

# THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

\* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE.\*

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## Editorial.

### Better Railway Administration in Sight.

The new Railway Act passed at the recent session of the Dominion Parliament, is one which contains provisions of the greatest importance to Western farmers. Under the old Act the commission appointed to administer its provisions was composed of members of the Privy Council, and for several reasons they were not in a position to deal in a satisfactory manner with questions which concerned the Western portion of the Dominion. That Railway Committee will in the future be replaced by a commission, composed of members possessing practical qualifications which fit them for investigation into and administration of matters pertaining to railways. One strong objection to the old committee was that they met in Ottawa only, which prevented minor requests or complaints being made to them personally or by delegation, on account of the expense of a journey from the West to the Dominion capital. The new court will be a movable one, and will, therefore, be within the reach of all locations. The commission will consist of three members, composed as follows: A lawyer, a railroad man, and a business man or farmer. The powers of the commission will be:

1. Absolute regulative powers in regard to rates, preferences, discriminations, rebates, and secret rates.
2. Supervisory powers in regard to through rates and through routes.
3. Power to compel equal, proper and reasonable facilities for shipment to all persons and companies.
4. To regulate traffic agreements.
5. To regulate and supervise highway and railway crossings. In cities and towns the consent of the municipality to crossing a highway must be obtained.
6. To investigate into serious accidents, and the causes of accidents.
7. To exercise a general supervision and control over safety appliances, and all matters touching the convenience and safety of the public and employees of the railway, the safety of property, and the operation of trains and the railway generally.
8. To regulate and supervise the general construction of railways—the location of the line and stations—the construction and maintenance of railway bridges, tunnels, etc., drainage, fences, gates and cattle-guards, farm crossings, etc. The Commission has power to compel a railway to build any branch line to any industry within six miles of the railway on the application of the owner and upon terms. The Commission also has power to compel railways to put in a farm crossing for a farmer.
9. To supervise the opening and closing of railways in interest of the public safety.
10. To see that the various railways obey the provisions of the Acts, general and special, under which they operate.

The relations established in the past between the Western farmers and the railway corporations had not been by any means of an amicable nature, and for years matters seemed to be going steadily from bad to worse. Within the last two years, however, much has been done to remedy the anomalous relations existing between the railways and the public. Great credit is due to the farmers of the West for the persistent and businesslike manner in which they have in-

sisted on fair reforms, and to the credit of the railway corporations it must be admitted that they have manifested a spirit amenable to the appeals made to them in most cases. The railway question is certainly arriving at a more satisfactory condition, and the establishment of the new Commission is another step in the right direction. Its object is to place within the reach of the humblest patron the power and the means of approaching the corporations and getting their consideration of his case, whatever it may be, with a view to its satisfactory settlement. Greater questions can also be handled in a direct manner, and the old clumsy and circumlocutory process can be dispensed with, and that without regret.

### Siftings.

He who places himself above his business will eventually find his business reciprocating by passing away from him to those who value it more highly.

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When success causes "swelled head," then success in the history of that "patient" is at an end. He who thinks he has nothing more to learn will learn nothing more.

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Gold cometh not from the mint, unless gold be sent thereto. If we keep good stock we will, by good feeding, send forth good beef into the market.

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In the intervals between hauling wood and hay and doing chores, a by no means uninteresting and a profitable way of occupying the farmer's time would be to take a look over the harness, fix up little stitches that can be done at home, and arrange the more serious repairs to be sent to the harness-maker on the first trip to town.

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A paragraph in the Oak Lake News states that a number of farmers have left that district with their wives and families for a holiday in the Old Country. Many of these farmers came to the country but a few years ago without capital. To-day they are all prosperous. The foregoing shows what can be done in Western Canada by men of the right sort, and there are many such around Oak Lake.

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Reports of grain-growers' meetings are to be seen in almost every local paper throughout the Northwest, and organization and centralization is being effected for the convention to be held at Brandon on the 2nd February, when the final link of the chain of oppressive corporations will have the chisel and hammer applied to it.

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The Live-stock conventions will be held in Winnipeg during the last week in February.

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Stock-judging schools will be conducted at Neepawa, Brandon, and Winnipeg, beginning at the former and ending at the latter, during convention week.

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Among those who are expected to deliver addresses at the Live-stock conventions are Prof. Grisdale, Dominion Exp. Farm; A. P. Ketchen and W. S. Spark, Live-stock Dept., and S. H. Clark, Seed Dept., Ottawa, and Prof. Jas. Mills, Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph.

### Selling the Maverick.

The decision of Chief Justice Sifton at Macleod a few weeks ago, when he ruled that mavericks (unbranded live stock running at large upon the range) could not legally be sold by round-up parties, has caused considerable discussion by practical ranchmen. Heretofore, it has been customary at the close of annual round-ups to sell by public auction all such stock collected, the proceeds going either to defray the expenses of the round-up or for some charitable purpose, and the action of the judge in declaring that not only was the captain of the round-up guilty, but also the live-stock association that countenanced the sale, has been regarded by many as significant.

There can be no doubt that unbranded stock upon the range is a great temptation to rustlers, but the argument which maintains that round-up hands should be permitted to take property which does not belong to them, merely to prevent others from doing likewise, is in some respects a weak one, when it is remembered that upon the statute books of the Territories there is an ordinance providing for such cases. This ordinance calls for the public sale of all unclaimed stock after they have been duly advertised; the sale to be conducted by the proper officials, the proceeds going to reimburse the Territorial treasury. Notwithstanding that this ordinance has existed for some time, it is said the public coffers at Regina have not been as yet in any way replenished.

Years ago the High River Stock Association sent the proceeds of any mavericks sold by them to the hospital. This seems commendable, and yet, strictly speaking, it was a case of doing evil that good might result. Many hold the view that as these animals belong to some stockman, the stock associations should receive the benefit when sold. This appears to be a reasonable view, but since it is contrary to law, why should the present ordinance not be changed so as to give the stock associations the benefit of any surplus after these animals have come under the hammer. If an amendment of this nature were adopted, the main difficulties of the present would be eliminated without in any sense weakening respect for ruling authority, or yet affecting, as has been stated, the Regina treasury. It would also tend to further the present good feeling among the majority of stockmen, as the loss of the individual would be utilized in directly promoting the best interests of the industry which affords each a living.

On the other hand, it may be said that in a majority of cases it is from the mixed farmer's small bunch that the maverick comes. The systematic manner with which the ranchman's business is conducted permits of but few to escape the branding iron. With the farmer, however, it is sometimes different, as his varied duties do not admit of the same regularity in each. With newcomers, too, who come from parts where fences do away with the need of branding, there is a tendency to be lax in adopting the harsher treatment, the result being that additional mavericks tread the prairie until some "rustler" or round-up is the means of having planted upon them the seal of ownership. Thus it is, some consider that the stock associations are not so fully deserving of being the beneficiaries of mavericks, for the rightful although unknown owners may not have been members of any stock association, nor dependent upon that industry for