

tive shipper to the foreign market is naturally found to be some merchant whose connection with the trade at head-quarters enables him to select to the best of his judgment some favorable time or turn in the market at which to operate. For the purpose of fulfilment of foreign orders, or of operating on their own account, merchants at head-quarters prepare to ship grain to the other side of the Atlantic. With a natural desire to keep the whole of the business in their own hands, they endeavour to do so direct from their own doors. They find this feasible, and thus New York and Montreal become equally head-quarters for supplies for the home and foreign markets.

Now, to become the transshipping point for this foreign trade, Quebec must either relieve Montreal and New York of it, it must act as Agent, so to speak, for these places, or it must secure for itself any future increase in it. How is this to be done?

To relieve Montreal and New York of the existing foreign trade, we must effect an entire separation in the localities from which the foreign and the home trade are supplied, and so long as the supply for the former is dependent upon the present great fluctuations in the quantity available after the demands of the latter have been supplied, this has been found impracticable. The scheme has been tried of late years, by at least one firm, with an unusual energy and ample means, but it has been abandoned, doubtless, for well considered reasons, amongst which the absence of stationary elevators and warehouses, probably ranked as very trivial. Any grain forwarded direct to Quebec must practically either be shipped to foreign market, or sent back again to some point at which it becomes available for the home market. At present the foreign trade in grain is, *per ipse*, extremely uncertain, and eminently speculative, for the reasons that foreign orders are often based upon limits at which it is impossible to operate, and that it is seldom, about once only in four or five years, that foreign prices will afford any margin for profit in speculative shipments from this side. If this be the case when the trade is conducted by parties situated at the head-quarters of the grain trade, how much more would it be likely to be so were the trade conducted by parties at Quebec, situated at a distance from such head-quarters, and subject therefore to all the extra risks and inconveniences attendant thereupon. Were any attempt made, therefore, to draw the existing foreign trade from New York and Montreal to Quebec, their seems no reason to think that it would be successful.

In considering the question of whether Quebec will hereafter act as Agent for other places in forwarding grain for them to the foreign market, we must keep in view the business axiom, that no man will employ an agent to act for him in transacting any business for him which he can do equally profitably and con-