

### Township vs. County Shows.

As far as my experience and observation have gone, I think the county or district show has not been a success. In several instances I could name, the attendance both of exhibitors and visitors have gradually grown less year by year. On the other hand, the township show seems to have received a fresh impetus, and has been better attended, and in some instances has eclipsed the district show. A good many farmers seem to have a decided preference for the township show, and express themselves, when speaking of it, as "our show," thereby creating a wholesome rivalry amongst those who would not think of exhibiting at the county show.

I do not think it would be wise or beneficial to restrict the competition to the residents of the township; think the restriction would not tend to broaden the views or be a stimulus to the breeding or producing better products for exhibit and use; nor would it be satisfactory to those who breed improved stock, as the exhibition of such at fall fairs is a medium of advertisement; think perhaps the amalgamation of two townships in some localities would be a benefit to all concerned.

With regard to speeding in the ring, I think that no government grant should be given in this direction any farther than it applies to that which is necessary for the testing, in their various gaits in the different classes, of agricultural horses; other attractions in this direction should have no claim on the agricultural societies, as the tendency is demoralizing, instead of instructive and uplifting, which should be the aim of all our agricultural societies.

I think quite an interest may be created by giving prizes for the best groomed and harnessed team, best broken team, best walking team, best heavy draft team suitable for exportation, etc.

In getting up the prize list, think the best prizes should be offered for stock, and of that kind which would be most likely to benefit the township or locality in which the show is held, and that no exhibitor should receive more than one prize in any one section of a class, as where a man who has a good herd of cattle or flock of sheep, if allowed, would perhaps take all the prizes in the class (which he may rightly deserve), but the tendency would be to prevent those who have not been so enterprising as himself from exhibiting at all, and thus the society would fail in the object it should have, viz., to stimulate that class of farmers to come out and compete for prizes. Perhaps, at first sight, this may seem to be an injustice to the enterprising breeder, as he may exhibit animals that are far superior to his neighbor's second-price animal, yet when the rules are understood, it will be calculated to do the "greatest good to the greatest number."

Bruce Co., Ont.

HENRY ARKELL.

### Early Shearing of Sheep.

Successful sheep breeders we believe as a rule shear their last year's lambs during the month of March or early in April. The sheep suffer from the heat in the warm spring days if forced to carry their heavy coats of wool, and especially so if they are infested with ticks. There is practically no risk to the health of the sheep to shear them on a fine day in March if they are kept in a closed building for a few days afterwards. In the course of a couple of weeks after shearing they should be dipped to clean them of all lice and ticks and to clean their skins. Even if there are no indications of the presence of parasites, the dipping will more than repay the cost by the improved health of the sheep and increased growth of the wool. Ewes that are not due to lamb till May might also be sheared with advantage if in good condition. Thin ewes that are nursing lambs should not be sheared before the warm weather comes, but if lambs have come in March, and the ewes are in good condition, the ewes they may be sheared any time after the middle of April, and if ewes and lambs are dipped soon after it will be better for both. The only reasonable objection to early shearing, especially in the case of the yearling sheep, is the undue discrimination made by buyers against unwashed wool, but if a sale can be made at a reduction of one-third from the price of washed wool, we feel sure it is more profitable, on the whole, to shear the sheep unwashed. The rapid improvement in condition and increased growth of wool will more than make up for the difference in the price received for the fleece.

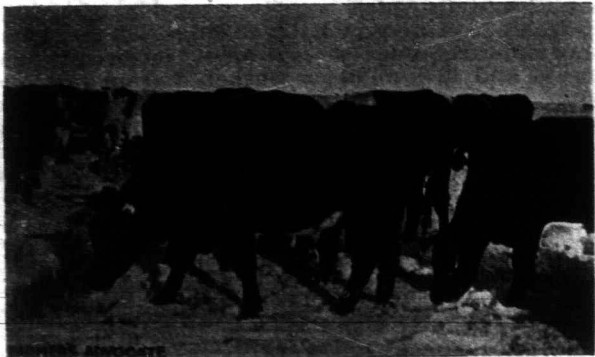
### Something for Nothing.

