

The Cattle Trade.

In another column will be found an interesting letter from Mr. Robt. Ironsides, M. P. P., member of a leading firm of Manitoba cattle exporters, Gordon & Ironsides. Mr. Ironsides speaks most encouragingly of the cattle trade, and in so far as he advises the *thorough feeding of good steers* we are with him.

The average of 3½ cents of cars in Winnipeg for the 9,000 head shipped during the past season appears to us above rather than below the mark, but be that as it may, under this "blessing in disguise"—"embargo," which Mr. Ironsides so strongly favors, he can only hold out as a prophecy 3½ cents for prime shippers next spring. Certainly not a very brilliant outlook, but then, as Mr. Ironsides points out, the manure would be left on the farm, which must henceforth be looked upon as an item of very considerable import. But in the face of such rather discouraging prospects, let no one conclude that the feeding business is "done," for "it's a long lane that has no turning," and cattle-feeders have now been travelling this lane for a long time. England has suffered from a severe drought, and in consequence thousands of the plainer females will be hurried to the shambles. The great ranching States to the south and west of us have been pouring "she" cattle into the stock yards at Kansas City, Omaha and Chicago for years past, to us every year lessening their producing power. The tide is bound soon to turn, and then fortunate will be the farmer who is loaded with the right kind of "stuff." Now, however, is the time to prepare; *cull out, CULL OUT, CULL OUT!* Away with the scrub, his day is past. Never again can he pay his fare to the world's markets. Use nothing but pure bred-sires—they can be bought cheaper now than ever before in the history of this Province, and get the right kind of one while you are at it. A Herd Book certificate is not sufficient unless accompanied with a strong constitution and a well-rounded-out, thick-fleshed carcass. It don't matter so much about "color," "a tail a wee bit high," or "a horn a trifle heavy." Get the substance, never mind the shadow.

Then shelter must be provided and good use made of the feed-bucket. Shove the youngsters right from the start. It's young beef that's wanted. The Englishman does not now want the roast of a five-year-old that will reappear upon the table day after day for a week, but calls for the small young roast that can be disposed off at a sitting. And on supplying the demand there will be profit, but only well-bred, well-cared and well-fed steers can ever fill the bill.

The Stock Breeders' Association Sale at Guelph.

On Thursday, the second day of the Fat Stock Show at Guelph, the recently organized Stock Breeders' Association held their sale. As time was limited, this sale had to be commenced before that of the Agricultural College had finished. However, there was a full attendance in the Drill Shed, the building in which it was held being crowded to such an extent that it was difficult for intending purchasers to see the animals.

The bidding was spirited when Shorthorn bulls of merit were brought into the ring, and we understand that quite a number changed hands at fairly good figures.

In a letter received from Mr. G. B. Hood, he writes:—

"With reference to the sale, I wish to say that it was in the "Galloway" and "Herefords" that the sale was disappointing, there being very few buyers for these classes. In Shorthorns the demand was good, a large number of buyers being present from all parts of the Province. Some of the animals offered were not first-class and sold at low prices, but good animals realized good prices, from \$80 to \$100 being readily paid. Quite a number more could have been sold at these figures, as many buyers had to go unsupplied. Considering the dull times, the scarcity of money and the short time the breeders had to prepare their animals, it certainly was not a failure, and the Directors feel satisfied that it was a step in the right direction, which if followed up will be to the advantage of the breeders of the Province."

Some interesting experiments on the nitrification going on in the soil under different conditions have recently been published by the well-known French investigator, M. Deherain. Among the results of these experiments, the most interesting, from a practical point of view, was the striking effects that stirring the soil had in increasing the production of nitrates. In the experiment two equal quantities of the same soil were kept for six weeks under precisely the same conditions, except that the one portion was left untouched, while the other portion was stirred. At the end of the period it was found that the nitric nitrogen formed in the stirred soil was enormously in excess of that formed in the portion which was left untouched. The experimenter is of the opinion that the process of nitrification in soils would be greatly increased by the introduction of implements more suited for pulverizing the soil than those commonly in use.

The Tenth Ontario Provincial Fat Stock Show at Guelph.

