

WITH THE FARMERS

UNITED STATES FOLLOWS THE LEAD OF ALBERTA.

Lesson Learned That Will Save Loss of \$800,000,000 in Cattle Trade—Red Deer Cattle Going to Chicago.

Chicago, Ill., Dec. 30.—"Maybe those range riders having out there in the West would just hate all this talk about the cattle trade," drawled a Texas ranchman. He waved his hand dismissively about the amphitheatre where the great stock show was held recently. "Heck, cattle from the range always have got a hard deal ever since we began getting in this expensive breeding stock. Place of snow and north wind for them in winter. Hauled for hours in crowded cars without water, only to get knocked in the head without a smell of high life like this." Out in the south and snow here were 15,000 head of cattle waiting for the train to the slaughterhouse. Seemingly no Thanksgiving or Christmas or New Year's brought to the millions of range cattle cause for rejoicing. And yet, if they did not know it, the millions of suffering steers upon the range have cause for a grand celebration this year, for at least they would have found a friend. Alarmed at the frightful loss and suffering during the severe winters, the United States government has intervened on behalf of the ill-used cattle and is now making a campaign of education to bring about better conditions for the live stock which furnish such a large item in America's annual bill of fare.

An Expensive Lesson.

Bound up with the government's tardy action is the story of the discovery of an \$800,000,000 leak in the nation's wealth, of a lesson learned from Canada and of conditions in the range that beggar belief.

For years reports have poured into the department of agriculture of the suffering and wholesale deaths of cattle left to winter on the range with no other food than the grass that the snow did not cover and no shelter but may new line fences. Each year the report was worse, and finally, not long ago, the department sent an agent to investigate and to suggest possible remedies.

The situation he found was frightful. In the last year for which figures are available 2,887,027 cattle died from all causes, over half of them succumbing from exposure. Over 1,000,000 sheep died from exposure, and another million from other causes. Hundreds of thousands of sheep and steers are left to their own devices every winter, when snow and ice cover the grass of the plains (the only fodder for the cattle) and after frantic, futile efforts made by the cattle to penetrate the crusts of ice, with lips and noses torn to the bone and blood freezing in their veins, they mutely surrender to their fate.

This awful, were it unavoidable, but, according to the report, the most awful part of it seems to be that no attempt is made to provide water and shelter for the stock, it being calculated that a large percentage of the stock may be lost if the winter be a severe one, and that if there is no expenditure for food, the cattle being made to subsist on the grass of the plains, even a hard winter of cattle cold and starvation may be sustained, and still leave a profit to the cattle raiser.

The financial loss incurred each year in this way is estimated at no less than \$24,000,000. Thousands of frozen carcasses can be seen any spring lying in snow drifts or leaning against the endless fences of the railroad right of way.

Free Range No More.

Now the "free range" is no more. Yet the range method persists. In the majority of cases, and the average rancher expects to find a loss of 75 per cent of his stock at the end of a severe winter.

The full significance to the wealth of the country of this reckless waste of animal life is only disclosed by a careful examination of recent government figures of the loss of cattle. The story they tell is startling.

On January 1, 1917, there were 51,666,731 cattle in the United States, exclusive of milch cows. This was the largest number in the history of the country. The value of these cattle was estimated at \$1,350,000,000. In spite of the size of this figure it is more than \$25,000,000 less than the total value in 1901, when there were 6,000,000 less cattle. In other words, the hardships and losses due to the range winters have not only retarded the growth of the number of cattle in the country, but they have also caused a marked deterioration in the quality of the survivors.

On the basis of the government figures the average value of the cattle of the country on January 1, 1917, was a trifle under \$20 apiece. Six years later, on January 1, 1923, after the range had been fenced in and grazed on, an average value was a trifle over \$10 or a depreciation of nearly 50 per cent. As was seen, this loss is absolute as well as relative and the cause of it is not worth to-day the price of the smaller herds of six years ago. On the basis of the 1917 values the range and stockmen of the country would have lost \$1,000,000,000. Clearly it is up to Uncle Sam to find some means of putting a stop to this enormous depredation.

In their search for a solution of the problem, the government experts turned to Canada, to discover, if possible, how conditions had been met there. Curiously enough they found the situation entirely different, owing to more activities and richer forage for the steers.

days, with occasionally scanty snowfalls, broken by frequent and prolonged periods of warm weather. Sometimes the temperature drops very low but seldom dangerously so; and, anomalously, the average is considerably above the average further south. This cuts down the suffering and loss of live stock to a marked degree.

