

Ranching vs. Mixed Farming.

BY "AN ALBERTA ABERDONIAN."

To the youthful mind imbued with a desire for novelty and adventure, the idea of ranching out west, with the necessary accomplishments of "roping," "branding," "broncho-busting," etc., etc., has always cast a rosy glow on the land of the setting sun, and surrounded it with a halo of romance and Buffalo Billism. Like every other pleasure in this life, the joys of anticipation in this respect are greater than the joys of realization, and the "tender foot" finds that roping may even become "hard labor," and positively "beastly, don't you know," when the bottom of the corral presents an even surface of six inches of mud; and "broncho-busting" may be very exciting, but when you get pitched on the ground you fall just as hard, and feel it just as painful as if you had fallen from a "gee-gee" at home. Moreover the ranch may be the only building in sight on the wide prairie, and your heart may be gladdened now and again by the sight of a lonely coyote sneaking around, or a neighbor dropping in may confidentially impart the information that a bear was seen two years ago in the bush at the back of the hill. Still after a time, when the novelty has worn off, it takes a pile of such like "romances" put on the top of each other to make up for the lack of society, with its luxuries and its conveniences.

Sad to relate, but nevertheless true, the halcyon days of ranching will soon be a thing of the past to a great extent. In the history of Western America we find individual cases where ranching has been remunerative, but with time the condition of markets and things in general have altered circumstances.

To make ranching, as a large concern, return a paying dividend of course depends a great deal on the individual management at the head of affairs, but there are certain conditions opposed to the successful management of ranching proper that the stockman on a small scale can more efficiently cope. The results, however, depend a great deal on the line of business that has been adopted; for instance, ranging stock for beef purposes is one thing, while stock raising is another and requires far more supervision, and it is in stock raising that the small stockman has the advantage of his more aspiring neighbor. In the first place, through being able to bestow his individual attention on his stock, in a manner, so to speak, he receives the full benefit of his investment. In stormy weather he is able to lay his hands on them and give what assistance is necessary in the shape of feed and shelter, just at a season of the year when cattle, such as weak cows and calves, in the outlying district, are at the mercy of the timber wolves, which are becoming an increasing pest and a source of loss to stockmen on the ranches. Again, his cattle and horses especially become more domesticated under such treatment, and are less liable to accidents. With horses ranging wild, mares at the foaling season will naturally take fright at anything, even the attendant going to round them up, with the result that lots of newly dropped youngsters are run off their legs in their attempt to keep up with the dam, and never recover it. Another point in favor of the small stock owner is, by employing good sires amongst his cattle and giving his herd his personal attention he reaps the benefit in the improved quality of steers, which means a good third more on the market than the lean, lanky, long-horned range steer can bring, bred and raised after the ordinary range fashion. The large stock owner cannot give the attention referred to, with his cattle scattered over an area of several miles amongst owners similarly situated to himself, with sires of all degrees of excellence running around, it could hardly be otherwise. Even although a system of co-operation amongst the surrounding owners was brought to bear on the latter point to obviate the evil by importing good bulls, it is impossible to give the thorough supervision necessary to retain the good qualities in a herd of cattle, and where stock are only handled twice a year, as is the custom, at the annual spring and fall round-ups. The day can be remembered when the greater part of the western half of America's prairie was devoted to ranching, pure and simple: to-day we mark the inroad of an agricultural population over the same area, which tells its own story. Wherever the climate and quality of the soil will allow, an agricultural class will push itself to the front, which, with its greater ratio of population and their ever increasing demands to be supplied, are a greater source of revenue to the country, and impart to it a greater value, financially, than under the old regime of ranching, and we on this side of the 49th parallel, with a climate and soil similar to our southern neighbors, must naturally allow events to shape themselves and follow the same course. The hey-day of ranching is over, and the "wild," "woolly," sombre word cowboy, with his six-shooter and his desperado sort of air, like the valiant knights of old, will soon be a thing of the past, while his place will be filled by the plain, unassuming, natural-minded, every-day farmer.

Tariff Reform.

