

Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association.

A large gathering of prominent and influential breeders of Shorthorns met at Shrewsbury Hall, Toronto, on February 27th, to discuss matters vital to their large and growing interests in the stock-raising industry of our Dominion. The chair was well represented in the person of John Dryden, M. P. P., Brooklin, the president, who was ably supported on his right by the secretary, Mr. Henry Wade, Toronto.

In view of Mr. J. R. Martin's notice of motion to change the standard of registration, some of the members anticipated a lively meeting, but if the latter is to be construed as meaning that the members were likely to be at loggerheads over it, we are pleased to note that they were terribly disappointed; but in the sense of being conducted in a vigorous, business-like manner they were, we are sure, doubly satisfied.

The morning session was mainly taken up with the election of officers, the following being chosen:

President, John Dryden, M. P. P., Brooklin; vice-presidents, Richard Gibson, Delaware; Hon. D. Ferguson, M. P. P., Charlottetown, P. E. I.; J. H. Ladner, Ladner's Landing; J. S. Williams, Knowlton, Quebec; J. E. Fairweather, New Brunswick; James Geddes, Calgary, N. W. T.; Prof. Geo. Lawson, Halifax, N. S.; L. L. Smellie, Binscarth, Man. Secretary and editor, Henry Wade, Toronto.

The appointment of delegates opened the afternoon session. Mr. Jno. Dryden, M. P. P., and Mr. Jas. Russell, Richmond Hill, were appointed delegates to the Industrial Fair Association, and James Morgan, Kerwood, and Arthur Johnson, Greenwood, were appointed delegates to the P. C. Farmers' Institute.

Mr. Richard Gibson, of Delaware then read the following paper on

THE FUTURE OF SHORTHORNS.

To the President and members of the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association.

GENTLEMEN,—At your President's suggestion I offer you a paper on "The Future of Shorthorns." Believing as I do that it is the duty of every member of this association to do what he can to make the annual meeting more interesting, to that end I have consented to prepare a paper on the above subject, and so add my mite, premising however, that I do not wish to pose as a prophet, or that I am able to see further into the future than my brother breeders. I do not pretend as much, but this I do know, that a great many breeders are feeling discouraged, and also that there is but little money to be made out of them now, or prospectively. It is to such I wish to address myself, and I trust I can give them some little encouragement.

In the first place, let us cast back for 4 or 5 years, and notice the change in prices that has taken place in that time amongst the various other breeds of cattle. Herefords were booming; as much as \$500, \$600, or \$700 were being paid for bulls for ranche purposes. That trade is gone. As milkers they are not a success, hence of but little value in the thickly populated States, where milk, butter, cheese and cream are required, as well as beef, and are only of value on the rich black soils within the corn belt of the Prairie States, and their worth has depreciated so much that they are now of less value than the Shorthorn, the breed they maligned so much, and that notwithstanding the amount of money in advertising and helping the boom, in every way that money, tact and organization could accomplish. To stop importations they even went so far as to impose a fee of \$100 on each imported animal offered for entry in their head-book. While the Shorthorn breeder fought against every breed unassisted, he had also to fight those who should have been his friends, viz., other Shorthorn breeders; that is, breeders of other strains of blood besides his own, and they were often his worst foes. Whereas the Hereford breeders were thoroughly organized and disciplined and pooled their cattle and fought as one man, hence the secret of so many triumphs in the show-rings.

What of the Angus? Notwithstanding their successes at the fat cattle shows their star is set, except in the corn belt of the Prairie States. Have they not been worked for all they are worth? I venture to predict that within a very few months there will scarcely be a respectable herd left in Ontario; they are not wanted here, and the boom in the States is broken—no marching through city streets with herdsman dressed in kilts, leading the "Bonnie Doddies," with pipers at the head of a procession. No importations are being made, and last year the first for some time, at the annual spring sales in Scotland, the Shorthorns were not only in most demand, but actually realized the higher figures. I will not detain you continuing the parallel with Holsteins, Jerseys, etc. You all know they have depreciated in value more than the Shorthorn.

But I would not have you assume that I predict a brighter future for the Shorthorn because of the depreciation in value of the other breeds; but only in as much as so many young breeders were coaxed away from the golden calf to seek after false gods in the shape of antagonistic breeds; and as these breeds have been tried and found wanting, in the future we may expect an exodus of young breeders who have hitherto of late years been persuaded to invest in anything but Shorthorns. But there are signs that would indicate we are now nearing the morn of a bright and prosperous day, and I think the golden rays can now be seen—instanced by the sale in Chicago last November, when 79 head sold for \$43,320,—average over \$548—and 12 head of one family sold for \$29,050, an average of \$2,420.

Again, there is the fact that Shorthorns are thoroughly useful. They are not a fancy article, like a piece of old china, but intensely practical, and of every day utility. That they the more nearly approach the general purpose cow than any other pure breed is unquestionable, and if any doubters could only see the good cows now used in the large dairies in the vicinity of London they would no longer be in doubt as to their value as milkers; and my firm belief is that even if the Hereford or Angus could take their place as beef manufacturers, their influence in the dairy economy could not be filled elsewhere, and they would be wanted for that purpose.

