

The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine

"Persevere and Succeed."

Established
1866.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1876.

Vol. XLIII.

LONDON, ONTARIO, AUGUST 27, 1908.

No. 831.

EDITORIAL

THE RAILWAY RESPONSIBLE.

There is no use mincing matters. The acts of rowdyism which occur almost annually on the harvesters' excursions to the West are a disgrace to the class of population from which they are drawn, as well as to the railroad which is so lax as to permit the outrages. This year, it seems, the conduct of the excursionists has been worse than usual. The looting of an hotel by a trainload of men from the Maritime Provinces was one of the notorious acts of a party, of which, on arrival in Winnipeg, it was reported in the despatches that "No batch of European immigrants ever put in so disreputable appearance." Some were minus hats or coats, others had black eyes, bruised faces or blood-stained clothing. Two were arrested and sent back to Fort William to stand trial. Eight others were wanted, but eluded the police. A second carload of excursionists were attacked by the sectionmen along the road in revenge for the misdeeds of the trainload who had preceded them.

What would be said of a trainload of immigrants who thus misbehaved themselves? The truth is that, in a crowd of rough laborers, fired by the drink demon, and free from the restraining influences of female companionship, the incipient germ of lawlessness asserts itself among the rougher men, and spreads like a contagion, even among those whose own instincts would refrain from such debauchery and outrage. Prompt repression of the first symptoms is the only means of handling such a crowd, and the precautions recently adopted by the C. P. R., in the way of a special force of constables, should have been adopted before. Public opinion holds the railway responsible for preserving order and decorum on its line.

THE EMBARGO IS BRITAIN'S AFFAIR.

The recent agitation in Britain for a repeal of the embargo on Canadian cattle has failed to move the British authorities. Unusual strength was lent to the effort this time by the high price of fresh-killed beef, due in part to a reduction of imports of fat cattle from the United States and Canada of over 50,000 head in six months, along with a deficiency of the home-bred supply. In these circumstances, it was easy to command a degree of credence for rumors that the American beef trust was manipulating supplies with a view to "bulling" the market. A formidable spectre of monopoly was ingeniously painted, and the repeal of the embargo on Canadian store cattle was demanded, as a means of increasing the supply of home-fed beef and loosening the alleged grip of the American trust. The idea that a foreign trust could permanently control the market of a free-trade country like Britain was absurd, and has been effectually exploded in Parliament. It is probable that any manipulation of the supply of American fat cattle on the Deptford market was with a view to tiding over bare spots from week to week, thereby equalizing the supply, and incidentally redounding to the advantage of the British consumer of beef, as well as the individual American exporter, whose cattle may have been carried over for a few days, or perchance slaughtered and held in cold store to escape being sacrificed on a market momentarily depressed below the average or prospective range of values.

Dispassionate consideration of the whole matter reveals that the high prices of the season were attributable to natural causes, rather than monopoly; hence, it is by no means clear that the

admission of Canadian feeding cattle would have any marked effect in reducing prices of beef to the consumer. Certainly it would not if Canadian farmers consulted their own highest interests, for the breeding and export of feeding cattle would be an extremely poor business for Canadian farmers to engage in, as has been indirectly demonstrated by feeding experiments. However, it is entirely probable that, with the embargo lifted on Canadian feeders, a considerable number would find their way across the Atlantic, to be there finished, to the decided profit of the British farmer, but to the distinct loss of Canadian pocket-books and farms. The result of such a movement might be a slight reduction in the price of fresh beef in Britain. Certainly, the British farmer would make more money turning his feed into Canadian store cattle than he now does in raising and finishing the present limited number of home-bred bullocks. The only real advantage that would accrue to Canada from a removal of the embargo would consist in a possibly improved opportunity for the marketing of finished beef, as they would not have to be slaughtered so promptly upon arrival at the British ports, but might await the elapse of a temporary depression in the market, and might, if necessary, be fed up to recuperate somewhat from the effects of a bad voyage. On the whole, however, it is very questionable whether the increased competition of British cattle feeders would not, by shading prices, offset any advantages that might otherwise accrue to our shippers and feeders. Indeed, we are becoming convinced that the embargo is really more advantage than disadvantage to Canada, the advantage consisting in that it prevents the development of an export trade in store cattle. Theoretically, it might be presumed that the Canadian farmer would know his own business well enough not to export lean cattle, if more profit could be made by finishing them at home. Practically, it is to be feared that some would be inclined to drop the substance and chase after the shadowy and unsatisfactory business of raising stockers for export, thereby deriving but a meager financial return for feed consumed in rearing the cattle, while shipping off the land a great deal of fertility. The elements of soil fertility in the food supplied to a fattening steer are largely returned to the land through the manure, while a growing beast appropriates a large share of these elements to the building up of his bone and tissue. Many farmers fail to take this fully into account; hence the too common willingness to dispose of unfinished cattle at a price below what they have intrinsically cost to produce. It is greatly to Canada's advantage to finish all her own beefs at home. Those Canadian newspapers which have been urging the removal of the embargo, in order to permit the development of a stocker trade, have been egregiously ill-advised and misinformed.

