

Echoes from the West

Hay is a scarce and high-priced commodity in British Columbia this season, and dealers are bringing in shipments from Alberta. The imported article is of good quality. The British Columbia hay market was until recently supplied from the Fraser River district and from Saanich, the former bringing \$25.00 per ton and the latter as high as \$28.00, prices remarkably high, but warranted by the scarcity. The Fraser River is the chief source of supply, but owing to farmers being busy harvesting and to the prevailing feeling that the price of hay was bound to advance, producers held for higher figures. The price for new stock is as yet nominal. It is believed that Alberta hay can in future be laid down at Victoria for about \$20.00 per ton.

Tobacco growing in the Okanagan Valley will help to still further increase the value of land in that district. Mr. N. Holman, who is engaged in tobacco culture in the United States, has been visiting the Okanagan, and says the district is admirably adapted for the growing of "the weed". Others who have grown tobacco there in the past are able to corroborate this. Authorities on tobacco culture declare that the soil and climatic conditions are distinctly suited to the growth and curing of the very finest grades, and it is likely that a large company will be located in the near future to engage in the tobacco industry.

"Dry farming," along the lines laid down by Professor Campbell, will likely be tested on land within two miles from Medicine Hat. Members of the Board of Trade, City Council and Agricultural Society of Medicine Hat, recently interviewed Hon. W. T. Finlay, Minister of Agriculture for Alberta, and ascertained his views on the establishment of a farm for experimenting in this work. The Minister was favorable to the establishment of a demonstration farm in capable hands. If given full particulars and estimates he promised to place the same before the Government with a recommendation for a substantial grant.

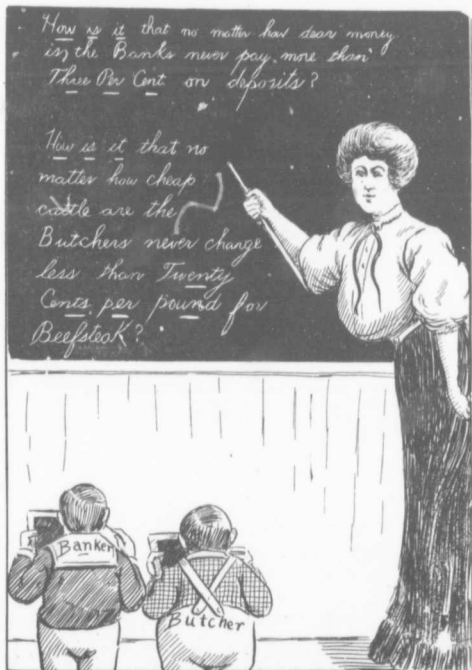
The Chicago market is this year attracting more attention among Alberta stockmen than for some time, and if there were direct railway connection from the Alberta stock districts to Chicago, probably three-fourths of our beef would pay duty to get into Uncle Sam's best markets. Year by year the Alberta producer is netting a smaller figure for his stock. It is said that this year there is no competition whatever, that the country has been divided up, Pat Burns taking the Alberta beef and Gordon & Ironsides the balance. Those in close touch with the stock business fail to see the slightest sign of competition among buyers. Producers are consequently shipping their own cattle and are satisfied

with the returns, whether from Chicago or Toronto.

An illustration of what the province is up against in reaching the Chicago market was recently furnished at Medicine Hat, L. H. Pruitt had 1050 steers to sell and proposed selling them in Chicago. His ranch is near the boundary, sixty-five miles south of Medicine Hat, and his intention was to drive his cattle to Chinook, Montana, and ship there. The live stock representative of the C.P.R. sought to get this business for his company, and interviewed Mr. Pruitt, promising a rapid run from there to Chicago, and personal attention to the shipping. Mr. Pruitt considered that it made little difference to him which road he patronized so long as he got his stock to Chicago expeditiously; in fact, he favored shipping over a Canadian road, and after receiving the written promise that there would be sixty cars ready for him on the 22nd of October, he brought his bunch from the south. Instead of getting cars, he got a curt telegram that the cars would not be forthcoming for shipment to Chicago on account of

some trouble the railway had in getting Canadian cars returned promptly. Mr. Pruitt, who had acted in good faith, and against his primary intentions, was placed in a peculiar position. He endeavored to hold the company to their written agreement to furnish cars but was turned down flatly. About this time buyers from an outside point came upon the scene. They made offers for the cattle, which would indicate that they thought they had the old man "over a barrel," but he didn't "roll". One man offered \$27.50 per head for the bunch, and another raised him fifty cents for a cut of 750 head—less, we should say, than two cents per pound. Here's an indication of competition. Mr. Pruitt's price was \$42.50, and he started the bunch south to ship them from Uncle Sam's country. Next morning the \$28 offer was raised to \$40, and we understand a deal was made for the bunch at this figure.

If our stockmen look with longing eyes to a market where they get prices for the stock according to grade, and eagerly anticipate the time when they will have a rail outlet direct into Chicago, it is in great measure due to the hostility brought about by the actions of the big Canadian buyers. Outside



ECHO ANSWERS WHY? (COURTESY TORONTO TELEGRAM)