

of Telephones and are delivered free at the nearest railway station. In a province where poles are a scarce commodity this service can best be rendered by a Government department. In addition to this helpful donation the Department lends the services of an inspector, whose duty it is to see that the system is built up to requirements. The company is allowed considerable latitude in the control of its plant, but necessarily there are certain provincial standards which it is both important and advantageous to maintain.

Financially a company must make a good showing at the bank before it is permitted to proceed with construction. It was at first intended that a cash deposit amounting to a total of \$20 for each pole mile should be collected from each subscriber to the stock, but this has been found to be too stringent a regulation. Cash is often difficult to collect in the West, though credit may be sound, and notes are now accepted as sufficient guarantee of solvency. At the same time, settlement in full must be taken when share are sold.

A few figures will now give an indication of the success of co-operative telephones in Saskatchewan. During 1908, the first year of the enforcement of the Act, thirty-one rural telephone companies were incorporated and 216¾ miles of line were strung and put in operation. In 1909, forty-five companies were formed; in 1910, sixty-six; in 1911, one hundred and one. This means one hundred and nine; up to November 30th, 1912, eighty-six. This means that since the spring of 1908, three hundred and thirty-seven rural telephone companies have been established. To-day there are 7,555 pole miles of line in operation and 8,024 subscribers. The latter manage their own lines, attend to their own repairs and in general work their systems in a far more economical way than were they to be left to the care of the regular department.

Only in special cases requiring expert knowledge are the officials called upon for assistance.

Doubtless the success which attended co-operative telephones influenced Saskatchewan's legislators when they tackled the elevator problem two years later. The Elevator Commission, which was appointed in February, 1910, to find a remedy for one of the most aggravating situations in the West, could do nothing better than recommend a measure of co-operation among the grain-growers, backed by the Government. The Commissioners might have stood out for state-ownership, as in Manitoba. That they did not speak for their perspicacity, as subsequent events in the latter Province have proved. On the contrary they held that the only satisfactory system would be one which would give the farmer full control. Without direct personal interest in and responsibility for the elevator, there would be little incentive to make it a financial success.

But meanwhile, what is the elevator problem and why should it have become such a bugbear in the West? An elevator is seemingly such a harmless looking object, except perhaps under cyclonic conditions, that it is difficult to understand why it should be a source of trouble.

The elevator problem sprang into existence contemporaneously with the transportation problem. It is really only another phase of that much discussed subject. Its first manifestation was when individual shippers of grain found that in the rush for marketing their crops they were being discriminated against by the railways in favour of the elevator companies. The only loading facilities at the stations belonged to the elevators, and the railways saw that the elevator people, being the largest shippers, got the cars. A farmer had of necessity to ship through the elevator or face all sorts of trouble. There was a spirited agitation and