The real justification for Britain's maintenance of the embargo is the protection of the health of her pure-bred and other stock. We in Canada have been inclined to resent the imputation of the health of our herds, but, after all, is the resentment warranted? Granted that our cattle are among the healthiest in the world—healthier perhaps, than the British cattle—that does not guarantee that they are free from disease or the danger of disease. As a matter of fact, parasitic mange is more or less prevalent on certain areas of our Western ranges, notwithstanding strenuous efforts to stamp it out. Anthrax has occurred; we are by no means free from tuberculosis, and so of other diseases; while, throughout the length of the international boundary we are exposed to the possibility of infection, intro-

duced from the south, although it is but fair to state that the utmost vigilance is exercised by the Veterinary Director-General's Branch to guard against the introduction of disease. Evidently, the British stockman considers that one avoidable chance of introducing or spreading disease among his valuable herds, is one too many. Moreover, the present embargo is general as against the stock of all countries. Were an exception made in case of Canada, pressure would be constantly exerted to have the privilege extended to other countries, and if it were so extended, how much better off would we be in the end than we are now? But, how much more precarious would be the business of the British stockmen! So, after a full examination of the subject in all its bearings, we are by no means disposed to criticize Earl Carrington's position. As for the newspapers and politicians on this side of the Atlantic who have been meddling in the affair, and endeavoring to drag the question into the forum of political discussion, they would be much better employed in minding their own business, paying attention to questions of more direct and important consequence to the Canadian people. The retention or the removal of the embargo is Britain's business, not ours. Our interest is but secondary and unimportant.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IS POWER.

"Strive to know why, for this teaches how and when."

This excellent maxim, which adorns the front cover of Prof. F. H. King's masterly text-book, "The Physics of Agriculture," we commend to the young man who may be debating the wisdom of taking an agricultural-college course. The difference between knowing how and why and merely knowing how, is the difference between the farmer and the clodhopper. It is the difference between management and routine: between resourcefulness and helplessness; between success and failure; between hope and despair. A man may learn how to farm according to prevailing neighborhood practice without understanding the principles underlying that practice, and if industrious, thrifty and observant, may make a tolerable success of his business, so far as stock husbandry and crop-raising are concerned, but he will never make the highest success until he studies principles. He will be unduly cautious in trying the new, or, if venturing out of the beaten path, will be very likely to venture in the wrong direction, misled perhaps by those who know less than himself, or by some self-seeking persuader. Knowledge of reasons, causes and principles is the best possible fortification against mistakes and deception. Of course, partial knowledge may be more misleading than ignorance, but if a young man once becomes fairly well grounded in scientific principles, as he should be at an agricultural college, he has a basis on which to build further knowledge, and the accumulated information of successive years, tintured by practical experience, render him increasingly less prone to error, while preserving an open habit of mind that makes him receptive to new ideas, prepared to meet new developments with readjusted practices, and, in short, equipped for the eventualities of his calling. Given a reasonably level-headed young man, he will assuredly make a greater financial success of farming, if broadened, developed and informed by a two-year agricultural-college course. He may or may not accumulate a larger bank account, because he will probably spend more on himself and family, and in permanent improvements on his farm; but, so long as he spends it wisely, is it not well? Better to have earned and spent than never to have earned