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# THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

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## Editorial.

### Settling the Range.

In the rapid settlement of the prairie old traditions and customs are being completely ignored. The old line of demarkation between the farming lands and the ranching districts will scarcely be discernible in a few years if the tide of immigration continues, the optimism of the new Westerner ascends, and natural conditions become modified by modern methods of farming. Until recently that part of Canada between Moose Jaw and the foothills, and the International boundary and a line running East and West near Battleford, was known as the ranching country. The land is rolling—abruptly so, in some places—the rainfall, taking the average of several years, is light, and other climatic conditions have been such as to recommend this vast district as an ideal stock-growing country. Over this whole territory ranchers have kept their flocks and herds since the early days. In the newer parts the stock was herded without restriction upon the railway, Government and Hudson's Bay Co.'s lands; later, large areas were rented from these owners at a nominal fee of three cents per acre, and this arrangement proved quite satisfactory for many years—so much so that large flocks, herds and studs have been built up, the owners probably owning a section or two as a sort of focus point, and renting the remainder of the range required for grazing. This arrangement continued up to within recent years; then newcomers began to homestead and buy railway and Hudson's Bay Co. land all around and directly upon the ranges, the leases of the ranches having been conditional that should settlers buy any part of these ranch lands they should be given possession at once. With such arrangements, one can easily imagine the unsettled position of the ranchers. Any day might see a total stranger locate on the most fertile part of what had hitherto been the rancher's grazing lands; a quarter or a half, or even whole sections would be fenced off, and preparations made for mixed farming, grain-growing or sugar-beet culture. Over the whole West there are but few ranchers whose operations have not been curtailed by the filling up of the country, and many of them have moved farther back from the railway centers. These disturbing conditions have had a most deleterious effect upon the stock-growing business as it has been carried on hitherto, and everywhere it is common to find ranchers who are anxious to sell out, or who are selling cows and heifers.

Naturally, one asks the question why can ranchers not buy their grazing land and use it to as good advantage as the farmer settler? The rancher's answer to this question is that, because of the abundant rainfall during the past few years, land has been advertised for farming purposes, which, in average seasons, will not produce crops of sufficient yield to justify their sowing, and this unwarranted estimation of the use and value of lands has so enhanced prices that it is out of the question to buy land now for ranching purposes. New settlers and the advocates of mixed farming reply that the lands of the ranching country are capable of producing more than they have been doing (from twenty to forty acres being required for one head of stock), and that, though drouth, frosts, etc., may injure the crops, still, taking an average of years, good livings can be made from quarter sections—and so the strife goes on.

Standing at one side as an interested spectator, knowing the inevitable rule of the conquest of the primitive by the modern, we give it as our opinion that a system of farming peculiar

to the ranching districts will be developed. This system will permit of the keeping of a large number of stock on the minimum area of land. Under this system some land will be kept for grazing, some will grow tame hay, oats and other grains, and some will be devoted to alfalfa-growing. This latter crop, although not yet in general culture, is creeping northward; the inoculation theory is hastening its spread; it possesses just the properties to make it a valuable crop for ranch feeding, and it should be grown. Better stock will be kept all over, so that what a man loses by being compelled to reduce his numbers he will endeavor to gain by improving the quality of all his animals.

Ranchers, we caution not to be deceived and think that dry years will stop the flow of immigration and the invasion of the farmer. Such seasons, doubtless, will come, and these people will suffer, but those of us who stand beside this flood of Westward-moving humanity, realizing something of its impelling force, knowing something of its irresistible power, and being conscious of its inexhaustible source, are driven to the conclusion that the days of free ranges and large ranches are shortening, however much we lament the abandonment of time-honored practices and deplore the departure of ancient traditions. The ranchers must face the conditions; they must either give up their business, or buy land and practice closer herding and hand-feeding. Whether it would be better to buy land now and secure a particular location, or to await the chance of a slump in prices owing to a possible dry season, is a problem for each to solve.

