

In Union There is Strength

Cooperative Marketing in Saskatchewan

AT the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, held recently at Saskatoon, C. A. Dunning, general manager of the Saskatchewan Elevator Company, outlined the progress that the company had made in the face of the keenest kind of opposition from competing interests. Said, aggressive action on the part of the cooperating farmers had saved the day for them, and though a last desperate effort was being made by powerful interests to wreck the company, he felt that its position was secure. The same kind of opposition will be met by the cooperating farmers in Ontario as it being met in the West, and one of the best ways of preparing to meet that opposition is to watch the progress of the fight as it is now being carried on in our sister provinces.

Growth of the Company.

The first year ended Mr. Dunning, as reported in the Grain Growers' Guide, forty-six elevators had been organized in various parts of the province. The second year, at a 1-4th of special efforts to build a large number of elevators at as many points as possible, the system grew to 137 elevators. During the third year a further extension of 192 elevators had been made, then 216 in the fourth year, while so far this season the increase had reached 230 elevators.

Similarly the volume of business had grown from 2,200,000 bushels the first year to 13,900,000, then in 1912 to 19,500,000, and finally to 28,000,000 to date this year. In platform business handled to better than 11,000,000 and 32,000,000 bushels this year.

In connection with the volume of patronage, it was interesting to note the percentage of Saskatchewan's crop handled each year by the company, inasmuch as it evidenced the latter's growth in relation to the growth of similar institutions. The figures represented only the marketed portion of Saskatchewan's crop in each year; in a grain business it was noted that this was the important consideration. In 1911 the Cooperative Elevator system handled 3.16 per cent. of the marketed portion of the Saskatchewan crop. In 1912 the percentage was 9.78. In 1913 this increased to 12.39 per cent., while in 1914, which was the smallest crop for many years, the percentage still showed an increase to 16.41 per cent., thus indicating that the spirit of cooperation was growing among the farmers.

The number of shareholders had increased to nearly 15,000 since June, 1911.

A Fight for Life.

Speaking of the attitude of competitors—the line elevators—the company, Mr. Dunning stated that during the first year it had been one of scorn, that the new company had just been laughed at. They said no farmers' elevator company ever set the world on fire, and his cheeks had burned down at the grain exchange when they referred to him as the "green kid from the farm." Nevertheless, they had gone along and succeeded till their friends the enemy commenced to wake up. That was why endeavor had been made the second year to build a large number of elevators. Many of those present knew by experience the way the farmers' small elevating companies were squeezed out of existence. The Cooperative Company was afraid that the same means might be applied to squeeze it out. It was not difficult for a line company to do this with farmers' company at a given point; it was not impossible to do it at 46 points; but

widen the area and it did become impossible, it had been a year of nightmare, but the area had been widened successfully.

Since then they had experienced a sort of guerilla warfare. An odd point or two on the system was picked out and a few special men at that point would be given a very special little deal. This was one of the most insidious ways to get at the root of cooperation. Sometimes free storage would be offered, and these line companies would pay two or three cents a bushel more than the cooperative elevators were able to pay.

A Frontal Attack.

Now a great frontal attack was being made by the enemy. The line elevators throughout Saskatchewan had issued orders reducing charges from 1 3/4 cents to 1 1/4 cent per bushel, whereas the managers of several companies had limited their wheat could not be handled profitably at that rate. The inference was plain. It was a case of finding the nigger.

In 1913, when the company had operated the cheapest it, the actual cost had been 2.29c per bushel. The total cost for everything, including selling, had been 2.48c. They could show where their company had made up the loss, but other men could not.

It was some job to fight a company that for the five years of its existence had not built any palaces in any fashionable quarter in any city, but which had nursed a fighting fund instead of distributing everything to its shareholders.

Mr. Dunning went on to say that the company expected to build thirty elevators this year. Applications, of course, were made in many beyond the capacity of the company, 120 communities having applied where there were at present no cooperative elevators.

The Spring Meat Supply

T. Mc Mathison, Grey Co., Ont.

LAST year we had considerable difficulty with our meat supply during opening time, or until our beef ring sealed up, which was about the first of June. Most of our neighbors cure pork for this season of the year, but we do not care for it. As there is no butcher nearby from which we could secure fresh meat as needed, we had to depend on ourselves. Last spring when the weather in April turned out to be so warm, the beef which we had on hand spoiled and we lost it.

For this spring we have hit on a new plan by which we hope to have a good supply of fresh beef until the beef ring starts operations? We cut up a quarter in pieces of convenient size for cooking. What will be needed until spring opens up was set aside. Each piece of the balance was frozen into a square block of ice. In doing this we utilized an old gas can and during the cold nights in February had no difficulty in freezing one block each night. These blocks have been packed away in sawdust just as ice is in an ice house and in the spring all that will be necessary when a roast or a boil is needed, will be to take out one of the blocks, and ship the ice away. We will then, we hope, have fresh meat, as sweet and wholesome as when it was frozen into the ice.

To any who think of following our plan, it will be necessary to act as soon as possible. It is surprising the amount of frost it takes to freeze a block of ice one foot square. In fact, some of the nights in which the thermometer went down to 15 below zero, it took about 10 hours for the block to freeze.



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