

A SAMPLE MARKET

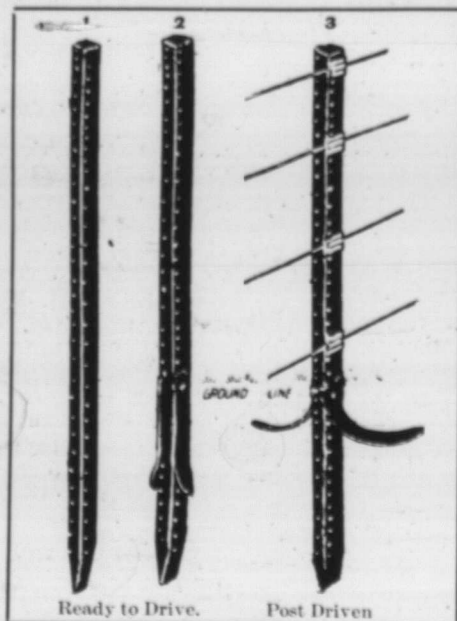
One of the most important changes or rather improvements which government ownership and operation of elevators would bring is the establishment of a sample market, or perhaps better the creation of conditions which would make possible the successful working of a sample market in Winnipeg. We believe there is nothing else connected with the marketing of our grain that has come in for such severe condemnation from our farmers as the grading system which determines the price they get for it. Growers of wheat generally are coming to realize that the fault does not lie with the grain inspectors, but with the system of inspection. Arbitrary and fixed rules are laid down for the classification of wheat into grades which does not and cannot from the nature of them classify according to its actual value. Color, as every farmer knows, is the chief factor in determining whether wheat will go into, one, two or three Northern grade. That weight,—which in other civilized countries is one of the chief factors in determining the price,—has nothing to do with it here, is proven by the fact that the average weight of our two Northern grade is greater than that demanded under the Act for one hard. Again wheat which under our system, grades rejected because of a slight trace of smut, has to sell at 6 to 10 cents per bushel under the straight grade when in many cases the value is not impaired even a fraction of a cent a bushel.

The farmers in Manitoba who live close to the International boundary line know this well, from the facts they have learned from their Dakota neighbors. The Minnesota inspection rules for Minnesota and the Dakotas are similar in principle to our Manitoba inspection rules, but the value of the Dakota farmers wheat is not determined by the particular classification they may give his grain. There is in Minneapolis a large group of flour mills, the greatest in the world, that consume,—with

what is shipped eastward from Minneapolis—practically all the hard wheat grown in these states. These mills have not gathering elevators of their own throughout the country, and consequently have to buy their wheat in open competition in the Minneapolis market. They want the wheat to grind and they pay the price which in their judgment it is worth for the purpose for which they want it. It is well to bear in mind that they have bidding against them, buyers for mills farther east. The grade of the wheat is disregarded. It is bought on sample. The result is that wheat which under their inspection grades only number 2 Northern often brings a higher price than other wheat which grades number one Northern and wheat which is slightly tainted with smut, as good a price as the straight grade, all of which is just and right and puts more money into the pocket of their farmers.

What is the condition in Western Canada? We have not in Winnipeg or anywhere in Western Canada a milling centre such as Minneapolis. Under present conditions such is impossible. How then can we secure a sample market? By creating a system that will absolutely guarantee the preservation of the identity of types—not grades—of wheat. Such a thing is possible only, by a system of government ownership of elevators. Under such a system the grain would be received at the country elevator by a government employee, whose duty would be to take it in, properly clean and weigh it, and forward a sample, made up of samples taken from each load, to the Inspector at Winnipeg. This would be the best possible sample of the wheat. The commission merchant who was to sell the grain could get the sample from the Inspector, and the buyer from the Winnipeg mill, or from Ontario or from the old country, could buy the wheat, to put with other lots he purchased in the same way, since the government stood back of it to deliver to him the identical wheat he purchased. This

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