

Inspection of Cattle.

THE DANGER OF PERMITTING THE TRANSIT OF AMERICAN CATTLE THROUGH CANADA.

For some time previous to the 23rd of April, 1880, United States cattle were not allowed to enter Canada. This prohibition was enacted in order to protect Canadian cattle, amongst which no contagious disease ever existed, from becoming infected by being brought in contact with United States cattle, among which contagious disease always exists to a greater or less extent in the different states of the Union, more especially among the cattle of the western states, and thereby to secure for Canadian cattle the English market free from quarantine regulations, to which the United States cattle, and the cattle of nearly all other countries are subject, in consequence of the existence of contagious disease in the countries from which they are exported. This advantage to the Canadian stock raiser and shipper, over those of other countries, can scarcely be estimated, considering the great yearly increase in the number of cattle exported from the Dominion; and the government of Canada are fully aware that this advantage for the benefit of the Canadian farmer and shipper can only be retained just so long as Canada can show a clean bill of health as regards contagious cattle disease. By the prohibition of the transit of the United States cattle through Canada, the Grand Trunk and the Canada Southern Railways interested in the export of western cattle to eastern markets, lost a large item of their trade, amounting in 1882, the second year after the transit was permitted, as shown by the report of the department of agriculture to 11,238 cars, they (the railroad companies) represented this loss, which would gradually be growing greater as the trade increased to the Canadian government, and succeeded in getting the government to enter into negotiations with the imperial government for the purpose of making arrangements to allow American shippers to send their cattle through Canada over the through lines of railway for the benefit of the said railways. Regulations were agreed upon, and an order in council was passed on the 23rd April, 1880, to permit the transit of United States cattle through Canada, subject to such regulations, which are as follows:—

That cattle intended for transit through Canada should on arrival at point of export, and when unloaded, be examined during the hours of daylight by properly qualified veterinary surgeons to see if they were infected with contagious disease; if not, a certificate is given to that effect, signed by the veterinary surgeon, on which they are allowed to pass through Canada.

Second. That all cars used for the transit of United States cattle through Canada should be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected before being used for the transit of Canadian cattle, or before being put to any other use, and that the droppings from the animals found in the cars should be removed from all possibility of Canadian cattle coming in contact with them. These are the chief points insisted upon in the regulations.

Now, keeping in view the present accepted germ theory of contagious disease in cattle, and the way in which they are spread and the great difficulty, even under favourable circumstances of detecting an animal infected with contagious disease, it is perfectly plain to be seen by any person that these regulations and the best manner in which they can be carried out as a means to prevent the introduction of contagious disease into Canada is perfectly absurd. Cattle intended for transit through Canada arrive at Detroit and Port Huron, the points of export, at all hours of the day and night. The inspector is notified when a train arrives; he goes out; walks along one side of the train; looks in through the door of the car, and at the best of times in daylight, he is not able to see more than the feet of about half of the cattle in the cars. And at night he makes the inspection this way by starlight, moonlight or if neither chanced to be shining, and it is Egyptian darkness, he makes the inspection just the same and gives the certificate.

I think it is not too much to say that it would be just as reasonable to expect the clerk in the office where the weather probabilities are made out, to tell the colour of the eyes of the man in the moon with his telescope, as to expect a veterinary surgeon to detect one animal that might be infected with contagious disease among a lot of from one to five hundred all inspected in this way in about ten minutes. And