

# The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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## EDITORIAL.

### United States Sheep Quarantine.

As announced in "The Farmer's Advocate" of February 4th, a petition has been circulated among Canadian pedigreed-sheep breeders, pressing upon the Dominion Minister of Agriculture the importance of endeavoring to secure early removal of the American thirty-days' quarantine on Canadian sheep sold to cross the border. As a result of the present regulations, which came into force last June, some of our leading breeders have suffered the loss of a large proportion of their most lucrative trade. The petitioners are anxious that the Dominion Government should make every effort possible to rid the country of the contagious disease (scab) which the American Secretary of Agriculture claims we are harboring, and which has admittedly existed to some extent in certain parts of Ontario. Unhindered access to the American market is declared to be of utmost importance to the breeders of pure-bred sheep in Canada, which should be to the American continent what Britain has been to the world in the production of pure-bred stock.

It would have been well had the framers of the petition stopped at this point. Instead, they raised up a snag of opposition for themselves by proposing a generous sacrifice of the swine-breeders' interests, if necessary, to secure relaxation of the sheep quarantine. It seems that the Dominion Department of Agriculture, in correspondence with the United States Department upon this subject, was reminded of the embargo maintained by Canada on American swine coming into our packing-houses in bond. This fact being communicated to the sheepmen, the petitioners took it upon themselves to suggest that, if necessary to the end in view, the Dominion Government should lift the embargo on American hogs, the reason advanced being that this is of comparatively slight advantage to Canadian hog-raisers, while the American sheep quarantine is a heavy handicap to our sheep-breeders. Naturally, this offer of a quid pro quo aroused a storm of indignation and protest in the annual meeting of the Dominion Swine-breeders' Association, which finally passed a resolution expressing disapproval of the lifting of the embargo against American hogs, on account of the grave danger of hog cholera being introduced and distributed throughout the country.

That the Canadian swine embargo had anything at all to do with the imposition of the present American sheep quarantine is scarcely conceivable, though it may be offered now by the United States authorities by way of justification. As Dr. Rutherford pointed out to the Dominion Sheep-breeders' Association, sheep scab could not be compared to hog cholera in seriousness. Hog cholera had been frequently brought into Canada by means of imported hogs, and it was essential that strict precautions as to quarantine regulations should be enforced.

On the other hand, no outbreak of sheep scab in Canada had been reported to Ottawa for some time. The Veterinary Director-General's Branch had spared no effort to rid the country of scab, and had also taken up the subject of the removal of the sheep quarantine energetically with the American authorities. There seemed to be prospects for modification or rescindment of the onerous regulations; but, meanwhile, a good word of advice was given to push the sheep business in Canada for all it was worth. In view of the success attained by Canadian sheep-breeders on this continent, it is deplorable that sheep husbandry is so generally neglected by our farmers. Let us try to develop the home market.

### The Man for the Place.

Canadian stockmen and veterinarians have been disturbed by a report that Dr. J. G. Rutherford, Dominion Veterinary Director-General and Live-stock Commissioner, has tendered his resignation as head of these two important branches of the Department of Agriculture. With a thorough education, experience and training, Dr. Rutherford combines extraordinary executive capacity. Hard-headed, astute, and widely-informed, he has proven an exceedingly capable official, first as Veterinary Director-General, and later in the dual capacity which he now occupies. It is understood that the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Sydney Fisher, is anxious for his Commissioner to remain, and this desire is shared by all who have the veterinary and live-stock interests of the country at heart. The Federal Department of Agriculture is of such wide scope and importance that it demands not merely a capable head in the person of the Minister, but expert lieutenants in charge of the several branches. Salary may not properly stand in the way of securing the best men available, and the Minister might wait long and look far before finding another who would serve with the same sagacity, efficiency and acceptability as Dr. Rutherford, whose service is to be measured only by the freedom allowed him in the formulation and execution of policies designed in the public interest. Given scope and authority, with absolute freedom from political interference, the head of an important branch like this is in a position to do much for the interest he represents, and "The Farmer's Advocate" expresses the unanimous opinion of its readers in urging that no opportunity should be lost to retain Dr. Rutherford in the important position he now holds.

