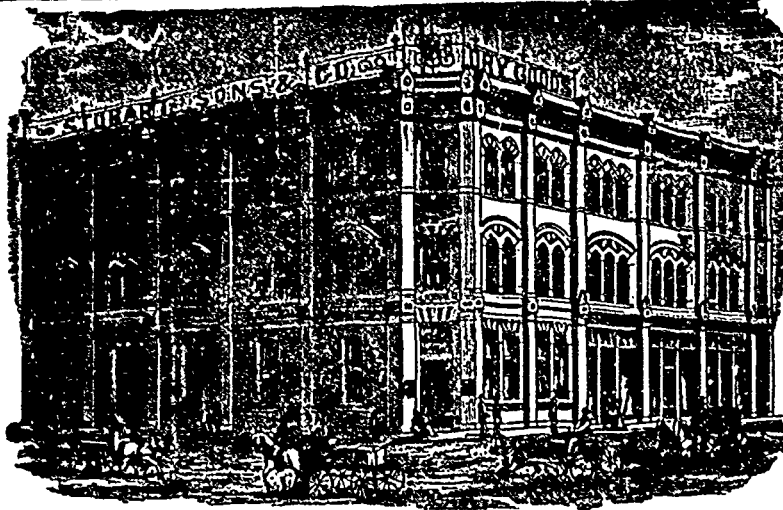


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The Ranching Question.

The statements of Dr. McEachran and of the *MacLeod Gazette* are not in harmony, and the matter is one which Parliament should investigate. Cattle ranching is a valuable industry to a certain extent, but in the case of the Alberta ranches it is chiefly valuable to the English cattle barons who have secured leases from the Government. We recently published a statement from Dr. McEachran explaining—and we must admit, if “accurate” explaining away—the complaint of one settler who had located himself on the Walrond ranch of which Dr. McEachran is manager. But the *MacLeod Gazette* replying to Dr. McEachran’s denial of the charge that he refused to allow *bona fide* settlers to locate in the Walrond townships, quotes a correspondent who says:—

The list of those settlers refused permission to settle on the leases would be a long one, and it is not improbable that the Walrond Rancho would head the list. The half dozen others on the Walrond lease are there because they had the grit to stay in the face of McEachran’s refusal to grant them permission. Dr. McEachran knows and has said why he does not dare to disturb some of these men. Permission to settle on the Waldron lease has been repeatedly refused by Dr. McEachran. He makes a great show of having consented to certain settlers getting their entry, but as might be supposed in such a man, he makes a virtue of necessity. He could not help giving those settlers an entry, for they were there before ever Dr. McEachran saw the country, or even knew where his lease was. It is not long since written notices were sent to settlers on the Walrond leases, warning them to leave.

Many of the local men who are not ranching lease holders have expressed a desire to see the lease system abolished. They say that instead of the country carrying 800,000 head of cattle, as leases provide, there are not above 100,000, and that the whole thing is a close corporation, sustained by Sir John Macdonald’s Government in the interest of a few influential friends. Dr. McEachran makes answer to this by saying that, “without the lease system as a partial “guarantee of the tenure of the land, capital

“could not be obtained to stock the land with horses and cattle.”

To this the *MacLeod Gazette* replies;—

After such a statement, it will be in order for Dr. McEachran to explain his chief argument in favor of the lease system, viz., to prevent the overstocking of the ranges. Why, if such is the case, was it necessary to take measures to prevent 50,000 American cattle, half the total number in Alberta, from being imported in 1887? How does he account for the fact that thousands of American cattle, representing millions of capital, are ready to enter Alberta as soon as the vexatious restrictions imposed by him are removed? How, in short, can he account for the millions of capital invested in this business in Western States, where the lease system is not only not in vogue, but where the cattlemen deliberately refused to ask for it, and where the ranges are open to the freest kind of settlement? That argument is clearly as trashy as the most of Dr. McEachran’s shallow utterances. He says further: “The foot hills country would not be utilized for the only purpose for which it is fitted, viz., stock raising.” The crops raised right on the Walrond range, as reported above, effectually refute this statement.

The only part of Dr. McEachran’s interview which is a correct representation of facts is the last paragraph, in which he praises the stock raising capabilities of the country, and for which we are pleased to commend him.

There can be no danger in saying that it is the duty of Parliament to investigate the whole subject. We do not think it satisfactory that the manager of one of these private ranches should be the Government quarantine officer. The object of the rancho holders is to restrict the number of cattle produced and to prevent competition. The object of the country is to have as many cattle raised as possible and to encourage competition. The power of restriction is largely held by the quarantine office. It is also a question whether this quarantine should be maintained against cattle coming from districts where there is no disease. Possibly the *MacLeod Gazette* may be wrong in saying that even if Canada were scheduled in England the gain to the Dominion from the free access

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of cattle to the Northwest would outweigh it, but the matter is open to opinion. After all, the worst that could happen would be that Canadian cattle would be killed at Birkenhead and sold as beef instead of being allowed to be sent into the interior of England. As a matter of fact we are told that a large part of Canadian cattle shipments, is slaughtered at the lairs. And it is a well known fact that one or more associations of capitalists have been deterred from establishing preserving factories in Manitoba and the Northwest because of the Government regulations which restrict the output, and strengthen the hands of the cattle monopolists. What is wanted is such an examination of the subject in Parliament that the public of Canada are not left for knowledge of the charges of the Western Men and the denials of the manager of one of the interested ranches.—*Montreal Herald.*

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