

Our Western Letter

Shortage of Cars for Cattle—More Farmers Elevators Needed

Winnipeg, Oct. 14, 1901.

1st. That fodder cheese hurts the consumption, thus diminishing the demand for grass goods and lowering its price.

2nd. That the outlet for cheese is limited, and everything depends on the quality to induce a large consumption.

3rd. That the consumption of cheese is not increasing, but diminishing, while the consumption of finest creamery butter is rapidly growing.

4th. That the price of butter is higher on an average all the year round than cheese, for the finest qualities.

5th. That the manufacture of butter is more profitable than cheese, not only in the comparative price, but in that the farm stock and the land are better sustained.

6th. That in order to maintain high prices, there must be a continuous supply of finest butter, and as the flow of milk is lessening now, it is most urgent that the quantity should be kept up as much as possible, and to divert the milk from cheese to this article is the only way to keep up the supply.

Butter should be shipped fresh weekly to command the best price.

GENERAL NOTES.

It is recommended that all factories should be fitted up so as to make either cheese or butter.

Cheese should be held three weeks at a temperature of 60 degrees to ensure proper curing. Serious complaints continue to come of cheese being shipped much too green.

Packages both of cheese and butter are still made of much too thin wood.

The general tenor of this communication is quite in keeping with what we have advised in connection with the cheese trade for several years back. In our opinion our dairymen would be money in pocket if they would close down every cheese factory at the end of October of each year, and not open them up again till the 1st of May of the following year. Such a policy would help to regulate the supply and demand and prevent any early and late fodder goods from being put up on the market. The statement in the above that the consumption of cheese is diminishing while that of butter is increasing, if it be correct, is the strongest argument that could be advanced in favor of curtailing the make of cheese and largely increasing the make of butter. The condition of the cheese market during the past month would seem to bear out this contention that the consumption of cheese is decreasing, though the make is short and stocks are not large, yet the market keeps dull. If there were the usual consumption of cheese we should have an active and firm market.

Will Locate at Berlin.

The Ontario Sugar Co. will locate their factory at Berlin, Ont. Particulars in Sugar Beet World next issue.

The farmer is apt to look upon the exporter as an enemy, fattening upon the result of another's toil. Recent developments here indicate that the exporter has a like opinion of the Railway Co., and past events indicate that the company consider that their employees get too large a share of the good things of this world. The worst feature of talking about one's troubles lies in the fact that it takes such a short time to reason things around the circle to the starting point. We sometimes think that the exporter and the railway company have a private agreement by which they pluck the farmer and partition the plunder. Whether or not it is a case of thieves falling out cannot be definitely stated, but certainly there is trouble between the stock exporters and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

Complaints have been quite general during the present season of shortage of cattle cars, and of delay in filling orders for same, of delays and unnecessary stoppages in transit, of loss through failure of the railway company to provide necessary and promised facilities for watering and of careless and dilatory manner in which stock trains are handled. From Medicine Hat and farther west to Montreal is a long journey by rail, and it is fully recognized that only by careful handling can cattle stand this trip. Finding that individual complaints were unattended with any result, concerted action was attempted by bringing the matter before the Board of Trade, which body appointed a committee to look into the alleged grievances. On the fifth inst. the committee held its first session, when evidence was presented by the larger firms on their own account and on behalf of the smaller concerns engaged in the cattle trade. As a result of that meeting the following telegram was despatched:

"To Sir T. G. Shaughnessy, President Canadian Pacific Railway:

"Large number of cattle held for shipment in Alberta. Your officials here give no information when cars will be available. Twenty-five hundred head should be shipped to-day and Monday to catch boat at Montreal. Not more than six weeks before close of shipping season, and large numbers of cattle cannot be marketed, owing to your company not furnishing cars. Serious complaints by shippers of great damage to cattle through inferior and delayed service. Interests of West seriously affected. Immediate relief absolutely necessary.

"(Signed) W. Georgeson,
"President Winnipeg Board of Trade."

Voluminous evidence, consisting for the most part of letters and telegrams relating to delays in

transit and failure of the company to provide cars when required is in possession of the Board. The lack of feeding and watering facilities at any point west of Winnipeg has also led to much loss. Mr. Gordon, of the firm of Gordon, Ironsides & Fares, says on this point:

"I have asked the C.P.R. for the last three years to provide suitable yards at Moose Jaw so that cattle coming from Alberta and Western Assiniboia could be unloaded and watered. Mr. Osborne promised me last season that this would be carried out this spring. But it has not been done. The C.P.R. have what they call yards there, with a stagnant pool in them. Mr. Cochrane, of the Cochrane ranch, sold his cattle to be weighed off the cars in Winnipeg, and to be watered in transit at Moose Jaw. He personally examined the yards at Moose Jaw and decided not to unload his stock, owing to the condition of the accommodation.

"There are no other yards suitable for unloading range cattle between Medicine Hat and Winnipeg. Mr. Cochrane's experience was that it took him about fifty hours to run from Lethbridge to Winnipeg. His cattle were more dead than alive when they arrived here, and sixteen head of the shipment were dead in the cars. I could give you other experiences similar to this."

Between Winnipeg and Montreal the delays in transit are almost equal to those west of Winnipeg. The railway company agreed on 22 miles per hour for stock trains instead of which 13 to 16 is the rule. The officials of the company say the shippers are grossly exaggerating matters, but promise to investigate the complaints. There are several thousand cattle now ready for shipment, but owners are afraid to ship under existing conditions. The shipments to date amount to 17,000 head compared with 32,000 last year. The fact that the season is two weeks or so later does not altogether account for this shrinkage when it is remembered that there are 50,000 cattle in the country which it was expected to ship this season.

Many of the local dealers say the treatment they are receiving will surely force them out of the business.

As a result of the improved weather the elevators are again taking in wheat. They were closed for a period of about ten days. Operations were resumed on the 7th inst. The fact that the companies can thus at will shut up the wheat market is a tangible proof of the need of an increased number of fully equipped farmers' elevators, which seem to be the only safeguard against the monopoly. At the same time it is an indication that the buyer is not such a greedy monster as some imagine—since he makes such moderate use of his opportunity.