

questions provide a valuable object lesson particularly to a country such as this not yet committed to any definite plan, and therefore in a position to adopt the best characteristics, and avoid the worst features of the trade as developed and conducted by other countries.

The greatest and most marked difference in the financial control of the meat export trade, and packing house industry, in the Australasian colonies, in the Argentine, and in the United States, is undoubtedly shown by the manner in which the business is conducted in relation to the producer; in other words, the part played by the rancher and farmer in establishing, and carrying on the business, and consequently the extent to which he participates in the wealth produced.

Central-
ization

Another point of difference is found in the way in which certain countries have centralized, and others decentralized the business; in some cases operations have been confined to few centres, and conducted at such points on a large scale; in other cases a greater number of smaller works have been more widely distributed over the stock producing portions of the country and the various operations connected with the business carried on at more points, but on a smaller scale.

Control of
the trade

The United States and the Argentine provide examples of countries where the meat industry has been centralized; and also examples of countries where the dressed meat export trade and packing house business has been established and carried on by comparatively few firms. The interests of those engaged in this business are not closely connected with the interests of the producers. Except as regards obtaining the necessary supplies of cattle and hogs at prices that will enable them to handle the business, and market the finished article at a profit; the interests of the two may be said to be diametrically opposed. The large firms now controlling the packing house business and meat export trade of the United States centralized principally in Chicago, which for many years remained the only large market for live stock. Of late years, however, it seems to have been found that centralization, although possessing certain advantages in the way of economical handling, can be carried too far, and the result has been that stock yards and packing plants have been established in other centres nearer the stock producing districts. In 1871 stock yards were opened at Kansas City, and afterwards the business was extended to other points as follows: St. Louis in 1874, Sioux City in 1877, South Omaha in 1884, St. Joseph in 1898, and in recent years packing plants have been established in Texas, and arrangements completed for building on the Pacific Coast near Portland. The few firms instrumental in building up the industry in the United States, now control practically the whole of this vast business; they have amassed great wealth, and obtained immense power with the growth of the trade. The group known as the "BIG SIX" control very largely, not only the packing house business of the States, and the export trade in dressed meats and packing house products, amounting to an annual value of over \$200,000,000 but they have also acquired a monopoly of the refrigerator car service, and indirectly by that means, they control to a great extent, the trade in fruit, and other perishable products.

Trusts and
monopolies

There is of course always a danger that such enormous wealth, and power, in the hands of a few, may at times be used to influence trade to their own advantage, and to the prejudice of the producer. It is only necessary to point to the alarm caused by the operations of Trusts and Monopolies, to show how serious this question has become, as affecting the welfare of a nation, and as indicating one of the dangers to be avoided