### Controlling the Cattle Trade.

These two opinions were freely expressed at the recent Calgary auction sale, viz.: That some measure should be taken to prevent the holding of sales under other auspices than those of the Cattle-breeders' Association during the week of their sale, and that a system of inspection should be adopted whereby the inferior stuff which finds its way to the sale might be grouped together, thus placing the animals for sale in two divisions. With regard to restraining trade in cattle at any time, people might just as well make up their minds that they cannot invoke the assistance of any power to prevent cattle being offered at any time the owners may choose to sell them. It is our pride that our country is free, and people are at liberty to buy and sell when opportunity best suits. Unfortunately for the cattle industry, the sentiment of the breeders was so strong against the people who had bulls for sale at the Alberta stock-yards that they closed their eyes to the good things to be had there. We say unfortunately for the cattle industry, for among the cattle referred to were bulls that had a lot of real merit, and could have been bought for comparatively low prices, and would have been picked up if the purchasing public had been discriminating, but it is more than likely that the experience of this year will be sufficient guarantee that there will not be a recurrence of the situation.

As to classifying bulls sent up to the association sale, we fail to see any advantage in the scheme. If the object is to raise the standard of the animals sent up, we fail to see how classifying would accomplish much. The best and only real regulator of the quality of any commodity put upon the market is the purchasing public. If the public demands good bulls and good bulls only, then the poorer stuff will be used for some other purpose; but if there is a demand for inferior animals—and this appears to be the case—then bulls of this character will

always be on hand. At all the previous sales the public appeared to want second and third rate priced bulls, and even this year, when people were deploring the prevalence of this class of stock, they sold much better, comparatively, than did those which by common consent would fall into first-class.

### A Serious Menace to Horse-breeding in Canada.

In last week's issue reference was made to that serious disease of horses, known as *maladie-du-coit* (dourine, or equine syphilis). This disease, as will be seen in an article in another column, is so insidious in its nature as to be in many cases indiscernible in the early stages or by any usual methods of inspection.

The fact that the disease in question is first found in Canada on the range (it being doubtful if the disease investigated in Ontario in the eighties was *maladie-du-coit*), will at once bring home to horsemen the great possibility of the disease being widespread; in fact, far more so than official reports can as yet show.

To all appearances the Veterinary Branch has one of the biggest and nastiest problems to handle in the history of veterinary-police work, a work that cannot be successful unless the horse-breeders and farmers of the country lend their aid, especially in notifying the officers of the branch of all suspicious cases, and to speak plainly, horsemen will be well advised to consider as suspicious cases any or all stallions or mares showing the least departure from the normal and healthy appearance of the generative organs. This disease (*maladie-du-coit*) is one that has had heretofore comparatively little attention from the veterinary scientific world, especially the English-speaking section of it; but the serious outbreak of this malady on the Canadian ranges, brought in from the adjoining States, will result in careful study and investigation as to the cause and nature of the disease.

This Western country, more particularly the part included as Alberta and Western Assiniboia, may be considered as unsurpassed anywhere in the world as a horse-breeding country, and it is much to be deplored that so serious a disease has obtained a foothold in the horse-breeding districts of the West, a disease, to use an easily understood simile, comparable in its disastrous effects to the horse-breeding industry to last year's rust on the wheat crop.

Let every stallion owner take warning, and refuse absolutely the use of his horse to mares showing the slightest sign of departure from the natural healthy condition of the sexual organs, and let every farmer intending to breed mares inform himself as to the sexual health of the stallion. At the present time one cannot tell where the disease has got to. Many range-bred mares have been put on the market in Assiniboia and Manitoba, some of which may be diseased. The Veterinary Branch has a number of cases under observation, and doubtless some up-to-date information regarding the disease will be forthcoming by means of bulletins. We would direct attention to excerpts from an article on this disease, taken from the *Journal of Comparative Therapeutics*, which affords some recent information on this very serious disease.

How the disease can be spread any horseman will at once understand, and how it was brought into Canada undetected is just as readily understood once the insidious nature of the disease is remembered, and that mares may be imported apparently healthy, yet capable of imparting the disease to a stallion, which in turn spreads it throughout a district.