

Railway Regulation and the Farmer.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—In your Feb. 20th number appears an article on this subject by S. J. McLean, of Leland Stanford University, California, which to the ordinary farmer contains several extraordinary statements. He tells us that costs and distance fail to determine a rate, and that there are other essential factors. What are they—Watered stocks and bonds and "all the traffic will bear," and "the public be ———"? If this is not right, will the Professor enlighten us? He points out that there are weaknesses in the laws appointing these commissions. Here I agree with him, and if this country appoints a commission, these we want to avoid. He tells us that the judicial bodies have to pass on them at the last resort. Now, here is the rock on which all other commissions have split, and we must avoid that. We want no such provision; we want a commission with the simple powers of an ordinary jury. They have the power to try the law as well as the case; their decision is final. If the law is bad, so much the worse for the law. If we let the law be the final arbiter, there will be no end to litigation and no redress of grievances. It's no use to point to England, for they are in quite as bad a position as we in Canada in regard to freight rates. I understand that twenty miles from London you can ship goods to France and then to London for less money than you can ship direct to London. Is this a case of compromise? He points out that transportation is the most important question in Canada to-day, which is true. And this is the question our agricultural papers and farmers' institutes want to discuss, rather than how to produce goods, for all depends on the price we get when produced. We have already made two lords in connection with the C.P.R., and if it goes on charging present rates for passengers and freight, we are likely to make more. Is this a case of Empire building? Prof. McLean says Argentina is our great competitor. In this I think he is entirely mistaken. Russia is our great competitor. She is driving us out of the egg market in Britain; in butter she is up to us, and is coming on in cheese and bacon. As for wheat, Siberia is a country much like our Northwest and Manitoba, of much larger extent, and can raise wheat quite as good and is settling up much faster. It has a through railroad that carries passengers for one cent per mile (whereas our C.P.R. charges from three to five cents), and a freight rate less than half. This railroad is owned by the Government, and is not run to make money, but as their Minister of Railways declares, "to place their goods in the world's markets below all competitors." What is our Minister of Railways doing? Too busy testing cattle-guards! Mr. McLean contends that this question is beset with difficulties, some of them impossible of solution. Does Mr. McLean believe this? If so, he will find few farmers who agree with him. Is it possible that our legislators have given powers to railroad corporations so vast as to be beyond public control? This looks like an impostor of Mahomet's Koran. When he wanted to give great weight to some of his revelations, he commenced with a conundrum which no man could guess. It is needless to follow the Professor further at present, but state a few things that the farmers of Canada want:

1st, we want a commission, with ample powers to compel the railway corporations to show what they have done with the \$300,000,000 the people of Canada have given them to help build their roads, and how much of their own money they have put into them.

2nd, we want the watered stocks and bonds squeezed out, and that "witless" fifteen per cent. profit clause in their charters, that Mr. McLean tells us about, re-enforced.

3rd, we want a two-cent per mile passenger rate, and a freight rate on our heavily subsidized railways and steamships that will place our products on the markets of the world cheaper than all competitors, regardless of what the United States, Argentina, Russia or any other country may do.

This is going to be a big and long fight, and our friends will have to stand up and be counted one of these days. It would be well for our legislators and papers to show which side they are on, and not be led away by the writings of some one who may be in the employ of the corporations.

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[Editorial Note.—It would be unfortunate if the Canadian Railway Commission were invested only with "the simple powers of an ordinary jury." In the Province of Ontario, where our correspondent resides, it is only in a very limited class of cases that juries determine the law as well as the facts, and even in these, judges have the power to say whether there is sufficient evidence to allow the case to go to the jury at all. The question has already been raised as to whether some small purely local roads subsidized by Provincial grants could, by a declaration of

the Federal Parliament that they were for the "general advantage of Canada," be made subject to Federal control. The chances of judgment, however, would be in favor of the Dominion. There will also be difficulty in controlling the C.P.R. rates, in view of the clause in the original contract which provides that its rates shall not be reduced until the road earns ten per cent. on the capital invested in its construction. When the C.P.R. received power to increase its capital stock from \$65,000,000 to \$85,000,000, a reference to the Supreme Court was agreed upon to determine just what amount actually was invested in the construction of the Canadian Pacific. The public would like to know that, and will be content with nothing less than an efficient regulation of rates on roads that have cost people so much, and the prevention of discriminations. The fight will not be over with the creation of the commission, because it is very likely that the exercise of its powers may be resisted, thus involving litigation, but if Parliament does its duty the commission should in the end secure practical sovereignty over the railways of the country. In another column we give an outline of the Railway Commission Bill as submitted to Parliament last week.]