The problem for the Canadian stock grower is also simplified by the fact that Canadian cattle are free from that other curse of the range, Texas fever, which alone causes a loss of from \$400,000 to \$1,000,000 in the United States in 1900. Alberta in particular, owing to its location in the northern latitude, is free from the ravages of injurious insects of all sorts, one of which is responsible for the deadly Texas fever.

But the day of the free range is over in Alberta, as it is in Texas and the Dakotas. The picturesque cowboy is doomed and the English "rough rider" no longer rules, from the saddle, domains as large as principalities. The same fertile prairie that has enabled the stock grower to gain the eye and ear of the farmer, the vast cattle ranges are already giving up the ghost to the grain and stock raising.

Here, if anywhere, the cattle have reason to be "grateful" and might be expected to celebrate Christmas in the state, the ranchers of Alberta have avoided the mistake of overcrowding, which leads to overgrazing, failure of grass and starvation. They have learned the lesson that our own department of agriculture is trying to inculcate, of the enormous price that is to be made by raising smaller herds of better stock. The results are already evident in the increased shipments to Chicago.

"I reckon you're from Dakota, stranger," said the Missouri man to one of the men who were with the cattle. "No, sir, we're from Alberta," was the patriotic response.

"The Missouri man was nonplussed. "Stranger, you've got me," he said. "That state ain't on my map."

"Definitely the Canadian produced a map and indicated a point midway between Calgary and Edmonton."

"Stranger, you're a long way from home, but if those are grass cattle you've got good grass there, and what's more, you know how to make cattle."

This is merely one of the incidents that give color to the daily life of great stockyards, but it is an incident of significance, for Red Deer, from which the cattle came, is far from the cattle country of the United States. It is included in the great white blank that stretched in unbroken desolation across the prairie, and it is used to be covered with rich, nourishing grasses, so that it is possible to raise cattle and ship them as far south as Chicago and still make a profit in connection with the business.

The Canadian stock raiser has had orders for 1,500 cars for the shipment of cattle during the month of November alone, making this month's stock shipments in proportion to the history of the country. An idea of the quality of the range bred cattle in some of the shipments can be had by noting the prices they brought. Top long recently averaged 1.36c per lb. and sold at \$6.10 per cwt., grossing \$5.18 per head. A second lot, averaging 1.37c per lb., was put over \$5.30, grossing \$5.57, and the third lot, averaging 1.38c per lb., sold at \$5.50, grossing \$5.64. Some medium weight cows, averaging 1.39c per lb., sold at \$5.50, grossing \$5.64.

Red Deer is the most northerly point from which cattle have ever been shipped to Chicago as yet, but representatives of Swift & Co., Inc., predict that the Peace River range, lying away north of the Saskatchewan valley, will within the next decade be the centre of an important range cattle industry.

No Problem in Canada. In other words, Canada has no such live stock problem as there is in the United States, and the question now before Uncle Sam is whether or not to supply the demand for live stock with that of Alberta by mitigating the effects of our severe winters.

The department of agriculture has opened its campaign by trying to induce stockmen to provide food and shelter, by showing them the profit to be made in that way. In the next place, it is urging them to rest their over-grazed lands and to promote better grass growth by reseeding pastures. The stockmen themselves are asking for some kind of legislation which will enable them to lease and improve sections of the public land and that they will be capable of taking care of the large herds now grazing on them. Lastly, the best solution of the difficulty lies in putting down the herds and grazing up the stock, so that when the stockman can no longer keep his herds in position, he can dispose of high class feeding cattle which he will aim to sell as yearlings of high class to eastern feeders.

All these plans are brought out in the recent report of J. S. Cotton, who is assistant in range investigation for the government's bureau of plant industry. The hearty co-operation of the live stock men is required before any real results can be accomplished.

But this co-operation is given a stop, will be put to what is now a blot on the country's industrial life as well as a source of distress. For a brighter day will dawn for the much abused beef steers.

which was rather disappointing after the firmness of American cattle in the autumn. There soon was a sharp decline through heavy selling, principally in Chicago, where Paton's big bull is said to have disposed of 7,000,000 bushels.

