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"THE PROFESSION WHICH I HAVE EMBRACED REQUIRES A KNOWLEDGE OF EVERYTHING."

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The Prospect for the Beef Industry in Canada

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IT is estimated that Canada's cattle number slightly over 6,000,000 head, a decrease of over 1,000,000 as compared with 1907, and yet during the same period our population has increased approximately 34 per cent. The natural result, of course, has been a gradual falling off in the number of beef cattle exported during the last decade.

With the European markets for all meat animals, looming big at the present time, to say nothing of the demand at home, the question arises—is the Canadian farmer in a position to take advantage of this increased demand, or is the outlook for a permanent market sufficiently attractive for him to construct his business with a view of taking advantage of it later. In regard to the question of prices of meat for the future, it seems reasonably clear that the effect of the present conflict on the Continent has not been the sole factor in the upward tendency of prices for all classes of meat. At the same time, it must not be overlooked that the establishment of markets in Europe, due to war conditions, will have an important effect on the future development of the beef industry in this country.

The slaughter of beef herds in Europe during the early stages of the war, and the increased demand for all meats since, has resulted in a greater scarcity. Aside from any effect the above condition has had, there were other rea-

sons just as important and possibly more permanent which had an influence in stiffening prices.

A brief review of conditions leading up to the scarcity of beef animals might not be out of place. Meat production, in any form of animal production, must yield a larger tangible profit than is obtained from the selling of raw material from the farm, before we may hope to keep enough people engaged in the business to supply our needs. In other words, the returns must be larger than from hay and grain selling, as there is considerably more expense involved, in the way of more buildings, more capital and more and higher-priced labor. Further, the establishment of meat production on a stable basis must, first of all, take account of the establishment of a market for live stock which is sufficiently remunerative to remove the tremendous hazard that has surrounded the industry during the past twenty years. The older the agriculture of a country, the more artificial the environment of cattle, and the more intensive the method of production the more complex becomes the problem connected with the industry. As the problem becomes more complex and production more intensified, the cost of production necessarily increases. These are the conditions which surround the industry in the oldest settled districts at the present time. Cattle raising is, therefore, passing through a transition stage, attempting