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EDITORIAL.

WARRANTY OF BUTCHERS' STOCK.

Judging from the columns of our Old Country exchanges, a very live question among British stockmen just now is the proposed warranty of butchers' stock. The National Federation of Meat Traders, Incorporated, some time ago committed itself to a position requiring that on and after November 2nd next, all fat stock purchased by them, either at the London markets, or privately, must be accompanied by an express warranty by the vendor as to freedom from disease and fitness for the food of man, the warranty to remain in force for a period of ten days after delivery by the vendor. In other words, British farmers selling fat cattle will be required to warrant them sound and fit for food, and, in case the carcasses are subsequently condemned by inspectors, the farmer will have to stand the loss.

Naturally, this action has caused much turmoil, and many meetings have been held to discuss the issues raised. Hitherto, when the carcasses of animals which appeared healthy at time of sale were condemned, the loss fell on the butcher. Years ago the grievance was discussed by their representatives and the Council of the Smithfield Club, resolutions being passed calling upon the Government to deal with the whole question of tuberculosis in cattle, and contending for the principle of compensation from the national funds in the case of slaughtered animals condemned in the public interest. Pending completion of the lengthy investigations of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis, legislation has been deferred.

Meantime, the butchers have decided to demand a warranty from farmers and graziers. This action should be clearly distinguished from a legislative measure. It is merely a trade arrangement, dictated by one party to the bargain. It is somewhat as though the purchaser of a horse refused to take him without a certificate of soundness. Legally, therefore, the butchers are on safe ground.

To appreciate the position of the butchers, we must take into account the increasing vigilance of the British local authorities, meat inspection being very keen in the metropolitan districts. The butcher cannot be sure of the health of animals he buys, and the master-butcher, it seems, although he may be ignorant of the presence of tuberculous meat on his premises, is liable to penalties if such be found there and seized by the inspector. He could even be deprived of his slaughter license, according to a recent report in the Times. When a butcher sells a joint, there is always an implied warranty that it is fit for the purpose for which it is offered. The butcher thinks that the vendor of live animals should be put in the same position. At present, he is not. The National Federation of Meat Traders took a case to the courts, but lost it, the Lord Chief Justice ruling that the vendors were not liable to refund any of the price paid for meat (subsequently condemned) in the absence of a warranty, which, he said, the purchaser could probably have had, had he asked for it. Apparently taking their cue from this, the Meat Traders have determined to demand a warranty in all cases.

But their action bears hard on the farmer, who may be obliged to incur a loss representing a large proportion of the value of his season's output of stock. In all ordinary transactions, the unknown risks are assumed by the purchaser, who is justified, if necessary, in allowing himself a margin on the purchase price of the animals. The question is raised as to how a butcher could prove

that a condemned carcass was that of an animal purchased from any particular farmer. On the whole, it would seem as though the butcher were the one who might most fairly bear the risk, securing himself, if necessary, by insurance. However, farmers' organizations, realizing the strong organization of the butchers, appear to be considering a combination of farmers, butchers and auctioneers, with a view to making such an arrangement, by insurance, as would protect both butcher and grazier, although, in anticipation of legislation bearing on the case, and possibly providing for national compensation, they feel that the whole matter should be deferred. At present writing, it looks as though the crisis precipitated by the action of the meat-traders may hasten legislation, and unite both farmers and meat traders in a demand for compensation from the national funds for carcasses condemned. What the Government and the taxpayer may think of the proposition, is another question.

NUTTING ON THE FARM.