The Tenth Annual Provincial Fat Stock Show, held under the joint management of the Agriculture and Arts Association, the Sheep and Swine Breeders' Associations, and the Guelph Fat Stock Club, opened December 6th, under most favorable conditions. Two difficult factors to contend with, the weather and the roads, were at their best. The temperature being pleasant, the business of the show went along with comfort to all concerned, while the capital sleighing was a great advantage to those who had heavy loads of swine and sheep to move to and from railway stations.

To say that the Show was a success in point of number of entries is a very mild way of putting it, but the heavy Christmas cattle, that were the centre of attraction in former years, were neither allowed in the prize list nor are they to be found in the herds of those who used to take a pride in bringing out monster beevés.

The fact is the utter uselessness of this class of beef on the block, its unprofitableness to the feeder, and its neglect by the consumer will probably prevent us again seeing steers of 2,400 lbs at Fat Stock Shows. It is true they are an acquisition to the show ring, but the fact is that these cattle were chiefly composed of useless hulks of blubber entirely beyond the digestive capacity of the average consumer, and buyers of Christmas roasts got tired of paying two prices for what they could not eat, therefore the three-year-old highly-finished steer with his 2200 or 2300 avoirdupois is now a thing of past history. In his place, however, feeders are aiming to produce steers under two that will turn the scale at 1400 or 1500, with much better satisfaction to the three parties interested, viz., the feeder, the butcher and the consumer.

It is true that the Guelph Show did not bring out many real good steers, but there were a few of a right good sort, while heifers were as good a class as we ever remember seeing.

The show of fat sheep was acknowledged on all hands to be the best ever seen on this continent, not only in point of numbers, but in the wonderfully uniform quality and high finish of the animals brought out. This was true of all the breeds in the building. We did not see a single inferior specimen, while the classes were filled to overflowing with sheep brought out in the pink of condition. In all there were something over 300 entries, which taxed to the utmost the capacity of the space allotted to this department. Swine were also forward in vast numbers, and the quality of those on exhibition is an evidence of the vast resources we have for producing pork products suitable to supply the demand from the better class of consumers abroad. Champions of each particular breed evidently had endeavored to build still higher the reputation of the variety in which they were most interested, and this resulted in an exhibition of prime porkers such as never has been seen at any previous Canadian Fat Stock Show.

The Sheep and Swine Breeders' Associations are to be congratulated upon the success that has attended their efforts in furnishing such a grand exhibit in the two departments which have developed so surprisingly under their fostering care. If we could venture to find fault with the management, it would be in endeavoring to crowd too much work into the short space of time allotted to them: for what with judging the different classes, the very full and interesting breeders' meetings, the two sales, one of the surplus stock of the Ontario Agricultural College and another of the Breeders' Association, much of the work had to be carried on simultaneously. This is unfortunate, for many visitors came with a view of seeing and hearing all that transpired, and of necessity missed much that otherwise would have interested them.

Among the cattle classes, grades and crosses were first ordered out for inspection, with Mr. Thirlow, of Barrie, to tie the ribbons. Steers over two and under three hardly answered the description defined for this section, and rather a motley lot, consisting of six, all ages, answered the call. Here a plain but well-fed roan steer shown by James Riddock, Everton, carried first, while a thick-fleshed yearling shown by James Oke & Sons, Alvinston, was placed a strong second. The third ribbon was sent to a yearling entry shown by Thomas Russell, of Exeter, while the highly commended was given to Henry McGurk, Colville, who had forward a grade Hereford in only ordinary condition.

The class for steers over one and under two was a vast improvement and a striking contrast to the previous ring. Here eight right good, thick-fleshed, beautifully-formed steers responded to the call. James Oke & Sons were awarded the first for a grandly fed red, with capital meaty top. He had such crops as are rarely seen in a yearling. This was a steer wonderfully even-fleshed, and of capital character—certainly one of the best finished beasts in the show.

The second ribbon was sent to Stewart Bros., who had forward a large, well-grown steer, pos-

sessing plenty of natural flesh, well-covered top and grand neck veins, but as he was a bit rough at the tail head he was rightly placed second.

Messrs. Bolton Bros., Armstrong's Mills, won third place with a well-developed steer of good, even form, but he lacked the thick, heavy, natural flesh and prime finish of his two more successful competitors.

