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The Beef Cattle Trade

THE EFFECT OF REMOVAL OF RESTRICTION AGAINST ARGENTINE CATTLE IN GREAT BRITAIN

THE beef cattle situation reached another stage of development last week when the Hon. Mr. Hanbury, President of the British Board of Agriculture announced that the restrictions on the Argentine live cattle trade would be removed allowing the Argentine cattle equal privileges with Canadian in entering the British markets. Coming as this does so soon after the Argentine had raised the embargo against the importation of pure bred stock from Great Britain into that country, it would seem as if some sort of a "tit for tat" arrangement had been previously agreed upon. However, that may be, the fact remains that the removal of the embargo against Canadian store cattle is not of the first importance in the opinion of British statesmen. From a British standpoint this reciprocal arrangement will be of far greater value to the British trade in pure bred stock, than anything it might gain by the removal of the embargo against Canada. The Argentine previous to the prohibition of pure bred stock importations into that country a year or two ago, had been the largest and best purchaser of Britain's high class breeding animals paying high prices and securing the best animals. This trade as we pointed out a few weeks ago is likely to be renewed this season on a larger scale than ever, which will explain to some extent the desire of the British Government to lessen the restriction against Argentine cattle.

The English ports were closed to live cattle from the Argentine Republic in 1900. In 1898 the imports of live cattle from that country amounted to 89,000 head. Efforts were made by the Argentine government in 1901 to have this restriction removed, but they were unsuccessful. However, if they were unable to ship live cattle they made great headway in the shipment of dressed beef to Great Britain, the figures being 771,929 cwt. in 1901, as compared with 411,962 cwt. in 1900. This is a gain of nearly 100 per cent. and would offset in a large measure the loss of their live cattle trade. The diversion of so many live cattle that had formerly been sent to Great Britain on foot into the dressed beef trade is evidence that the removal of the restrictions will not influence the markets as much as many would suppose.

But the question which dealers

and cattle raisers on this side of the Atlantic are asking is what effect the British Government's recent action will have on the price of beef cattle. The dealers in this city express different views regarding the matter. While some believe it will bring the price down, others are just as confident that it will have little effect for a time at least. We are inclined to the latter view. The high prices for beef at the present time are due to several causes, one of the chief ones being the scarcity of cattle not only in Canada but in the United States and Great Britain. While this is true consumption has greatly increased, especially in the United States and the old land. The supply of live stock in these countries is not keeping pace with the home demand. During the past ten years, population has increased much faster than the number of cattle, hogs and sheep. According to federal census figures recently made public, the number of beef cattle in the United States has increased but 12 per cent. in the decade, while population gained 22 per cent. In milch cows the increase is less than 4 per cent., in sheep 11 per cent. and in swine 9½ per cent. In a word population or the power to consume has increased twice as fast as the number of meat and dairy animals. In Great Britain the situation is somewhat similar. During the past decade while the population has increased, 3,720,000 the number of cattle has only increased some 133,000, while sheep have decreased to the extent of 3,200,000 head. These figures require no comment as they explain to a very large extent the rapid increase in the consumption of meat products of late years and the falling off in the supply.

Expert Dairy Testimony

Dairymen should read carefully the report of the Dairy Conference elsewhere in this issue. This conference was of a somewhat unique character, in that the delegates were those who are making a specialty of instruction in the making of cheese and butter. It was a gathering of experts, and in this report, which was especially prepared by a delegate for the readers of *The Farming World*, will be found the expert testimony of those who have made it their life-study to advance the cause of good dairying in Canada.

A prominent feature of the conference was the attention given to the patron's or farmer's side of dairying. The patron is no longer expected to supply whole milk only, but pure, clean-flavored milk, that will leave no bad taint in the

finished product of cheese and butter. The trade demands this, and if the farmer will not willingly supply milk of the best quality, he must be made to do so. The experience of the instructors present, and it coincides with our own, is that the majority of patrons do not wilfully neglect their milk, but through ignorance of what is required in the care of milk, fail to perform their duties in relation to co-operative dairying, as they should. Such being the case, some special effort should be made to reach the patron and instruct him as to what his duties are.

Another subject that was strongly emphasized, was that of proper sanitation in cheese factories and creameries. Too strong emphasis cannot be laid upon the importance of this. A great many of the factory buildings and surroundings in this country are a disgrace and should not be tolerated in any civilized community where any regard is had to the public health, let alone the manufacture of so highly concentrated and delicate a food product as butter or cheese. Surely it is time some strong measures were put in force, either to compel better buildings and sanitary conditions, or that such factories as will not listen to reason in this matter shall be put out of business.

The discussion on the work and methods of instruction in the different provinces should lead to improvement in this direction. That Ontario, the pioneer in dairy matters in Canada, was shown to be behind the other provinces in her methods is something that our dairymen should turn over carefully in their minds. While the instruction in this Province has been valuable, it seems to have lacked in not having a sufficient grip on the factories to compel better methods. We would be glad to have the views of any of our readers on this and other matters discussed.

A British Report on Canadian Cheese

At the dairy conventions and elsewhere during the past winter the statement was made by the Hon. Mr. Fisher and others that Canadian cheese had greatly deteriorated in quality during 1901. This statement is fully sustained in the report of the cheese sub-committee of the Home and Foreign Produce Exchange of London, England, received by the Minister of Agriculture a few days ago. Coming as it does, from the very parties in England, who handle Canadian cheese, the report has the greater signifi-