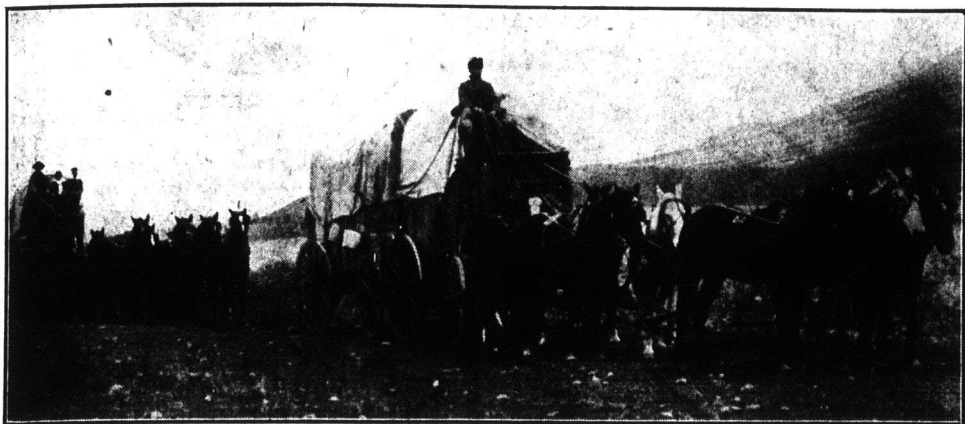


their way along the new road, making short distances, and in the early evening the mules were unharnessed, and allowed to graze till morning, while near water, beside the road, the muleteers made camp. Naturally the cost of transportation was very great. It was no infrequent sight to see as many as twenty ox-trains of sixteen cattle each; twenty-five horse or mule trains of ten each, and no less than four hundred horses or mules with no vehicles, all engaged in the transportation of merchandise. Almost incredible are the changes and progress in the Pacific Province in the last three decades. The whistle of the railway train has long been a familiar sound in the once high-inaccessible Western land. Later facilities of transportation have been augmented by the great automobile trucks which, heavily laden, speed along

and feed the stock. This is usually done for three months, beginning about the New Year. The calves and their mothers are allowed to run together till the fall. When between six months and a year old, they are branded. First they are lassoed by the neck and hind feet, and, being thrown, are branded on the side or hip with a hot iron. The brand is a letter or figures, sometimes a design. Horses are branded with a crow-foot-half-circle, which has to be recorded. A round-up is for the purpose of collecting the cattle either to brand or to ship, and requires seven days. There are two of these round-ups every year. Cattle thieves were not very numerous, but when they did commit depredations were never caught.

About two-thirds of the land on the Bridge Creek Ranch is dry. The land



Cariboo freight team en route from Ashcroft Terminal—220-mile haul.

the Cariboo Road. By means of this road the country has been opened up, and opportunities for agricultural and grazing operations have come within the reach of many. Up the Cariboo Road, eighty-seven and a half miles from Ashcroft, and two hundred and ninety one and a half from Vancouver is situated 100 mile-house, the chief house and general store of the Bridge Creek cattle ranch, the property of the Marquis of Exeter. As ranches and the life thereon is much the same, a description of Bridge Creek will give a pretty good idea of the life in the "dry belt of British Columbia," through which passes the Cariboo Road. There are several divisions on this ranch of ten thousand acres. From 100

is watered by irrigation, obtained from creeks. Big Bridge Creek runs from the south out of Horse Lake, while Little Bridge Creek runs from the Westward and is the one chiefly used.

Long trenches, two feet deep, are dug; the water is brought in open trenches at intervals; the sides are broken and by means of marking the water is scattered as desired.

Bridge Creek Ranch is situated about forty miles east of the Fraser River. The elevation is high, 2,500 feet above sea-level; the general character is "rolling." The mountains are no farther than a mile away to the south in the dry belt. The climate is dry, hot in the day, cool at night. In winter it is cold, but dry—



The old way of hauling freight.

Mile House one meadow extends westward for five miles, the Willow-Dale to the east for six miles, north-east for nine miles is the Milk Ranch, and twelve miles east is the Buffalo Lake District. These are fenced with wire or wooden rail fences.

There are about 550 cattle, comprising Shorthorns, Highland and Herefords. These cattle are sold anywhere from two and a half to four and a half years, and marketed chiefly in Vancouver. There are about fifty horses on the ranch, chiefly Clydesdale, Blood and Broncos.

About one thousand tons of hay are raised on this ranch, and is preserved in stacks containing on an average fifty tons. These stacks are built in the various meadows for the sustenance of the cattle kept at the several points, and which are left out all winter. The calves and bulls are kept at the Home Ranch, the breeding stock at Willow-Dale, the steers at Milk Ranch. In winter one man resides at each ranch to attend

the thermometer falling to 65 degrees below, with about 18 inches of snow. There is very little wind and none heavy. Rain is not common and thunder showers are a rarity. Mosquitoes are very troublesome in May, and even horse flies put in an appearance for a few days.

Work on the ranch included ordinary farm work, the hours being the usual ones: from seven a.m. to six p.m. Hay-making began in July and continued till October.

A Chinaman, capable, although not the cleanest in the world, did the cooking. His sense of humor carried him over many trials. The food was good and plentiful, fresh beef three times a day; good bread, cake and pies, and strange to say, usually canned milk.

The foreman or "boss," as he is termed, was a fine man whose duty was to see that the work was done. He, however, accompanied the men and never assigned a task from which he would shrink himself.



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