To A. A. Armstrong was given highly commended on a steer of fourteen months, which from a breeder's or feeder's standpoint was equal to anything in the ring. He is grandly coated, well formed, with plenty of character and feeding capacity. He is of superlative excellence, but is six to eight months younger than those placed before him.

The ring for calves under one year consisted of a quartette of exceedingly promising youngsters; for the first time we had to join issue in the allotment of the ribbons. The judge placed a good, thick, meaty calf, bred by D. D. Wilson, Seaford, first. A. & F. Bolton were placed second with a nicely formed youngster of six months, while the best calf of the three, to our mind, was given third. This one was also shown by D. D. Wilson, and like his other entry was the get of his prize-winning imported bull Prime Minister. In this case the third prize calf was beautifully formed, with grand meaty top and very showy make-up. He was scarcely as fat as the first, but more promising.

The call for grade cows and heifers in the section over three years old brought out seven good specimens, but it was not long before all eyes centered upon a three-year-old heifer shown by James Rennie, of Wick. In fact, it is seldom that such a beautiful specimen is presented. She possesses a well-nigh perfect conformation, a wonderful wealth of flesh, and all her beef points were covered to perfection. She is remarkably fine in the bone and especially light in offal, while her prime finish made her appear every inch what she was, a butcher's beast *par excellence*.

In this section the second ribbon went to a beast of entirely opposite type in a heifer shown by J. R. Caldwell, Fergus. This entry was a strong, upstanding heifer with rather heavy bone, but she had a good touch, and was both well fed and thickly fleshed.

D. D. Wilson was given third place with a neat, smooth cow whose frame carried a lot of good roasts. She had a good, thick, meaty top, and gave evidence of killing out a lot of good beef.

In grade and cross-bred heifers under three a handsome quartette faced the judge, led by a right good one from the Oke contingent. This heifer had wonderful crops, good rib roasts, capital neck veins, and was evidently another candidate for sweepstake honors. She also out-scaled the other competitors, and was the ripest beast in the section.

To James Rennie was sent second for a nicely-fed two-year-old, but she lacked in the scale in comparison with the previously mentioned entry.

A beautiful yearling heifer was shown by Mr. Rennie, which only required age to make her fully equal to anything shown. She is a most superior yearling, with wonderful development for her age, possessing any amount of flesh and in handsome conformation was the equal of anything in the show.

Wednesday evening was chosen as the time to tie the ribbons in the pure-bred classes, and the work began by calling in Shorthorn steers over two and under three years, to be inspected by Mr. Ellis, of Galt. Only one steer of this age was forward; this, however, was a right good specimen, shown by W. B. Cockburn, Aberfoyle. In addition to being the heaviest beast in the show, this beautifully-formed white son of Indian Chief gave evidence of dressing out an exceedingly good carcass of edible beef. He had a goodly proportion of flesh on all the more highly prized parts, while from a breeder's or feeder's standpoint he was all that could be desired.

In yearling steers a grandly-bred and grandly-formed steer was forward in the entry by H. & W. Smith, Hay. This was Village Hero, by the stock bull Blake, and of the celebrated Village Hero family. Under his white coat he carried sufficient evidence of the most toothsome roasts, which a year's feeding may make a bit rich for ordinary palates, but his form and character are such that whoever lives to see him another year may expect to find him a hard nut to crack.

The remaining steer was a good one, but had neither the quality or the form of the entry from Hay, although much larger. A nice red calf shown by Adam Armstrong was the last of the four pure-bred steers.

Whatever Shorthorn steers lacked in numbers was made up in the large entry of heifers and cows of this breed. However, so strong were a few of the tops in this section, all did not answer the call. The first ribbon was sent to J. R. Caldwell, who had a beautiful maiden heifer four years old, which, barring a bit of roughness about the shoulder blades, was as near a model of perfection as we ever saw. This heifer was particularly smooth and evenly finished, with a vast depth of flesh which betokened killing out beef that might be a trifle too rich for dyspeptics, but would make a fine showing at the Christmas shambles.

W. B. Cockburn was awarded second for Rose Leaf, a useful four-year-old cow bred by Hon. John Dryden.