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A Change of Front.

Commenting on the new regulations regarding testing cattle imported from Great Britain to America, the Scottish Farmer concludes:

"The policy of the United States with reference to Channel Island cattle is peculiar. Many things in the United States are peculiar, and one more or less need not put us out. It appears that Mr. Salmon and his Bureau are convinced that Channel Island cattle bred in the Channel Islands are so absolutely free of tuberculosis that they and they alone of all cattle may now be entered at any port in the United States without undergoing the tuberculin test. This indicates a very astonishing change of front on the part of official persons. We do not understand it. The reasoning is faulty. If Channel Island cattle are so healthy, the test will not do them any harm, and it is too much to ask us to believe that their freedom from the disease is the cause of the new ordinance. According to every accepted theory, Channel Island cattle ought to be healthier in Great Britain than on the coast of France. Their alleged healthfulness does not demonstrate that human and bovine tuberculosis is not the same disease. The logic of the situation now created is the abolition of the tuberculin test in the United States. If dairy cattle of the deepest milking propensity are absolutely free of tuberculosis, there is no such disease as tuberculosis. The action of Mr. Salmon's Bureau is definable as humbug."

The Railway Commission Bill.

The Hon. A. G. Blair, Minister of Railways, in introducing his amended Railway Commission Bill in the House of Commons at Ottawa, on March 20th, very properly laid down this proposition, that "the first interest to be considered was agriculture, which far surpassed all other interests." It proposes in the first place to abolish the present Railway Committee of the Privy Council, and establish in its place a tribunal independent of the Government, and empowered to control the operation of railways, rates, trains, equipment, the protection of crossings, and also, we presume, freight shipments which involve part carriage by water. It will, like other railway commissions, give publicity to rates, etc., in which there is safety for the people. In its powers it is claimed to go beyond any previous legislation, and to avoid the weaknesses of other commissions. It is to be judge as to both law and fact; but there is a right to appeal to the Supreme Court when the jurisdiction of the commission is attacked, and on questions of fact to the Governor-General-in-Council or Cabinet. Is there not grave danger in the latter proviso, when great issues affecting the rights of people re-transportation are at stake, that the Commission might become involved with the political exigencies of the Government of the day? The Bill aims to remove long and short haul discriminations, provide uniform rates of classification, and the Commission is empowered to alter these rates and control tolls. The Intercolonial Railway (Government line) is exempt from the operations of the Act, and the C.P.R. partially so, owing to the ten per cent. clause in the charter.

Freight rates are classified under three heads, standard, special, and competitive. Standard rates are to be fixed by the Commission, after application by the railways; the railway schedule may or may not be accepted by the Commission, and the decision of the Commission shall stand. Special rates would cover the carriage of coal, lumber, grain and similar commodities, and competitive rates might result from reduced charges between given points under certain conditions, but the board will have the power to disallow these amendments after a certain time. The railway shall give to shippers three days' notice of any decreased rates, and ten days' notice of any increases.

The board will consist of three or five members, Mr. Blair preferring three, but the number is left blank until the bill reaches the committee stage, when all its provisions will be fully discussed. The commission is to be a court of record. The term of the appointment of commissioners shall be ten years, but they shall be eligible to re-appointment. The age limit is to be seventy-five years. The commissioners shall be removable only by the Governor-General-in-Council, and then upon cause. One member of the commission may hold a hearing, providing the matter be not contentious. The place of meetings shall be movable on consent of the Government. A majority of the Commission will decide a case.

Big Feeding Test.

Professor W. J. Kennedy, head of the Animal Husbandry Department of the Iowa Agricultural College, has completed final arrangements for the mammoth cattle-feeding experiments to be conducted on the Cook farms, Odebolt, Iowa. The cattle have been carefully selected, and divided by Professors Kennedy and Marshall into ten lots of fifty animals each. Three separate lines of work are taken up: (1) Acclimation test; (2) light, medium, and heavy rations; (3) by-products of corn, flax seed and cotton seed, and dried blood.

None of the lots will be fed any stock foods, as the manufacturers would not enter this year's test on the same ground that they did last year and those complied with by the manufacturers of the other foods which are being fed this year. The feeding is being done by Newton C. Rew, a graduate of the College. Full details and results of the work will be published at the conclusion of the test.

With the scarcity of help that prevails this year, it will be more than ever necessary for the employer and employee to maintain a mutual understanding; cultivate politeness and a consideration for others. Charity covers a multitude of sins.