It may be objected I am saying too much on this subject, but I feel it is one of the most important questions in connection with the breed to-day. You can have good milkers and good feeders. I have had them and so can others.

Though prices are not as high nor the demand as great as we might wish for, Shorthorns can yet be bred profitably, and I wish you not to forget that in the natural course of events there must be times of depression. There never has been a business or industry of any magnitude that has been continued for a length of time but what has met with reverses, and why should you expect the breeding of stock to be an exception? There have been periods in the history of the breed on this continent when the situation was gloomy indeed. Mr. Allan, in his history of the Shorthorn, writes, "With the year, 1840, under the continued depression of the financial interests of the country at large, the spirit so active during several periods in cultivating the Shorthorns, waned, and further importations ceased. . . . There was little or no encouragement for breeding Shorthorns. Under this depressed condition of affairs hundreds of well-bred bull calves were castrated for steers, and many cow-calves spayed and reared for the shambles. Prices for the best blooded animals were merely nominal; public sales were scarcely made at all as in the past years, and private sales infrequent; nor was the depression for a few years only, but continuous or nearly to quite the year 1850. In Kentucky, New York and New England, Shorthorn values were no better, and many breeders who had begun rearing them but a few years before, became disgusted with their stock, turned their choice bred cows into the dairies, put them to common bulls and sold off their calves remorselessly to the butcher. During this depressing period numerous good pedigrees were lost as not being worth preserving, and many valuable families of this lordly race became almost if not wholly extinct."

What a picture! And yet in the year mentioned, viz., 1850, we find a small bevy of American gentlemen crossing the Atlantic and attending a sale held at Kirklevington in May, where they succeeded in purchasing 3 females. And again, three years later at the Tortworth sale, the same, with other Americans, laid the foundation for a herd whence a single cow

realized very much more than the whole 68 animals brought at Kirklevington—a herd that at public auction realized \$380,490 for 108 head.

Then let us take heart of grace; let us not be discouraged. The signs are right and the good times are coming. There never has been, within my memory, a time when a breeder could so easily set himself right if on the wrong track. Never a time when a foundation for a herd could be procured at such a small cost, and never a time when money invested in well-bred animals at current prices seemed so certain of being safe and profitable. Just as sure as summer follows winter, so sure will depression be followed by buoyancy. And just as sure as Ontario is worth farming, stock must be the leading feature; and if so, the Shorthorn must take that high position to which he is entitled, both by his lineage, prepotency and intrinsic worth.

On concluding his paper Mr. Gibson was tendered a vote of thanks for his able essay, which was thoroughly appreciated by all his hearers, and a resolution was passed that the leading stock papers be asked to give it publicity.

After a short discussion it was moved by Mr. Francis Green, seconded by Mr. James Russell,

That all calves dropped after January, 1889, be registered when 18 months old, or double charges be made for their entry.

This motion was carried, members concurring in the view that besides aiding materially the financial condition of the association, it would also lessen many of the present difficulties of registration.

Mr. J. R. Martin, of Cayuga, then introduced his motion the notice of which appeared in our February number. The members were almost unanimous in desiring to have the standard remain untouched, though a few members supported Mr. Martin in his renovation. The outcome of the matter was that a motion to the effect that the rule be recast, but not so as to affect the standard in any way, was carried.

Mr. J. C. Snell, Edmonton, then followed with an excellent paper that was well received, on

THE MILKING PROPERTIES OF SHORTHORNS AND HOW TO IMPROVE THEM.

It has been justly claimed by the friends of the breed that the Shorthorns combine all the desirable qualities we need to look for in the bovine race, and we may safely say that they cover all the ground more completely than does any other breed in existence.

For the production of the largest quantity of the best quality of beef at the least cost, the records of public tests in England and America unambiguously show that the Shorthorns and their grades have grandly held their own, while as improver of other breeds and of native cattle no other breed has shown such splendid results, as is seen in the fine grade cattle of this and other countries.

These are assertions which the few who are interested in cattle of the rival beef-breeds may dispute, but it is clear that the consensus of public opinion in this country, after a fair trial of the different breeds for the last 25 or 30 years, is overwhelmingly in favor of the Shorthorns, as is evidenced by the large and increasing number of breeders of these, as compared with the few who have adopted the other breeds, and the very limited extent to which they or their grades have spread in the country.

But we have evidently arrived at a point in the history of agriculture in the Dominion, and especially in Ontario, where the cultivation of grain for sale can no longer hold the prominent place in the plans and resources of the general farmer that they formerly held, and when the rapid growth of our towns and cities, and the consequent demand for dairy products clearly point to the wisdom of providing for the supply of these requirements, and to the necessity of breeders of Shorthorns giving more attention to the milking properties of their cattle.

I have no doubt that one reason why this subject has been assigned me as the basis of this paper has been the experience of other breeders as well as myself in the last few years in receiving so many inquiries for bulls bred from good milking families.

Fortunately for us we have no cause to be ashamed