Have you ever gone nutting in a bush large and dense enough that you couldn't see out? Have you got up early on a crisp October morning and scampered back to the woods to make a hurried circuit of the hickory trees ere some "pot-hunting" neighbor had gathered the "rough" of the morning's drop? Have you, returning, hastily deposited a peck or half bushel of nuts in the old chest, against the day when there should be time to hull them, then hustled off to school, cheeks glowing with healthy exercise, and eyes kindled by anticipation of winter evenings, with feasts of nuts and apples before the fire? Have you, some windy Saturday, following a frosty night, spent a day in the bush harvesting a bonanza crop, filling sack after sack in the old sugar house, which served as a base of operations? Have you tramped barefoot all day over the fresh-littered, spongy mould of leaves, now through the inky swale, anon digging your toes in the decaying trunk of an old fallen pine? Has your heart danced to the music of the wind swaying the lofty tree-tops overhead? Have you bounded like a deer when approaching the favorite old hickory tree, which bore the "large, three-cornered" nuts, and, dropping to your hands and knees, snatched eagerly at the tempting fruitage which filled the bag so fast? Have you spied the old hawk's nest, away up in the crotch, where the thinning leafage no longer hid it from view? Have you noted with jealous eye the red squirrel helping himself to a crop which by right of eminent domain belonged to you, reflecting meanwhile upon the utter uselessness of red squirrels anyway in the economy of man? Have you more complacently observed a big fat black or gray squirrel up in another tree, marking well the spot, and contemplating the tempting pot-pie there would be when father could bring back the double-barrelled breech-loader some evening after school, and try his aim at squirrels? Have you at dusk tramped up the long farm lane to the house, and, depositing the heavy load, trudged wearily off to do the evening chores? Have you come in to supper happy but tired, and hungry as a bear? Have you filled up on fried potatoes, bread and butter, and apple sauce, and pie, and then laid down on the sitting-room lounge, from which you were almost immediately roused and hustled off upstairs? Have you stumbled your way upstairs to "roost," undressed, and tumbled into bed, to dream of forests where all the trees were hickories, and none of the squirrels were red? If you have done these things, you have experienced a sweet touch of nature's enchanting paradise. If not, you have missed one of the supreme joys of juvenile country life.

TRUSTING JUDGES.

The question of the selection, appointment and work of judges at fairs has apparently been more critically discussed in conversation and through the press this fall than has been usual. And yet, when the noise and smoke of the season and of the bloodless battle of competition has cleared away, and the matter has been quietly and fairly considered in all its bearings, it is gratifying to find so few instances in which there has been reasonable ground for adverse criticism, either on the score of apparent favoritism or of incompetence on the part of those entrusted with the work. When we reflect that exhibitors are not unlikely to place a higher estimate on their own animals than are disinterested persons, perhaps as competent to judge as are the owners, and that the most experienced and capable of judges sometimes differ and disagree in their estimate of the relative merits of competing exhibits, where a bench of two or more are appointed to work together, we surely need not be surprised that the work done by either a single judge or a committee fails, in some cases, to meet with universal approval. Allowance should, therefore, be made for honest difference of opinion.

The reversal of decisions in the relative placing of the same animals competing at two or more fairs, is sometimes disconcerting to readers of fair reports, and even to onlookers, but close observers know that, besides the possibility of honest difference of opinion on the part of judges, animals exposed to the vicissitudes of railway travel and change of feed and water, are liable to vary in appearance in the course of a week or two sufficiently to amply justify the reversing of their placing. In the case of milking cows, especially, so great, in some instances, has been the change in the winner at the first meeting, that the same judge would scarcely be open to reasonable censure for reversing his own work when the same cows came before him a week or two later. And the same or similar conditions may present themselves in the case of other classes of stock or other exhibits, where the competition was originally close. For reasons such as these, therefore, and for others which might be cited, criticism should be seasoned with charitable allowance for change of circumstances. When we remember that, in any and every case we have to trust the judge or judges when once they are appointed, it is as well to trust them fully, and give them to feel that they are placed upon their honor, to dispense justice in accordance with their best judgment. And when a man is serving in that capacity, especially if acting alone, he will realize that his reputation and his honor are at stake, and will be likely to do what he conscientiously considers right. This is where the one-judge system commends itself, since there is good reason to believe that, where two or more are working together, an honest man may, in some cases, for the sake of peace and progress, yield his judgment, when he knows the responsibility rests not wholly upon himself, and may excuse himself on the ground that the other man may be as good a judge as he, and as honest in his intentions; while, on the other hand, a loquacious or designing man may, by argument, succeed in having his own way, even if not always right, knowing that, when done, his colleague must share the responsibility. Formerly, it was customary for fair boards to endeavor to keep secret the names of judges until the day of judging, in order to avoid the possibility of connivance; but a saner view of the matter is now taken, and the names of judges are published months in advance, so that exhibitors may know to whom their stock will be submitted for rating, and judges are placed upon their honor. There