[Paper read by Rev. Geo. Roddick, before the Farmers' Meeting, in the City Hall, Brandon.]

A mass meeting of representative farmers was held in the city in March last, and declared unanimously in favor of a reduction on certain articles, and an unanimously signed petition forwarded to Ottawa, praying for said reduction. Very little attention was given to that and many other petitions on the same subject from other portions of the Dominion. However, it was announced that the government contemplated a general revision of the tariff, and that during recess an investigation would be held. That investigation is now in progress, and as far as it has gone the manufacturers have had the inside track.

As the Hon. Mr. Foster, Minister of Finance, has intimated his intention of visiting this province in the month of September, your committee felt it necessary to call this meeting in order to formulate a memorial for presentation on his arrival.

As in the former resolutions, we ask for a reduction on five articles:—implements, lumber, coal oil, barbed wire and binder twine.

Many of you will be of opinion that we have not gone sufficiently far in our demands, but we wish to keep in line with the former resolutions, believing that half a loaf is better than no bread, and that upon these resolutions all can unite without any compromise of political principles. To go farther would be to defeat the ends which we have in view.

I need scarcely press upon your attention the importance of harmonious and united action. On such occasions manufacturers and others sink their petty differences out of sight, and present a united front in pressing their demands. Let the farmers do likewise, and we need have no fears as to the result. Politicians will find that they cannot afford to ignore the demands of 80 per cent. of the voting power of the Dominion.

Manitoba is essentially an agricultural country. Upon the produce of the soil are not only the farmers dependent, but all other classes of the community. We have no manufacturing interests of any consequence, and not likely to have for many years to come. We derive no benefit whatever arising from the increase of consumption produced by eastern manufacturers. From one to two thousand miles intervene and shut out all profitable intercourse.

Again, the arrangement known as the National Policy was never intended by its founders to be permanent. Its design was to foster industries while in their infancy, and no longer. After fourteen years of this fostering care, is it not time to enquire: Has the National Policy been a failure, or has it been successful in placing our manufacturers upon their feet, so that they no longer require the aid of government leading strings? To one or other of these conclusions we must come. From the influence which these manufactures exercise over the government, from the army of agents that swarm over the country, and the manner in which they are piling up mortgages against the struggling farmers of Manitoba, we are forced to the latter conclusion, and feel that they are perfectly able to stand upon their own feet.

Manitoba is an inland country. It is situated near the centre of the continent of North America. Both the eastern and western seaboard are thousands of miles distant. To compel the farmers of this province to meet not only the enormous export and import charges, but in addition, pay a tariff of 35% on their implements and other articles necessary for the successful operation of agriculture, is to debar our produce from the markets of the world. I affirm that under existing circumstances, agriculture in Manitoba must prove a failure. In making this statement I do not disparage the country. I came here to stay, and my faith in the country has never wavered. It is true we have natural drawbacks, like every other land. We have our frosts, our hail and our drought, over which man has little or no control, and to which it becomes us to submit with due resignation. These are not more serious than the disadvantages against which other countries have to contend. But as the Brandon Times very properly puts it, in an editorial of July 20th: "Last year, to deliver a bushel of wheat here, while it cost to deliver a bushel of oats about the price of two bushels; and to deliver barley, about one and a-half." To continue such state of matters is simply impossible, for the sufficient reason that farmers can afford it.

In the interests of immigration relief is imperative. It cannot be denied that this Northwest country presents many advantages as a field for industrious settlers. Here millions may find comfortable homes. But until the present settlers obtain relief by the removal of the burden of taxation imposed by means of the existing tariff, the tide of immigration must remain very limited. In vain will the most vigorous immigration policy be adopted, with its expenditure of immense government funds, until the present grievances are fairly met.

The correspondence between settlers and their distant friends will do more for or against immigration than any other agency that can be employed. At present living is too expensive, and the price of the farmers' outfit out of all reason, to enable the settlers to exist. Compare the cost of the same implements (American make) in Manitoba with those in Dakota:—

	Dakota.	Mani- toba.
Deering breaker plow.....	\$ 16.00	\$ 25.00
Wagon.....	60.00	90.00
McCormick binder.....	130.00	180.00
Mower.....	45.00	70.00
Rake.....	25.00	35.00
Lumber.....	16.00	25.00
Coal oil.....	16c.	50c.