The *Exporter*, of Montreal, devotes a vigorous article to the absurd application of an English firm, Campbell, Shearer & Co., to the Quebec Legislature for a bonus or gift of \$20,000 per year for twenty years to enable them to start a packing-house for cattle, sheep and hogs, and also for the purchase of cheese, butter, and other farm produce, for which English prices are to be paid, less the cost of handling. As the country is already well supplied with packing establishments, developed by private enterprise, and the existing competition for dairy products exceedingly keen and prices high, strong opposition has developed against this scheme to bonus outsiders with public funds to come in and compete with Canadians. It is very pertinently asked, if these people have faith in the success of their project, why are they not prepared to carry it on with their own money, and build up a trade for themselves in honest competition? Strong protests are going in to the Quebec Government against the proposal.

### Beef in the West.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE, BY J. M'CAIG, ONTARIO.

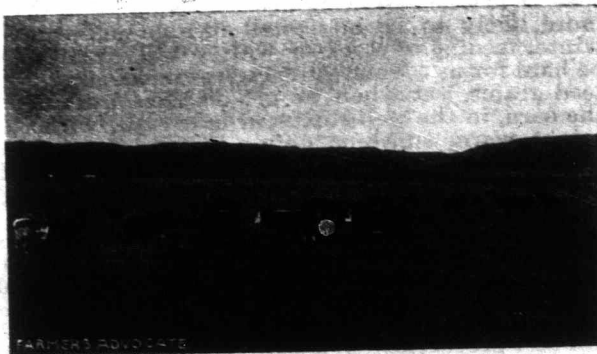
Men who have never lived in any other than temperate latitudes do not sufficiently value their heritage and condition. They are free from the constant cold that brings mental torpor and want of ambition, besides dwarfing their stature, and free from the enervating influence of constant heat and from the tendency to indolent habits induced by living in a moist tropical climate where production is spontaneous and perennial. The temperate zone is productive; but only so under the diligence of man. Moreover, this diligence is a necessity from another cause, namely, that the sealing up of the productivity of nature during a half of the year implies diligence and foresight during the remaining half to meet the necessities of existence. So industry is an essential quality of the men of this climate. That the people of the temperate climate are progressive is borne out by history and experience, for the foremost people of the world in art, industry, commerce, and war, are the people of the middle zones, not those of the tropical or polar regions. This is a matter of climate and soil and of the now inherent mental and physical attributes of the races sprung from such areas.



ALBERTA RANGE CATTLE IN WINTER CONDITION.

As an adjunct to the productivity of the land in the way of cereal foods, the temperate zone has an illimitable wealth of fish, flesh and fowl of the useful classes. The food fishes are largely confined to our zone. Our game is the best in the world, and our capacity for the production of meat animals from the domestic classes unsurpassed on the globe. Canada is not behind, but rather ahead of most other temperate countries in these peculiar advantages. Her beef is no worse than her wheat, and her wheat is the best in the world. Canada has stores of strong food for strong men and to spare for the tables of industrial England. Besides, we live under institutions that do not clog, but rather make possible and encourage the highest freedom, the greatest energy and the most complete self realization for the individuals composing the banner British colony. Under these circumstances, it is not strange that the great western country should show a very rapid and energetic development peculiar to itself under the hands of versatile and busy people.

*Beef is King in the West.*—In the East we cannot pin our faith to a single product. Lands are high, competition more or less intense, and the pro-



ON THE RANGE, ALBERTA, CANADA.

duction of as many and as varied products as possible is recognized to be the wisest course for the average farmer. Similarly, it is due to special conditions that beef is the important product of the Northwest Territories. It must not be supposed that there are not vast areas in the Northwest Territories suitable for agriculture; there are plenty of such lands. The larger areas, however, are ranching lands, and ranching is the characteristic industry. The principal ranch lands are on the eastern side of the Rockies and along the southern part, while the agricultural lands are those parts of Saskatchewan and Assiniboia nearest to Manitoba, and generally resembling it, besides northern Alberta and northerly stretches right up to the Rockies.

The southern parts of the Territories are prairie country. What determines whether a country is ranching or agricultural is its moisture. Plentiful moisture is necessary for vegetation of the heavier sorts, such as timber, cereals and roots. Moisture from the Pacific is shut off by the Rockies. The moist return trade winds from the south-west precipitate all their moisture on being forced into the higher latitudes of the plateau west of the Rockies,

and though these south-west winds are the prevailing winds for Alberta, they reach us as dry winds. Little moisture comes from the east or south-east, as the long continental stretches covered before they reach us absorb all their moisture. Our rain and snow are from Hudson's Bay, and most of this goes to our northern areas, thus leaving the southern and south-western parts semi-arid. The condition of the ranching country with respect to moisture can best be understood by a comparison with Ontario. In Ontario the annual rainfall is about twenty-eight or thirty inches; in southern Alberta it is about ten or eleven inches.

