

The Commercial

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STOCK YARDS AT WINNIPEG.

The value of stock yards to the city of Winnipeg cannot be overlooked by any person who will take the trouble to give the question only a short study, and that their value has not been more generally recognized, is due to the fact that their utility has not been felt so far. We have for a few years been in that progressive state of production in this country, that wants were only discovered as a rule when there was great necessity for them, and there is every reason that stock yards should come through a similar experience.

Five years ago this country had to import a share of its flour, now it exports annually about half a million of bags. Five years ago we exported no wheat, and now in a rough and manufactured form we export at least five millions of bushels a year. Oats had to be imported three years ago, and now we have a good surplus every year. Up to one year ago we had to import butter, and now we send it out of the country in car load lots. With many other articles of produce it has been similar, and now we have reached the point where we must prepare to export our beef and pork products in some form.

Before any extent of an export business in beef and pork can be done, stock yards somewhere in Manitoba is a necessity. It matters not whether we export live animals or meats slaughtered and cured, they are necessary all the same, and as was shown by Alderman Penrose at a recent meeting of the Winnipeg Board of Trade, there must be stock yards in Winnipeg or somewhere in its neighborhood, if this province and the territories beyond are to take their proper position as exporters of meats. That gentleman's suggestion is good, that freight arrangements on the C.P.R. should allow of cattle being unloaded in Winnipeg for selection purposes. Only a smaller class of cattle are necessary for the home butcher market, while these are not wanted at all in Montreal for the export business, as it pays only to handle the heaviest cattle for this trade. Manitoba furnishes quite a surplus of cattle that are too big for the home market, and others that are too small for the Montreal market. When

either market has to receive other than its actual wants, it will be received at a loss in price to the producer and shipper. The utility of stock yards here would therefore be to secure the highest price for our products, which catering for different markets will bring, and this is based upon the opinion of gentlemen, who believe that stock yards for slaughtering business are still unnecessary in Winnipeg or anywhere else in Manitoba.

But we question the opinion of the gentlemen referred to on the item of a slaughtering and packing centre here, and we do not admit that their's are the opinions of practical men. So far as a slaughtering centre for beef is concerned there is as yet some argument in favor of their statements, for without beef canning factories and other arrangements, the wisdom of which as investments is somewhat problematical, this city can only use a very limited quantity of beef, too limited as yet to call for very extensive stock yards. But with regard to pork packing there is a totally different aspect on affairs. We have no experience as yet by which we can determine the profit in pork packing in this country. True it has been tried on a small scale during the past two years, and while it has not been a failure, it has not been a bonanza to those engaged therein. But it should be known that pork packing up to the present date has been conducted on the antiquated plan of purchasing the dressed hogs from the raiser, a system which the experience of every packing centre in the Western United States has shown to be a failure, while slaughtering and packing at the same time has made more wealthy men, firms and companies than any other branch of industry of the same magnitude.

Objectors to pork packing here endeavor to make a strong point out of the belief that Winnipeg with a population of over 25,000 does not furnish a large enough market for offal to allow of profitable pork packing. The experience of much smaller places knocks the bottom out of this absurd argument, and we do not require to go outside of one western state to prove this. The live little city of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with a population at least 10,000 less than Winnipeg, has a packing house with a capacity of 3,000 hogs a day, and it has grown to this magnitude from a business of fifty a day in about fourteen years. It is one of the

most profitable concerns of its kind in America, and is the back bone of the industries of the city it is located in. Dubuque, Des Moines, Davenport and other points furnish further though less marked proofs of what we state, and Iowa, although it does not possess a city having 30,000 population has pork packing houses at quite a number of points, the aggregate capacity of all being somewhat over 14,000 hogs a day. Such facts and figures should silence all objections on the offal question. The facts are that in these places the bulk of the offal is manufactured into some product which can be shipped to wider markets at a profit.

Another argument used against pork packing here is the uncertainty of a supply of hogs. That argumens should be traced back a little, and it would be found that the uncertain supply has been the outcome of an uncertain market. Establish pork packing and curing on an extensive scale, and with slaughtering arrangements connected, and we will establish a steady market for live hogs, which will soon tempt our farmers to raise them in abundance.

The objectors to pork packing here as a last stand argue that hog raising will not pay our farmers. On that point the objectors, being men of trade and not agricultural experience, are not competent to judge, and we can furnish them with the opinions of men, who have had chances of overlooking more regarding hog raising than these objectors ever had of learning about it, and these opinions agree that in few if any places on this continent does the hog raiser start in with better advantages.

But the question comes to this; Are we to export our pork in the expensive way of live hogs or in the economical way of packed or cured pork? There can be but one answer to such a plain question, and the additional fact that the first ten cars or so of live hogs shipped east from this province, are met in Montreal, by a carefully circulated but lying rumor of hog cholera in Manitoba, adds firmness to the tone of that answer, and shows how our live hog export business can be placed at the mercy of eastern spectators.

There is no use trying to evade the fact that we require pork packing houses here at once, and stock yards in connection, and if the latter are wanted for the live cattle export trade, then it will only increase the necessity for them.