Under such circumstances can the farmers of Manitoba compete with those in Dakota, or is there any inducement for additional settlement?

The lumber combine which at present exists in this province is as tyrannical and oppressive as a Ukase of the Czar of all the Russias. As lumber is so essential for the protection of man and beast in this severe climate, the high price will continue to operate against the best immigration policy that can be adopted.

In conclusion, we may add that this movement is not of a local character. It is widespread and deep-rooted, and like a similar movement across the line, will prove a "landslide" in the removal of all barriers. Our demands are moderate, reasonable and just. We ask for nothing more; we will not accept anything less. The Toronto Empire may falsify and belittle our action and cowardly refuse to open its columns for reply, party heelers and those who fatten at the government crib may oppose our efforts, but let the farmers drop old party lines, be true to themselves, to each other, and to their adopted country, and their voices will be heard above the din of all party clamor.

Saving Seed.

WRITTEN FOR THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE BY THOMPSON SMITH.

There are too many farmers who do not realize the great gain in carefully saving seed in the summer and fall from the choicest of their products. A good crop cannot be expected year after year from inferior seed. It is only an occasional time that indifferent seed will bring a good yield. I have seen very small and refuse potatoes planted, from which were grown large tubers, and an abundance of them, but if small seed is planted season after season, the yield will become poor both in quantity and quality. Now, during the gathering season is the best time to save seed potatoes. As the farmer handles the crop, he has the best of opportunities to select the most perfect and place them to one side. It is a good failing to save more than you think it likely you will need, for if there is not a demand for all your seed in the spring you can eat them or sell them as well then as now; while on the other hand, if your supply falls short through unlooked-for circumstances, it is not nearly always easy to get the needed supply, even at exorbitant prices.

When possible, a farmer gains by saving his own clover and timothy seed. These seeds are most generally to be found on the market, but the cost is high and it is very uncertain about their cleanliness. I have seen fields thickly set with objectionable growth from seed that was mixed with what should have been all timothy or clover.

Now, too, is the time to save seed corn, unless it is the expectation to depend on the seedsmen for the needed supply. A great many depend on their cribbed corn for seed, which means using from what is left over in the spring, whether good or poor. Last year there were a great many through northwest Missouri and southwest Iowa who planted corn from the spring supply left in the cribs, and the general result was a very poor stand and universal replanting. It has been my practice for a number of years to commence gathering corn for seed as soon as I found it thoroughly away from the milk. I do not gather it all at one time, but am always on the watch for a fine ear when passing through the field, and am never in too great a hurry to stop and pluck it. When cutting and husking the corn I am still on my watchtower, so that by the time my crop is cribbed I have a bountiful supply stored away which I know to be of the best. That the seed may be relied on as good, without fail, I find it essential to keep the corn strictly dry during the winter, and in order to do this I usually beg a kitchen nook of my wife, where my corn not only keeps dry, but is not subjected to the cold of the extreme wintry weather. I am of the opinion, though, that freezing dry corn does not hurt the germ, but by keeping it where it is warm it is more certain to be dry all the time.

Garden seed cannot be gathered in a happen-and-by-chance method and then good returns justly expected from them next year. I carefully gather the first well-formed ripe tomato and cucumber from which to keep seed, and, as a rule, I have tomatoes and cucumbers from two to three weeks earlier than my neighbors, and of the finest fruit. I have gathered the pods of Lima beans which matured first and stored them away securely with the seeds of bunch and poled beans, radish, lettuce, onions, etc., all of which was saved from my best, so I expect to have of the best next year. If good, large heads of cabbage and cauliflower are desired, the best of the heads grown must each time be saved, setting out the whole plant from which to grow seed. It is almost no trouble to take precaution in this matter, and he who does it is always amply paid in the spring when planting time is upon us. It is, of course, trouble to put seed away and protect it properly through the winter, but it is a truth: "there is no gain without labor."