

# The Farmer's Advocate

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### EDITORIAL.

#### A Damaging Admission of Packingtown Conditions.

While the world is denouncing American meat-packers for disregard of cleanliness and sanitation, the packers and their apologists asseverate that the companies have been making efforts to improve their methods, and that cleanliness has always been their motto. No doubt they have tried to improve. No doubt, when it did not promise to reduce profits too seriously, they did take pains to ensure the wholesomeness of their products. The conditions found in the packing plants of Chicago may be no worse, either, except in extent, than those that might be discovered in the abattoirs and factories of some other countries. It must be remembered, also, that civilization's standard of decency and sanitation is yearly rising. What is intolerable to-day, would have been treated with complaisance fifty years since, before bacteriology had aroused public fear of disease. It is admitted that a slaughter-house is a difficult place to keep clean, and a brutalizing place in which to work. No doubt there is the greatest difficulty in getting any but a low class of men to perform certain phases of the operations. All these facts may be advanced in partial extenuation of those responsible for the disgusting conditions until recently prevailing in Chicago. But these same facts merely emphasize the need of revolution in the business. The greater the temptation for the packers to drop into ruts of carelessness and filth, the more imperative the need for a spur to force them out of it. Strict compulsory inspection is the spur, and public feeling is the force behind it. In some quarters President Roosevelt has been accused of a rash act which has had the effect of thoughtlessly crippling the live-stock industry of the United States, but well he knew that less heroic measures would have failed to bring the offenders to their knees. In the end, the American farmer will lose nothing by the packing-house exposure, with the exhaustive inspection now legally provided. Instead, everyone will gain.

In this connection we read with some interest, lately, a couple of editorials in the leading stockmen's journal in the United States. This paper, with some others, has been distinctly unsympathetic towards President Roosevelt for his action in the matter of the packing-house exposure. It pointed out some time ago that a blow was being struck over the packers' heads at the American live-stock industry. It is not to be denied that the farmers of the Republic will for a time be rather hard hit, but we do not believe American husbandmen are the kind who would wish to see the public consume unwholesome food. An agricultural or stock paper may quite properly champion the interest of the class it represents, so long as this does not conflict with the general good, but our contemporary's views in this instance seem not untainted with a callous commercialism. The tenor of one of the articles referred to above was a palliation of the packers' crime, a minimizing of the unsatisfactory conditions revealed in the Neill-Reynolds report, and regret at the President's precipitate and, inferentially, unnecessary action.

The next article consists of a well-presented case for the establishment on the premises of the Union Stock-yards and Transit Co., Chicago, of a superlative veterinary school for the training of inspectors who will now be required in considerable numbers in the stock-yards and packing plants. It is stated that the best veterinary school now in existence is at Calcutta, India, and

a demand is made that the American Institution must be even better. The reason for establishing the school at the stock-yards is that here the students will be surrounded with the very diseases which they will subsequently have to detect. "Comparatively few veterinarians in country practice," says the Breeders' Gazette, "have ever seen such a varied assortment of diseases as may be seen any Thursday ('canner' day) in the Chicago yards. When a man's hogs begin to die off, he gets them to market as quickly as he can. The great yards are used as dumping-grounds. It is known in the country that some kind of price can be obtained for any kind of diseased animals," and so forth. The article goes on to say that diseased stock will be disposed of in the country "when the knowledge is forced upon shippers that diseased animals consigned will be condemned and tanked, and that all the shipper will get out of them will be the privilege of paying the freight and commission charges." The above damning admissions that diseased animals have been regularly shipped to Chicago and disposed of for some kind of price, undoubtedly for food, is about as severe a condemnation as any that has yet been levelled against the American packers. And yet this journal would have had the President refrain from arousing public opinion, the one influence that promised to be completely effective in stopping this sort of thing.

#### Expert Meat Inspectors Needed.

It is no season for Canada to gloat over the revelations in the American meat-packing houses. Our own conditions are not what they should be, and "The Farmer's Advocate" will not defile itself by trying to cover up the dirt. "Deacon" calves are marketed here in large numbers. Of course no one knows who eats them, but they "enter into consumption" just the same. Disease is not unknown among Canadian flocks and herds, nor do bacteria shun our slaughter-houses. We need just as close inspection of animals and carcasses as they do in the United States. One loophole for disease is one too many.

