

CHAP. XI.

RADICAL LEGISLATION AND IMPERFECT LAWS IN RELATION TO LAND GRANTS.

In the preceding chapter are the reasons set forth by a majority of the Senate Land Committee for recommending the passage of what is known in the Senate as the Quarle's Bill and in the house as the Power's Bill. The two proposed measures are identical; they are the most radical land legislation which has been proposed in forty years.

The effect of the enactment of such a measure would be to sweep out of existence the present methods of obtaining Government land.

These are now being used to build up great grazing ranches and land monopolies throughout the Western States, constructed by their owners in the fear and realization that the free range is becoming exhausted and the time is near at hand when the people of the United States will demand that every acre of public land play its part in the building of a home rather than as incidental pasturage for a baron's long horned steer.

In the six years ending July 1, 1903, there will have been taken from the Government, under various alleged legal forms, about one hundred million acres. In 1898 a little more than eight million acres were taken. In 1899 a little more than nine million. In 1900 began the agitation for restriction of the land privilege.

The dictators of the live stock ranges realized the probable results of this agitation and counted it as an inevitable event of the near future that they should be either ousted from the free range they now hold as private property or compelled to pay toll to the people and give some reckoning of their use of this valuable public property.