### The Stockman's Outlook.

The financial stringency which hampered many lines of business last year, including the pure-bred stock industry, is evidently proving of shorter duration than had been feared, and the prospect has brightened encouragingly since the advent of the new year. The signal success of the recent sales of Shorthorn cattle in Toronto are a striking evidence of improved conditions. And this revival of interest is but the logical result of the decided upward trend of market prices for beef cattle, owing, in part, to a shortage of supplies and an increasing demand; to money being more plentiful, or more easily available, and doubtless in part to restored confidence in the immediate future of the business, which is an important factor in the uplift of any industry. But it is not only in the beef-cattle business that improvement of prices is noticeable. Dairy cattle and dairy products, which were less affected by the depression than any other class of stock or produce, are still in active demand at high prices. The market for commercial hogs has recently shown a gratifying upward tendency, seven cents a pound at the point of shipment having already been paid, with a prospect of a continuance of this advance, or even a higher mark being attained. And this improvement is, we are told, already having its influence on the demand for breeding stock of the pure breeds, a condition which will doubtless grow more encouraging in the coming months.

The horse trade, which has been comparatively quiet during the past year, though good ones have continued to sell well, will assuredly improve with the advent of spring, as the Western Provinces will require many horses, as will also the many railway-construction companies, and the constantly-growing cities and towns. The pure-bred sheep trade received a serious shock last year,

owing to the United States quarantine regulations, which will, it is hoped, have served a good purpose in teaching our flock-owners to be more careful in keeping a clean bill of health. And now, since scab has been declared by the Dominion Veterinary Director practically non-existent in the country, and the assurance given that any cases reported will be promptly attended to, the prospect is that the embargo will be raised in time for the spring and summer trade, and that the business will regain its normal condition. In the meantime, market prices for commercial sheep and lambs are satisfactory, and the indications are that yearling sheep and spring lambs will command unusually high prices in the next few weeks.

Farm stock and products of all kinds are bringing good prices, and it would appear that, on the whole, the markets should be considered fairly satisfactory, even though purchased feed is high in price, and the cost of production in some lines perhaps greater than formerly. The present conditions and the prospects for the farmer are encouraging, and the people of our fair country have reason for thankfulness in the outlook.

### Pros and Cons of Pork-duty Question.

A couple of noteworthy resolutions were passed by the Dominion Swine-breeders' Association, which convened in Toronto a fortnight since. One, asking that the embargo be maintained against American hogs imported by our packing-houses for slaughter in bond, will be unanimously endorsed by public opinion. The danger of distributing hog cholera is not to be lightly incurred, to say nothing of other considerations bearing on the question. The request for an increase in the duty on United States cured pork from two to four cents a pound, is more of a debatable proposition, though there is something to be said on both sides. The case for tariff increase is, briefly, this: While there is a duty of five cents a pound on Canadian bacon going into the United States, the American product can come into Canada on a duty of two cents. This results in the importation, from time to time, of certain grades of pork from the United States, tending to weaken the market for the Canadian-grown product, particularly the rougher grades, such as hams. It is held by some, though disputed by the packers, that the fluctuations in the price of hogs during recent years has been partly due to this importation of American pork by our packers, by their taking advantage of dips in the market on the other side, thus filling up their cellars, and being thereby rendered more independent of the local hog-raiser. Owing to the peculiar nature of the Canadian export trade, the Canadian farmer has only one outlet for his product, so there is ground for the position that Canadian packers should have only one source of supply. Latterly, however, it is being urged that the packer has a joint interest with the farmer in asking for an increase of duty, as a means of protection from the American brands of pork sold in Canada. As indicating the proportions of the trade in imported meats, we quote these figures from the Canadian Yearbook of 1907, official figures for 1908 not being at hand: In the nine-months' fiscal period of 1907 there was imported into Canada, from the United States, 5,162,912 pounds of bacon, hams, shoulders and sides, valued at \$643,290; and 7,595,848 pounds of pork, valued at \$615,099. In the same year our exports were 75,378,919 pounds of bacon, worth \$9,018,470, and 181,161 pounds of ham, worth \$203,652. Thus, we exported in that year between seven and eight times the value of what we imported, while the home demand, also, has of