

Manitoba's Elevator System.

A SPLENDID RECORD FOR THE PAST DECADE.

Ten years ago Manitoba was without any elevator system. Start out with this fact in view, and then glance over the list of elevators now, and we think the reader will find therein genuine cause for astonishment. All the elevators in this long list have been built within the past ten years! This is a fact which speaks more than could be expressed in columns of matter, of the wonderful progress made in the wheat belt of western Canada, within the past ten years. The wonderful showing made in the erection of all these elevators within a single decade, may be taken as a safe index to the development of the grain growing industry of this portion of Western Canada. If we had not here a magnificent grain growing country, there would certainly be no such record as this in the line of elevator construction.

Elevator building in Manitoba commenced in the year 1882. In this year the Ogilvie Milling Co., and D. H. McMillan & Co., erected each an elevator in connection with their flour mills in Winnipeg, and in the same year something was done towards establishing elevators at other provincial points, where towns were growing up along the newly constructed lines of railway. Portage la Prairie, Carberry, Braudon, Manitou and Morden were some of the first points where elevators were erected. Now there are one or more elevators at almost every railway station in the wheat belt, extending from Winnipeg to Moose Jaw, and we think it may be safely said that Manitoba has an elevator system unsurpassed by any other country in the world. The Ogilvie Milling Company has kept up its record as one of the first in the field, and has been adding yearly to its system of elevators.

A good elevator system is a matter of great importance in a country aspiring to be a grain region. It greatly facilitates the rapid handling of grain, and enables it to be shipped in better condition. During the busy season, from 5,000 to 15,000 bushels of grain are often marketed by farmers in a single day, at one point. It would be a very difficult matter to handle this quantity of grain without elevator facilities. Farmers would be obliged to wait a long time to get their grain unloaded, without the assistance of an elevator. The farmer now has simply to drive his horses up an inclined platform at the side of the elevator, where the grain is dumped rapidly from the wagon into a large hopper. It is then weighed and conveyed quickly away by the elevating machinery, and deposited in bins, according to quality, care being taken to keep grain of the same quality in the same bins. Where grain is taken in at what are known as flat warehouses (low buildings without elevating appliances), it is a much more laborious and slower job, as the grain has to be carried in by hand and deposited in the different bins. When it comes to loading cars, the elevator also has a great advantage over the warehouse. The grain is simply run through spouts (this is called spouting) directly into the cars, while from the warehouse it must be lugged out by hand.

There has been a prejudice to some extent among farmers, against elevators, on account of a rule which existed, to the effect that the railways would not receive grain from warehouses at points where there were elevator facilities,

though the rule has not been always strictly adhered to. This prejudice has now about died out. The fact of the matter is, Manitoba's wheat crop could not be handled without a good country elevator system. If an attempt were made to handle the crop through warehouses only, there would soon be a complete blockade, and such delay would be caused to the railways, that they would not be able to move the crops. Such a state of affairs would be very serious for the farmers, and it is therefore in their interest that the elevator system may be made as perfect as possible.

Country elevators are not intended primarily for the storage of grain, hence their small capacity when compared with the mammoth storage elevators at important terminal and shipping points. The country elevator is intended principally to facilitate the handling of grain from the farmer, and to provide for its convenient transfer to railway cars for shipment. The usual capacity of country elevators is from 20,000 to 40,000 bushels. Though the storage capacity of a single country elevator is not large, yet in the aggregate they form an important portion of the storage capacity of the country. In case of a heavy rush of grain to market, or a railway blockade and consequent inability to secure cars as fast as required, these country elevators come in very useful for providing temporary storage for grain, which otherwise would have to be held by farmers until it could be handled by the shippers and railways. The elevators at Port Arthur, Fort William and Keewatin, are not country elevators. They are, however a part and parcel of the Manitoba system. The elevators at the two lake ports mentioned are for storage and for the transfer of grain from cars to boats. The Keewatin elevator is for storing and cleaning wheat for the mill there. The Winnipeg elevators are also principally for carrying and cleaning wheat for the mills, though a considerable quantity of grain is taken in direct from farmers at some of the Winnipeg elevators. The largest elevator at Portage la Prairie is in connection with a flour mill, and is therefore partly intended for storing wheat for the mill. The elevator on the Northern Pacific at Emerson, is an important cleaning and handling elevator, as considerable grain taken in at other points along the line of railway, is put through this elevator for cleaning and making up into large shipping lots, before being bonded for shipment through the United States to Atlantic ports. Quite a number of the country elevators have machinery for cleaning grain, but of course not on as perfect a scale as in the large storage and handling elevators at terminal and important shipping points.

In most instances, Manitoba country elevators are owned by parties or firms who do a milling or grain shipping business, or both, and the elevators have therefore been established for the purpose of facilitating the grain-buying business of the respective owners. In some cases, grain is received at these elevators from farmers, for storage, when the farmer wishes to hold his wheat for a while in hopes of getting a higher price. This, however, is not done at many elevators. In some instances two or more buyers handle grain through the same country elevator. In the list of elevators of Manitoba, will be noticed several termed "farmers' elevators." These were mostly

erected the past season, and are owned by local companies of farmers. These farmers' elevators have been established mostly on account of a feeling among the farmers of the locality, that it would be an advantage to them to have an elevator of their own, independent of the grain buyers, where they could store their grain, raise money upon the warehouse receipts, if required, and sell it in a lump at a favorable turn of the market, etc. In a few instances farmers have undertaken to ship their own wheat, but not as a rule with a successful result.

SUMMARY.

The total elevator capacity of our prairie wheat country, including terminal elevators at the two Lake Superior ports, is as follows:

| | Bushels. |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Elevators on Canadian Pacific | 8,445,000 |
| Warehouses " " | 389,100 |
| Total storage on C. P. R. | 8,834,100 |
| Elevators on Manitoba Northwestern | 425,000 |
| Warehouses " " | 220,000 |
| Total capacity on M. & N. R. | 654,000 |
| Elevators on Northern Pacific | 609,000 |
| Warehouses " " | 7,500 |
| Total on N. P. R. | 616,500 |

Grand total on all roads 10,104,100

This shows an average of 1,000,000 bushels capacity for every year since elevator construction began in this country. The season of 1891 shows a record of thirty-five new country elevators built on the Canadian Pacific, with an aggregate capacity of 1,112,000 bushels, and four new elevators on the Manitoba Northwestern railway, with an aggregate capacity of 160,000 bushels, besides the new annex elevator at Fort William, with a capacity of 1,250,000, making the grand total of 2,522,000 bushels' capacity added during the year 1891. This does not include new flat warehouses erected during 1891, which, if added would make a considerable addition to the new grain storage for the year. —Winnipeg Commercial.

The Canadian Almanac.

The Canadian Almanac for 1892, just issued, contains many new features that will make it of great use. It has been enlarged to 224 pages, contains over 16,000 facts, and 17,000 addresses, the census returns, post offices, a clergy list extending over the Dominion, and full information regarding the municipalities and counties of Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba. The Parliamentary lists, both Local and Dominion, are corrected to date, and the revisions made in the customs tariff are given. Altogether the book is a credit to the publishers, Messrs. Copp, Clark & Co., of Toronto, and is a publication which should be found in every counting room and business house in the country.

Census bulletin No. 61 shows that the state and country indebtedness of Minnesota per family, counting five persons as a family, averages \$21.85; South Dakota, \$50.20; North Dakota, \$56.46; Wisconsin, \$12.35; Iowa, \$9.55.