

Activity in the West

Two Agricultural Officials Resign—Farmers Losing Control To Break Lumber Combine

At the beginning of the year two resignations were placed in the hands of Hon. R. P. Robin, Minister of Agriculture, both being from prominent members of the staff of the Department—S. J. Thompson, V. S., Provincial Veterinarian, and Chas. A. Murray, Dairy Superintendent. It is generally understood that both resignations were for personal reasons.

Dr. S. J. Thompson has occupied the position of Provincial Veterinarian since March, 1893. He has had full charge of the work of keeping in check the contagious diseases of animals, and in addition has done a great deal of Farmers' Institute work. No better commentary can be made on his work than to quote a few passages from his reports for the present and past years. The report for 1894 is the earliest I have at hand. A few sentences will suffice. The doctor says: "In the past year I have destroyed 78 horses affected with glanders, and 16 have been destroyed by assistants, making a total of 94 as compared with 122 during eleven months previous." "In 1893 I found so many cases of scab among sheep that I feared it would take years to get rid of it. I am pleased to report however that the province is now practically free from the disease." In 1895 he reported: "There were this year 42 horses destroyed for glanders." "I am pleased to report that the flocks of the province are free from disease."

In 1896 he reported 80 horses destroyed, and commenting on this increased number says: "The increase is accounted for by the fact that a number of horses were brought in from the territories and especially from the Chibart ranch, the most affected with glanders." In the past year not less than 25 horses were brought into the province suffering from this disease. Not only had these horses been destroyed, but others with which they came in contact. An unfortunate feature of the case is that it is usually the poor man who suffers the loss. These ranch prices are offered cheaper than Manitoba horses, and it is almost invariably the poor man who buys them."

In 1897 he reported that about 90 per cent. of the animals destroyed were from the ranches of the territories, and the Western States, and urged on the Government of the province the necessity of protecting the province by a thorough inspection of all importations.

The doctor has been equally aggressive and outspoken in his subsequent action against the disease, and against what he considers the chief source of infection, and the good effect of his work may be seen in the fact that though there were in 1903 nearly twice as many horses in the province as there were in 1893, yet the number of horses destroyed for this disease was less than half as great. The figures are as follows:

	1903	1904
Number of horses in province	88,000	150,000
Number destroyed in 1903	12	60
Number destroyed per 1,000	15	3

No greater compliment can be paid to the retiring Provincial Veterinarian than to say that in eleven years he has, in the face of great difficulties, reduced the amount of contagious diseases among horses to one-fifth of what it was at the date of his appointment.

Mr. C. A. Murray, the retiring Dairy Superintendent, has, on the other hand,

seen a great increase in the volume of that which his appointment required should be his chief care. Since 1899, when his duties began, there had been a steady and gratifying increase in the volume and value of the dairy produce of the province for which it is only fair to give credit to Mr. Murray. He has been energetic, enthusiastic and positive in the management of his department. The work has not been of a nature to encourage enthusiasm. This is still essentially a grain-growing country, and dairying is as yet in the hands of the few. Mr. Murray has, however, the greatest faith in the future of the dairy industry here. He believes that with the growth of population the volume of the industry will increase in a much larger proportion. He will take the management of a newly formed Company doing a cold storage, produce and commission business in the City of Winnipeg.

In days past the legislature of this province was known as "The Farming Parliament." Those were the days when the "Farmer Premier" stated in more than one speech that the greatest ambition was to be called "the premier farmer." Hon. Mr. Greenway may have realized his ambition and may still be the premier farmer, though no longer the farmer premier. But the legislature is no longer a farming parliament. When the house met on January 7th it was a body of lawyers, doctors, merchants and grain dealers that faced the Lieutenant-Governor. There are still farmers in the provincial legislature but they are no longer the controlling element. Yet when we look over the list we are pleasantly surprised to note that the majority commenced life in the west as farmers. The premier is an instance of this, and though no longer himself a farmer his farm is still managed by his son. Of the other classes referred to above, almost all except those engaged in what we are accustomed to call the "learned" professions have been actively engaged in farming. We may be confident, therefore, that agricultural interests will not suffer at the hands of the present legislature for want of a proper appreciation of the needs of the farming community.

An announcement was recently made by the old vice-president of the C. P. R. which if carried into effect will give the greatest of satisfaction to every farmer in Manitoba and the territories. The price of lumber has been a serious drawback to the progress of the country. Farmers desirous of engaging in stock farming found themselves face to face with the necessity of paying two prices (almost) for the lumber required for their buildings. The combine is so well organized that its system of agencies covers the ground so thoroughly that there has been no room for the independent dealer. Prices have been persistently and continuously raised until they have become a menace to the advancement of the country. The question recently came before parliament, and a commission has been appointed to enquire into the existence of that which to all outside the House of Commons is a startlingly obvious fact, viz., the lumber combine.

We have no evidence from the records of the past that the C. P. R. has existed for philanthropic purposes, but if the announcement made as above

stated is justified by their subsequent action people of the west will be willing to take the incorporation to their hearts again and all will be forgiven. If Vice-President Whyte has proper authority for his statement that the west is to have cheap lumber we will gladly see his name placed beside the royal family in the prayer book. The price of lumber must come down, says Mr. Whyte. "The C. P. R. has great interests in the west. These are imperilled by the price of lumber. The combine must listen to reason or they will have to bow to force. Unless the lumber companies lower their prices they will have a competitor in the C. P. R. The prices are excessive, says Mr. Whyte, and here we have the best of evidence against the claim of the combine that their tariff is made in accordance with the cost of manufacture and distribution. These excessive prices must be reduced to a reasonable figure or the C. P. R. will establish mills on timber lands owned by them and sell the output to the trade at a reasonable figure."

The situation is well put in the following paragraph from an interview with Mr. Whyte:

"There is no disposition on the part of the company to enter into competition with the present owners of saw mill plants or retail dealers, provided they, recognizing the importance of the matter to the country at large, will sell lumber at a reasonable price, and give up the attempt to maintain high prices by 'combine' methods, but unless that is done, the company will certainly put in their own mills and deal with the matter as above outlined."—M. B.

Manitoba Breeders' Meeting

A mid-winter show will be held at Neepawa, Man., on February 16th and 17th. A course in live stock judging will take place at the same time, under the auspices of the Breeders' Associations, W. S. Engle, President, and G. A. P. Kitchen, Assistant Live Stock Commissioner, and Geo. H. Clark, Chief of the Seed Division, Ottawa, will deliver addresses.

On February 18th a stock judging school will open at Brandon and will be continued until the evening of Feb. 20th, and will be addressed by the same speakers as at Neepawa.

On February 22nd the annual breeders' meetings will open at Winnipeg and stock judging classes will be held in connection with them. The day meetings will be held in the large show room of the Cocksbutt Plow Company, and the evening meetings in the convocation hall of Wesley College. In addition to the other speakers named, Dr. Mills is expected. Thus, beginning on Feb. 16th, there will be so something doing among the breeders of Manitoba up to Feb. 27th.

Northwest Agricultural College

Mr. W. H. Coard, late publication-clerk at Ottawa, has established an agricultural college at Regina, N. W. T. The college farm consists of 30 acres and will be devoted to experimental work. The first half-yearly report—April to December, 1903—has just been issued. Twenty-six students wrote on the half-yearly examination in December. The college opened for the second term on January 16 last.

Horticultural Meeting

The annual meeting of the Manitoba Horticultural Society will be held on Friday, February 26th, afternoon and evening.