

SPREAD BETWEEN STREET AND TRACK PRICES

There are indications that the wide spread that existed between street and track price of grain for the last couple of years will be maintained by the dealers again this year. Notwithstanding all the efforts of the grain growers associations they have not yet been able to loosen the grip the combination of grain dealers have on the grain trade of this Country. Nor is there any reason to hope that any appreciable relief can be obtained in this direction until the local Governments step in and secure control of the interior Elevators, thus affording an opportunity for independent dealers to secure storage for their purchases of grain in the Country.

The only safeguard grain growers have against the inordinate desire of the members of the North-West Grain Dealers' Association for excessive profits is that afforded by the privilege of shipping their own grain. The provisions of the Grain Act have been considerably improved in this respect at the last session of Parliament, making it easier worked in the interest of the farmers. We have no hesitation in strongly urging farmers to make all necessary arrangements to be in a position to avail themselves of this privilege when they are ready to dispose of their grain, thus saving an item that in the last two crops amounted to approximately 10 per cent of the prices paid on street.

The local branches of the Grain Growers' Association can render valuable service in assisting their members to dispose of their grain to the best advantage. We would suggest that a meeting of each branch be called before harvest and have a committee appointed to see that the provisions of the Grain Act were carried out at their shipping point—wherever practicable, appoint an agent whose duty would be to advise shippers when their car was allotted them; see that cars were properly loaded; keep record of date when car was billed out; when it was pulled out of siding; number of inches grain was loaded above or below grain line; get a daily quotation of prices, etc.

His services could be remunerated by a fee on each car of grain he looked after.

This committee could keep in touch with the station agents and assist them in seeing that no names were improperly placed in the car-order-book. In past years friction has arisen between railway agents and farmer shippers, due perhaps to fault on both sides. We know that the railway officials desire their agents to treat their patrons courteously and in a business-like way. A committee of grain growers could easily smooth things over where difficulty arises, or, if necessary, seek redress in the proper quarters where their representations would invariably receive a courteous hearing.

For obvious reasons cars should be loaded as expeditiously as possible, the aim being in every case to have a car ready to pull out within twenty-four hours of the time it is placed at the platform. Co-operation among neighbors in loading should be encouraged. The grain growers should frown on any unnecessary holding of cars, or any abuse by farmers of the car loading privilege.

The amended Grain Act will not be available for general distribution for some time yet. We give below, for the benefit of our readers, the clauses dealing with the car distributions as they now stand in the statutes.

DISTRIBUTION OF CARS.

88. At each station where there is a railway agent, and where grain is shipped under such agent, an order book for cars shall be kept for each shipping point under such agent, open to the public, in which applicants for cars shall make order.

89. An applicant may order a car or cars according

to his requirements, of any of the standard sizes in use by the railway company, and in case he requires to order any special standard size of car shall have such size stated by the station agent in the car-order-book, and the railway company shall furnish the size ordered to such applicant in his turn as soon as a car of such specified capacity can be furnished by the railway company at the point on the siding designated by the applicant in the car-order-book. In the event of the railway company furnishing a car or cars at any station and such car or cars not being the size required by the applicant first entitled thereto, such applicant shall not lose his priority but shall be entitled to the first car of the size designated which can be delivered at such station at such applicants' disposal as aforesaid.

90. The applicant or his agent duly appointed in writing shall furnish to the railway agent the name of the applicant and the section, township and range in which the applicant resides, or other sufficient designation of his residence, for insertion in the car-order-book; and each car order shall be consecutively numbered in the car-order-book by the railway agent, who shall fill in with ink all particulars of the application except the applicant's signature, which shall be signed by the applicant or his agent duly appointed in writing.

2. An agent of the applicant shall be a resident in the vicinity of the shipping point, and if the car-order-book is signed by the agent of the applicant the appointment shall be deposited with the railway agent.

91. Cars so ordered shall be awarded to applicants according to the order in time in which such orders appear in the order book, without discrimination between elevator, flat warehouse, loading platform or otherwise. Provided always that a car shall not be deemed to have been awarded to an applicant unless it is in proper condition to receive grain.

92. Each applicant, or agent on being informed by the railway agent of the allotment to him of a car, in good order and condition, shall at once declare his intention and ability to load the said car within the next ensuing twenty-four hours.

2. In the event of such applicant or agent being unable to so declare his intention and ability to load the car allotted to the applicant, the railway agent shall thereupon cancel the order by writing in ink across the face thereof, the word "Cancelled" and his signature, and shall fill in thereon the date of cancellation and shall award the car to the next applicant entitled to it.

3. If the applicant, after declaring his intention and ability as aforesaid, shall not have commenced loading the car within the period of twenty-four hours from the time of the notice to himself or his agent, as herein directed, the railway agent shall thereupon cancel the order in like manner as aforesaid.

4. No cancellation of a car order shall be lawful unless made in the manner in this section provided.

93. At the time a car is ordered the railway agent shall duly enter in the order book in ink.

(a) the date and time when the application is made.

(b) where the car is to be placed; and,

(c) the number of the application in consecutive order.

2. When the car has been furnished, he shall enter in the order book in ink,—

(a) the date and time when the car was furnished;

(b) the car number; and

(c) when loaded, the date of such loading and the destination of the car.

94. The railway agent shall post up daily in a conspicuous place a written notice signed by him, giving the date of application and the name of each applicant to