The Ontario Government has taken over the Ontario Veterinary College at Toronto, and the course is to be greatly extended and improved. One of the most important phases of the work should be the training of qualified meat inspectors, a class of men who are going to be in great demand in Canada, as well as abroad. The United States Government is already asking for four hundred. It will be sufficient if we supply our own needs, but we want the best men money can hire, and the most thorough schooling and practice that funds can provide. At the Toronto stock-yards sufficient opportunity should be afforded for examples in pathology and for clinical experiment. Let no expense be spared in this branch of the Veterinary College.

Let us have healthy herds, sanitary abattoirs, wholesome meat, and credible certificates that it is wholesome. The misfortune of the United States is, to some extent, Canada's opportunity. Let us make the most of it, not by seeking to damage our rivals, but by preventing such conditions as have wrought injury to their trade, and thus escaping the stigma fastened upon the methods and product of Chicago's Packingtown. Recent report has it that Lipton enterprise is to establish a meat-packing business in Winnipeg, and the Cudahys have been looking towards Toronto. It is to be hoped Canada's dead-meat business may be established on a permanent basis.

#### Revival of the Sheep Industry.

Not for many years have so large a number of sheep of the different breeds been imported to Canada as are being brought out this summer. This may safely be regarded as an indication of the existence of an active demand for this class of stock. Indeed, it is well known by those in touch with the business that so heavy have been the drafts upon Canadian pure-bred flocks in the last two or three years that they have been reduced in numbers to a lower point than has been touched in the last thirty years; and the importation of fresh blood on a larger scale than usual has been felt to be a necessity, if we would maintain the standard of our stock and hold the markets which the high-class character of our sheep has won for us. It is gratifying to know that so many Canadian breeders have the courage and the enterprise to assume the risk of importing on so large a scale; and we are glad to learn that commendable care has been exercised in the selections made for importation this year, and that a larger number of high-class stock than usual has been brought over. The magnificent display of sheep of all the principal breeds at the leading exhibitions in Canada, amply demonstrates that we have a country admirably adapted to the production of this class of stock in the highest degree of perfection, and that we have practical shepherds, not a few who are well qualified by training and experience to bring them out in the pink of condition and in robust health and vigor. The splendid record made by our flockmasters in winning honors at the great international exhibitions in which they have competed, at Chicago and elsewhere, with Canadian-bred-and-fitted sheep in their own hands, and those of others to whom they had sold, furnished abundant evidence of the high-class character of our sheep, the undoubted skill of our shepherds, and the suitability of our climate, our soil, and our stock foods, for the growth and development of sheep and the production of mutton and wool of the very best quality.

In view of these facts, it is unaccountable that so few sheep, comparatively, are found on Canadian farms, that by a very large proportion of our farmers they are entirely neglected, and that the aggregate number of sheep in the Dominion has been steadily decreasing for the last fifteen years. We are confident this fact is not due to any general disability affecting the industry. We believe it is absolutely safe to say that in no other country are sheep liable to so few diseases or disadvantages of any kind. The climate is as near an ideal one for the successful raising of this class of stock as can be found anywhere in the world. All the principal mutton breeds do well with us. There is no class of farm stock the raising and care of which requires so little labor or expense as this inoffensive and unpretentious money-maker. Sheep will live in summer largely upon pickings in the lanes and by-places of the farm, and will eat many of the weeds which infest the pastures, thus helping to clean the farm and keep it clean. No stock is so little affected by protracted drouths; they prefer a short nibble, and thrive better in a dry season than in a wet one when feed is overfluous. The fleece of wool—a volunteer crop, which never fails—which no other farm stock yields, and which is perennial during the life of the animal, amply pays for its winter keep, even when liberally fed, and anywhere from 50 to 100 per cent. of an annual increase from the ewes may reasonably be expected, and, with a little care and good management, may be realized. We doubt if any other investment in farming will pay as liberal dividends as those