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#### Ocean Freight on Cattle.

The Dominion Live Stock Association deem it their duty to bring to the attention of the Canadian public a matter which has already done much to injure, and if allowed to continue threatens almost the total destruction of one of Canada's greatest industries, namely, the export of cattle to Great Britain. When it is remembered that since the establishment of this trade about the year 1875, it has brought back to Canada in cash over \$75,000,000 the price of Canadian cattle sold in Great Britain, it becomes at once apparent how deeply this industry affects the interests of the whole country. The importance, therefore, of the subject demands that the association submit to the public the following facts:—The cattle trade reached its highest point in 1890, since which time it has declined. The following were the exports of cattle and their value for the calendar years 1890 91 92 93:

Year.	Number of cattle exported to United Kingdom.	Their value.
1890	104,133	\$8,114,145
1891	99,967	7,381,284
1892	93,206	6,920,748
1893	89,572	6,796,439

Whilst the scheduling of Canadian cattle was one great cause for this decline, another and a preventable one is also operating in the same direction. If the trade were in a healthy condition it might be able to stand some drawbacks, but as if the scheduling was not misfortune enough, most if not all of the vessel owners have an understanding or combination, whereby they charge such freight as they choose.

Owing to quarantine regulations, Canadian cattle cannot be shipped through the United States to Europe. Thus the whole export trade is confined to one Canadian port, that of Montreal, the head of ocean steamship navigation. To this one point must come all Canadian cattle intended for the English market, and there be shipped by one or other of the few lines of steamers sailing between that port and Great Britain. Each line has its representative at Montreal, and what is easier than for these representatives to meet weekly or oftener and combine as to cattle rates. They have their agents in England, cabling them constantly as to the price of cattle. If it goes up, they put up the freight rates, including rates for cattle already on board. If the price falls, rates do not come down in proportion. If there is a large quantity of cattle at Montreal, the vessel men combine to exact excessive rates. If the markets improve and shipper want to ship in time to take advantage of such improvements, up go the rates. In fact, every state of the market or exigency of the cattle trade seems to be taken advantage of by the vessel men to levy excessive rates. Buyers cannot ascertain before buying what the rates will be.

Thus with a well grounded fear of being charged excessive rates, they have to buy in ignorance of what the vessel men will charge to carry the cattle to market. The rate may be \$7 a head, or it may be \$17.00. This uncertainty alone makes cattle buying extremely hazardous, to the great prejudice, in some cases, of the farmer who sells, in others, of the buyer. Why should a legitimate industry be reduced to the level of gambling? Buyers, who in buying have not reckoned on a sudden squeeze by the vessel men, have lost heavily, some even being ruined or driven out of the trade. In any event this element of uncertainty renders it extremely difficult for the buyers to know what they may safely offer for cattle. As a rule, shippers do not know what the rates are to be, until the cattle have been purchased, brought to Montreal, and loaded, and the vessel is ready to sail. In some cases the rate is fixed after the ship has sailed with the cattle on board. In securing space, the shippers at times have to agree to pay whatever are the going rates. This means whatever the agents of the vessel owners combine upon, when the shippers are in their power. In these and other ways the whole export cattle trade of Canada is now being paralyzed by one of the hugest combinations in Canada.

The first principle of a contract is that both parties to it are free to assent or not to assent to its terms. Here we have two interests, the cattle industry and the vessel industry, the latter dictating terms to which the former must submit. It is powerless to resist, for no other route is open, and the principal steamship lines coming to Montreal and engaged in the cattle trade being subsidized by the government and enjoying other advantages, are practically able to keep other vessels, except an occasional tramp steamer, off this route. Thus the conditions render this monopoly possible, and it exists, and is exercising its arbitrary powers most tyrannically.

With practically no competition in rates from Montreal, our cattle carried from Montreal at excessive rates are landed at Liverpool, on the same dock, by the side of American cattle carried at competitive rates from Boston, New York, etc. Both bring the same price in the English market, but the American farmer was paid more for his cattle than was the Canadian farmer, because of the lower rates. Thus, shipping cattle are worth more in the Buffalo than in the Toronto market. It now remains for the Canadian people to determine whether this condition of affairs shall be allowed to continue. Shall steamship lines, some of them largely subsidized by the Canadian government, and all enjoying the advantages of Canadian ports, harbors and waterways, upon which millions of Canadian money have been expended, be allowed of their own arbitrary motion to exact just such rates as they choose from the products of this Canadian industry? or shall Parliament be called upon to intervene, as it has done in the case of railways and other

powerful organizations, to protect the people from oppression? In the unequal contest, the cattle dealers have struggled in vain against the powerful vessel combination but are unable to break it. They now bring the matter before the public. It directly concerns the Canadian farmer. If he is to be paid the fair value of his cattle it must be possible to market them at reasonable rates, in fact as cheaply as his American rival does. But this question concerns more the Canadian farmer. The farmer in old Canada especially is being obliged to change his mode of farming, by feeding his grain instead of selling it. If the market for his cattle is destroyed what becomes of his industry? Thus, every Canadian is deeply concerned in guarding this most important branch of Canadian husbandry, and we ask shall one great powerful interest stand at the gateway of Canadian commerce and arbitrarily levy tribute upon one of our most important industries, or shall Parliament be asked promptly to deal with this abuse of power and thus prevent further injury?

A bill seeking to remove these grievances has been introduced into Parliament by Mr. Mulock, so that the whole subject will likely be discussed on the floors of Parliament on the second reading of the bill. In introducing the bill, Mr. Mulock stated that he was not wedded to the methods suggested in his bill, if any better could be proposed, and he stands prepared to co-operate with the government or any member of the House in order to accomplish the end aimed at, namely, the restoration of the cattle trade to a healthy basis, by the prevention of excessive and uncertain rates which are now strangling it. Therefore the question may be discussed on the basis of an existing evil, which, in the interest of the country, demands some effective remedy and that forthwith. As the whole subject will be discussed in Parliament, and it is to be hoped a solution arrived at this session, it is of vital interest to Canada that the decision of Parliament shall be in the direction of relief from the oppression now existing. Therefore it is important that public attention be now directed towards the issue involved, in the hope that public opinion may be evoked for the guidance of the people's representatives in Parliament. Under these circumstances the committee of the Dominion Live Stock Association, appointed to promote the necessary legislation for the prevention of excessive, uncertain and arbitrary ocean freights, rates and methods, including scalping, respectfully request the Canadian public to co-operate with them in order to the attainment of so desirable an end.

T. O. ROSSON, President.

The failure of J. M. French & Co., dealers and manufacturers of paints and oils, Toronto, is announced. The liabilities are about \$15,000 and the assets nominally the same.