

Stock.

A Chatty Letter from the States.

[FROM OUR CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT.]

There is always some trouble in live stock circles over the adjustment of rates of freight charges. The chief trouble is now caused by the railroad pools compelling the dead meat shippers to pay a great deal more than those who ship live stock. The theory of pooling may be good enough; it certainly is from the standpoint of those whose money is invested in railway stock; but the practice of those combinations is surely very much against the interest of not only the middle men who slaughter and ship, but also the larger producing and consuming classes.

The object of these pooling institutions is to keep a lot of men employed to carefully watch the channels of the shipping trade, and wherever possible to add on extra charges for the benefit of the railroads, to be paid by the people. This fixing of charges has been reduced to one of the "exact" sciences by these expert fixers, while the charges have to be paid directly by the large slaughterers and shippers; they are all borne by the people, and thus by the pooling arrangement all competition is removed, and instead of having a dozen competing trunk lines, we have, virtually, one huge railway system which can almost make its own terms.

The old saying that "competition is the life of trade," will have to be revised, so far as the railroads are concerned, for they are of the opinion that their only chance to live and collect high rates all the time is not by competition, but by pooling their issues.

There has been a change in the system of the live stock pooling arrangements at Chicago. It used to be that the pool agent exerted absolute authority over all shippers in compelling them to go, not the way they might individually choose, but over the road which was behind in the common pool earnings. This resulted in a man's having absolutely nothing to say about the way he would ship his stock. He simply had so many cars to go to New York, for instance, and after he had turned them over to the pool commissioner at Chicago, he lost all control over them in every way until they were delivered to him in New York. This scheme was constantly making trouble for all hands. A man who wanted to ship over the Grand Trunk did not want to have his wishes entirely ignored, and have the cattle sent over the Lake Shore. A new scheme has been resorted to, and now instead of the pool commissioners diverting stock, to "even" the business they simply keep track of the business done by all of the roads, and if one road happens to haul more than its proportion of the stock, that road is compelled to refund in money to the roads that are "short" the amount. In other words, a road gets its share of money whether it does its share of business or not.

Texas grass cattle are now moving to market very freely, and the prospects are that there will be a very large increase this year over last. Prices are about \$5 to \$7 per head lower than one year ago, and there are fears that a further reduction is imminent. The cattle marketed thus far have not been as good in quality as last year.

Reports from the range districts of British America are very flattering this year, and there will undoubtedly be large shipments of beef from the far northwest during the coming fall. It seems that ranchmen up there are learning better how to succeed in that country, and while they lost heavily during the first winter, which was not particularly severe, the Cochran Ranch Company, for instance, has encountered very slight losses during the late unusually severe winter. It is said that the first winter's experience cost this company some \$25,000, but the experience will probably be worth what it cost.

Some of the people interested in the development of the Canadian Northwest have a great deal of faith in its resources as a stock raising country, and a good many people predict that slaughtering and refrigerating establishments near these great growing regions are prospects of the not very remote future.

There is not a little talk about the Hudson Bay route for shipping to Europe. Practical men do not generally regard it as feasible, on account of the high latitude which would prevent navigation except during three or four months of the year. But it is claimed that even that would pay. The writer had a conversation not long since with a Winnipeg man who says that a refrigerator steamer has been running regularly from Hudson Bay to Europe for a number of years, and that if it pays on a small scale, it might on a larger one.

The slaughtering establishment of the Marquis DeMores, at Medora, D. T., is the most northerly of any such large enterprise at this time, but the success of that institution, it is said by enthusiasts, will revolutionize in a few years the shipping business from the northwest.

Shorthorn cattle are bringing good prices at the spring sales this year, but for some reason the Herefords continue to sell at a slight advance. Would it be so if there were equal numbers of these two rival breeds? Suppose there were as many Herefords in the land as there are Shorthorns, would not the relative prices then be a better test of the merits of the two breeds than now, when one is really common, and the other is almost a novelty?

What to do About Animal Disease.

What common sense suggests would be to put an honest, practical stockman in charge of the contagion business of the country, or of each State, and authorize him, by help of such skilled and trustworthy veterinary assistance as he might require, to get rid of infectious disease, and then hold him to strict account for the necessary expenditure, says a correspondent in the N. Y. Tribune. Instead of this, we have a hundred thousand dollars or so handed over each winter of late by Congress to the "Bureau of Animal Industry," Treasury Cattle Commissioner, etc., and thus far about what is there to show for it? Bulky volumes of "Annual Reports" contributed to the junk shops, and a succession of "outbreaks" of disease. Also, we continue to permit speculators to bring breeding cattle from Europe, the seed-bed of pleuro-pneumonia, rinderpest, etc. To what end? Not because the country needs these additions to its already fine and full representation of the best breeds of the world, but to en-

able the handful of importers to make money at cost of constant risk to all of our flocks and herds. Never a word say the veterinarians and Treasury Commissioners against this exposure; some critics have even accused them of desire to perpetuate the supply.

But here again practical men are opposed to the officials, and on the right side. Several leading journals of agriculture have for months repeatedly protested against continued importations, and the same course of safety has been favored by public meetings. For example, at a recent important one in Western Missouri, a leading speaker lamented the "little use of 'stamping out' disease in when the State is wholly unprotected from a future introduction of it." "America," he went on to say, "receives all the dirt and filth of creation, together with the diseased cattle of the Old World, and Missouri is the especial dump-ground. It is getting about time to put up the bars. There are enough good cattle in this country without bringing any from across the water to scatter pleuro-pneumonia, and endanger our vast cattle interests." This is a fair statement of an important fact, calling for effective action at the earliest possible day. The thing to do about animal disease is to get straightforward business methods, and then refuse to seed for a further crop. Surely this would be better than to place confidence in the ever-increasing tangle of expensive veterinary tape.

Testing Cows for Butter.

Base, malignant insinuations against the ADVOCATE are frequently observed in our agricultural contemporaries because we have refused to uphold the various booms which are constantly assailing our agricultural interests. Amongst many other things we are accused of being behind the times for not making a practice of reporting those extraordinary butter yields which have been made by a few cows of good family. It is asserted that we are the champion of the "scrubs," even in face of our protestations that we will push forward any breed or kind which can be proved by facts, figures or arguments, to be the best for the special purpose for which it is required. Here is a specimen of the arguments of the boomers: Queen Jersey made forty pounds of butter in seven days; therefore the "scrub" must go. If honest investigation is to be burked, and free discussion stifled, it would be a grand thing for the speculators; but, alas! for the farmers.

Let us examine the character of some of the tests which have been made with Jersey cows. It is claimed that these tests are purely practical, and should therefore win the confidence and respect of all practical farmers and dairy-men. So far as we are concerned we care not whether the evidence comes from practice or science, so long as it leads to practical results, and so long as there is nothing misleading in the reports. The fact that practical investigators are bewildered at the results of these tests is one reason why they should be received with caution. We are pleased to see the energy displayed by the Jersey men, and we are convinced that they made a wise departure when they substituted actual performance for fancy points. Let us compare the results of a