asked for by the Winnipeg grain exchange. As predicted by The Commercial, the attempt of the government to make a revenue out of the grain trade, by retaining a portion of the inspection fees, was quickly resented by the trade.

Two weeks ago The Commercial published a table showing the cost of shipping wheat from Manitoba to England. Two or three provincial papers have hinted that The Commercial figures are wrong, because they saw a statement published by a St. Paul or Minneapolis paper, showing a lower rate via Duluth. We stated at the time The Commercial estimate was published, that the statement in the Minneapolis paper was based on summer rates. These papers should know that freight and insurance advance later in the season. The rate from Duluth to Buffalo alone is 3½ cents per bushel higher than it was when the table was published in the Minneapolis paper. If these papers will take the trouble to look up The Commercial's figures, they will find them accurate to a small fraction of a cent.