In Chicago there was a decline of from 1 1/2 to nearly 3 cents, while in Minneapolis December was down 2 1/2, May 3 1/2 and July dropped from \$1.14 1/2 to \$1.11 1/2. Winnipeg markets opened slightly weaker than Saturday's close, but trading was active, making the day as business was fairly brisk. December and January options were 1 1/2 lower at close; while May was 1 1/2 and July 1 1/2 lower.

The demand for cash wheat was very light, but there was good demand for lower grades for export. The world's shipments, which totaled 4,000,000 bushels, were just slightly lower than last week, and practically same for corresponding week of last year. When on passage shows increase of 1,500,000 bushels. Primary receipts of wheat Saturday amounted to 100,000 bushels, of which were 200,000 bushels and total of wheat and flour brought total to 480,000 bushels.

Winnipeg options—Wheat, December open \$1.06, close \$1.05 1/2; January open \$1.07, close \$1.06 1/2; May open \$1.13, close \$1.12 1/2; July open \$1.14, close \$1.13 1/2.

CHICAGO LIVE STOCK.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—Stock yard values are all higher despite bad weather. Live stock are 25 cents higher. Buyers are after decent cattle. Exporters and shippers were factors in the trade largely on a \$4.75 to \$5.00 basis. Exporters paid \$4.75 to \$5.00 for choice, \$4.50 to \$4.75 for good, and \$4.25 to \$4.50 for fair. Receipts of cattle were about 20,000 today, which was enough for the trade. Shipments first brought good fat steers freely, but the packers were inclined to hang back. Late in the day before they had transacted much business. The general market was steady in some places and a little higher in others. Good fat steers are relatively scarce, but more popular than any other class. Common light grades are hard to sell. Cows and heifers sold about steady. Business on the farm basis and a better demand for cattle gave color to the market, which was higher for anything desirable.

WINNIPEG LIVE STOCK.

Winnipeg, Dec. 31.—The following prices prevail at the stock yards: Cattle—Choice, 100 to 120 lbs., 10c; good, 9c; fair, 8c; poor, 7c. Steers—Choice, 100 to 120 lbs., 10c; good, 9c; fair, 8c; poor, 7c. Hogs—Choice, 100 to 120 lbs., 10c; good, 9c; fair, 8c; poor, 7c. Sheep—Choice, 100 to 120 lbs., 10c; good, 9c; fair, 8c; poor, 7c.

TO-DAY'S GRAIN MARKETS.

Winnipeg, Dec. 31.—Cables were little lower on account of the sharp decline on this side yesterday, but the American markets became strong again and closed 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 higher. The Winnipeg market followed suit and closed 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 higher. The following prices prevail: Wheat—No. 1 Northern, 1.03 1/2; No. 2 Northern, 1.02 1/2; No. 3 Northern, 1.01 1/2; No. 4, 1.00 1/2; No. 5, 99 1/2; No. 6, 98 1/2; No. 7, 97 1/2; No. 8, 96 1/2; No. 9, 95 1/2; No. 10, 94 1/2; No. 11, 93 1/2; No. 12, 92 1/2; No. 13, 91 1/2; No. 14, 90 1/2; No. 15, 89 1/2; No. 16, 88 1/2; No. 17, 87 1/2; No. 18, 86 1/2; No. 19, 85 1/2; No. 20, 84 1/2; No. 21, 83 1/2; No. 22, 82 1/2; No. 23, 81 1/2; No. 24, 80 1/2; No. 25, 79 1/2; No. 26, 78 1/2; No. 27, 77 1/2; No. 28, 76 1/2; No. 29, 75 1/2; No. 30, 74 1/2; No. 31, 73 1/2; No. 32, 72 1/2; No. 33, 71 1/2; No. 34, 70 1/2; No. 35, 69 1/2; No. 36, 68 1/2; No. 37, 67 1/2; No. 38, 66 1/2; No. 39, 65 1/2; No. 40, 64 1/2; No. 41, 63 1/2; No. 42, 62 1/2; No. 43, 61 1/2; No. 44, 60 1/2; No. 45, 59 1/2; No. 46, 58 1/2; No. 47, 57 1/2; No. 48, 56 1/2; No. 49, 55 1/2; No. 50, 54 1/2; No. 51, 53 1/2; No. 52, 52 1/2; No. 53, 51 1/2; No. 54, 50 1/2; No. 55, 49 1/2; No. 56, 48 1/2; No. 57, 47 1/2; No. 58, 46 1/2; No. 59, 45 1/2; 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