

In some counties where there is a general desire to prevent all kinds of cattle from running on the highways, the owner of only one cow is exempted from the operation of the by-law, and this exemption is often taken advantage of by others who cannot plead poverty as an excuse for turning their stock on the roads. Thus in the Township of Hope (County Durham), it is complained that "the poor man's cow" does not receive the benefit of the road pasture, "on account of the large number of young cattle and sheep (belonging to two-thirds of the farmers) running on the said road." In the Township of McKinnon (County Huron), the by-law "is seldom or never enforced," a fact not difficult to be understood when it is found to provide that animals are not to be impounded while grazing on the roads or commons, but that their owners are liable to a fine for allowing them to run at large. Neither is it surprising that the township does not communicate the number of convictions, if any, before a Magistrate for infractions of a by-law in terms so contradictory. In the Township of Osprey (County Grey), the by-law is totally inoperative. The writer of the report says:—"I was this morning sending a cow to a thoroughbred bull for which I had paid service. On her way she was served by one of those 'roadster rats' which infest the highways." No doubt like instances are common, and are the source of considerable annoyance and loss to those who wish to acquire or maintain pure stock. In East Oxford Township (County Oxford), although the duty is imposed on overscers of highways to distrain and impound estray cattle, the by-law is reported inoperative, and there do not appear to have been any convictions. The report says: "Although three-fourths or more of the farmers never turn an animal on the road, they are put to the expense of keeping up strong fences to protect their crops from animals that are starving on the road." Here is a case in which the majority needlessly suffers itself to be injured by the minority. The farmers can, if so disposed, by insisting on the strict carrying out of the by-law, relieve themselves altogether from the expense of keeping up road fences.

In some townships great complaint is made of the ravages of hogs on the highways. In Ellice (County of Perth), the report says: "No person cares to impound hogs, yet I believe \$400 yearly will not repair the damage they do on the roads in our township." Though these animals, over a certain age or weight, or unringed, are generally placed under prohibition, it is certain that the laws are seldom if ever observed. To the contradictory and uncertain character of many of the provisions of those laws is probably to be ascribed the fact of their being so generally inoperative. It is difficult, for example, to determine precisely the age or weight of a sheep or hog, yet many of the by-laws prescribe the age or weight beyond which animals are not to be permitted to run at large. Where, as in a case like this, there is a difficulty in deciding whether a law has been infringed, there will always be found people ready to set aside or evade its provisions.

Some townships prohibit the grazing of all animals on the highways "except within half a mile of hotels, stores and grist mills." This exception is one almost certain to lead to difficulty. It is intended, no doubt, to benefit farmers attending those places and remaining over for some time on business, but it is certain to be taken advantage of by residents in the locality—generally numerous—and in turn by others outside the specified limit. Again, a large majority of the townships prescribe what animals may and what animals may not run at large, and name certain months of the year and so many hours per day during which permission is accorded. Where this is done, and where it is nobody's business to prosecute, it would be strange indeed if the law were not generally disregarded.

Farmers examined by the Commissioners were very generally favourable to the enforcement of an effective stock law. Mr. Cochrane, of Kilsyth (Grey), probably expressed a very widespread feeling on this subject when he said:—

"I would like to call attention to a grievance that is beginning to attract attention, namely, the running at large of cattle. I would not be in favour of doing away with fences entirely—we couldn't do that—but I would be in favour of making each man take care of his own animals. It is not right that I should be compelled to fence my farm to keep out my neighbour's cattle. I don't think I should be put to the trouble and expense of keeping the