The prairie country is a most valuable part of the Northwest Territories, though for ultimate national wealth the same area of agricultural land would doubtless be more valuable. It is not so dry as to be of little value, as some of the barren lands of the Missouri farther south are. It yields large quantities of valuable and nutritious grasses of different kinds without effort. On the prairie country the land becomes green at about the first of May with a new growth of grass, the old grass still standing, and by June it is bright in most places with delicate prairie flowers. This month is, perhaps, the height of the season of vegetation. By August the grass is burnt a tawny yellow on the benches and prairie, and greenness remains later only along the river bottoms or beside the occasional shallow lakes. The appearance of the prairie after the period of spring growth is wholly deceiving to the newcomer. It looks like a sere and barren waste. The grasses, however, are preserved rather than spoiled by the dry weather. Their essence and nutriment are naturally sealed up and remain good until eaten in winter or summer. Hay may be made and saved during any month of the summer or fall.

In southern Alberta housing of cattle is unnecessary, but in the northern parts both sheltering and hay feeding are practiced. Cattle are enabled to "rustle" their living, as the phrase goes here, both summer and winter, because the snowfall is light and is seldom protracted even if heavy. The Chinook winds, which are warm winds coming through the passes of the Rockies, suddenly unseat any condition of frost or hard weather. The snow does not thaw on the ground, but is licked up by these winds. The changes of temperature are very sudden and very violent, sometimes amounting to a variation of 70 degrees in one hour. This will sound improbable to an Easterner. It might be thought, besides, that such rapid changes would be disastrous to man and beast alike, but such is not the case. The extreme dryness of the air prevents any experience of discomfort. An occasional year of hard luck will come, in which, after an exceptionally heavy fall of snow, a partial thaw is followed by hard frost, and a hard crust will seal up even the longest grass. The gathering in of the cattle from long distances to the hay camps is impossible, as they soon become disabled by skinning their legs in the crust. Cases of severe or total losses, however, are rare, but each year means a small but more or less uniform percentage of loss of weak cows or an occasional early calf. As the number of ranchers increases, the tendency to keep up the weak ones and pull them through on hay becomes more common. The increase of Western population makes more help available, and on this account additional attention pays. The encroaching of the smaller ranchers on the ranges of the big outfits is changing the ranching somewhat. More winter feeding is becoming the rule. The cattle are being better looked after, and the percentage of losses is steadily decreasing.

The ranching business offers wide contrast to the cattle business in Ontario, and it might be expected that the beef products of the West would be quite inferior to those of the East. It is one of the great surprises for an Easterner to find that the contrary is the case. The haphazard system when practiced in Ontario results in stunted, poor beasts; in south Alberta, where cattle often complete their third or fourth year without shelter of any kind, they grow right along and are in good condition all the time. It might be thought that the well-fed Eastern steer would at least surpass the Western one. Even this is not the case. Steers sheltered in bank barns in Ontario, well fed for two years and finished on turnips, clover hay and grain for the last five or six months, are not on the average as good as Western steers at the same age and fed on a diet of grass and water from birth to block. The steers here seem to keep well fleshed up on top. They never lose their rib flesh; they grow very lengthy and keep both a straight upper and under line. The steers brought in at one and two years old from Ontario and Manitoba, called "dobies" or by some "dogies," are smaller in size than Western cattle at the same age. They are shorter, more podgy in the belly, not as well filled on the crops, hips and upper ribs, and are less symmetrical generally. The Western steer has the full points and ripeness of a pure-bred, with the flesh evenly laid on, not appearing in lumps and patches. He has the grace of a wild animal (he is rather wild), and at the same time seems to have sacrificed none of the fast-growing qualities that are the result of quite an opposed system of culture and feeding to that under which he is reared here. I saw a bunch of 500 steers that went at one shipment from a ranch out here, mostly three-year-olds, but with an occasional four. A finer lot it would be hard to find. They were not uniform in breeding, but Shorthorn predominated. There were a few fine heavy-fronted, curly-coated Herefords, which make good range cattle; some Galloways, and plump, barrel-shaped Angus; an occasional Highlander, judging by his horns and coat; and one or two raw