

Stop Plundering the Country to Help Railroad Magnates.

From time to time this journal has opposed the reckless granting of aid to railroads, in existence or in embryo, either in the form of land or cash. The times are admittedly prosperous, yet the pendulum is bound to swing to the other end, and many will feel the pinch of hard times later on. As a consequence of good times people are not careful enough to scrutinize the deeds of the administrators, and if a superficial scrutiny is made, the ways and means are not carefully looked into. It was the custom for many years in the West to shout against the C. P. R.; a politician could always make himself solid with an audience by thus exciting the prejudices and hatred of his hearers; that time has gone by; but there has arisen in Canada another road whose leaders are masters in handling the administrations. It is well known that in Manitoba many Liberals are sore, claiming that the financial and other aid given by their friends at Ottawa was used to beat them in provincial fights. Further, the overthrow of one cabinet minister is said to have been due to his insistence that the C. N. R. should be taken up as the federal government's transcontinental road, and not the Grand Trunk Pacific. All

these men are really the enemies of a free and independent country. They are the enemies of the people, they feel certain, that while some are in politics for the good of the country, the great majority are in it for what they can get out of it. It is a matter of common knowledge that the so-called aid now given to railroads on the prairie, is more than aid; it amounts to a straight gift, the allowance per mile being more than sufficient to properly build and equip the lines so aided. Some companies do build and equip with the aid so generously donated, others build and equip their lines on the cheap, and as a result when the ordinary business of the country has to be done, such roads fall down and the people are caused suffering, inconvenience, and financial loss. Effort is, however made to still the uproar resulting by shouting "big crops", "rapid expansion of the country", etc., etc., all intended to divert the attention of the taxpayers from the fact that the railroads have been financially aided to an extent that should have enabled such railroads to have forestalled the lack of transportation now existent.

In spite of the aid thus lavishly granted, the railroad service in many parts is undoubtedly scandalous. Just recently the C. N. R. have taken over what has been termed the Prince Albert branch of the C. P. R., and for lack of motive power are unable to operate it. The ambitions of the two C. N. magnates to own a transcontinental road are legitimate enough; we do not even decry the ambition of one of them to be made a peer or knighted, as other Canadian railroad magnates have been before him, but this anxiety to butt into the aristocracy

should not be allowed to affect the railroad's administration, with the result of spreading legitimate endeavor out too thinly.

The railroad situation in Canada is unique, and while the people have been dazzled by the G. T. P., the other railroad has been profiting immensely, in a way, sub rosa. It is well worth the while of a little thought on the part of the people of Canada, this matter of aid to railroads, especially in view of the fact that James J. Hill is anxious to come unaided. Canadian business is good enough, without the tax payers having to pay people to come after it!

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A grain exchange expert informs us that the millers, elevator men and other grain dealers have lost money in the grain business of late years, which we did not deny, on account of our credibility, although the thought would not down "Why do they stay at it?" Second thoughts suggest that the statement is probably right and that they have lost money—in the bucket shop.

HORSE

Now is a good time to look for a stallion. Some good home bred two-year-olds are still in the hands of breeders and are available for reasonable figures, and the importers' barns never before contained so many choice selections.

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There is an opportunity of the breeders of different classes of horses to exploit their favorites at the forth-coming conventions at Brandon and Regina. Why should not the directors invite some enthusiast for a particular breed to deliver a "spellbinder" before the conventions? The advantages of a breed cannot be too thoroughly published.

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Breeders should go up to the live-stock conventions prepared to make some recommendations to the different exhibition boards relative to the distribution of prize money. At the large shows there is an urgent need for the adjustment of the prize lists to provide classes for Canadian bred fillies of all ages, with provision that they shall also be allowed to compete with imported females. Will the breeders express their opinion on this matter?

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The new tariff provides for a specific duty on horses over one year old, valued at \$50 or less; as follows: British preferential tariff \$10, intermediate tariff \$12.50, general \$12.50. The object aimed at is to shut out the cheap horse stock that frequently floods the country from northwestern states' ranches. On purebred animals the tariff is unchanged; namely, free of duty. The old tariff was 20 per cent ad valorem on all except purebred stock.

The Wild Horses of British Columbia

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Various and weird are the conceptions regarding the wild horses that make their homes among the untraversed peaks of this Alpine Province. Some imagine that these little animals are the lineal descendants of the cloven-hoofed horses of the Glacial Age; many presume that like their neighbors, the Indians, they were always here, while others believe that they have degenerated from the civilized horses of every-day life.

To see these supple little creatures scale the side of an almost perpendicular mountain, to watch them leap from rock to rock with the dexterity of a mountain goat, to witness an exhibition of speed that would cause a sensation on one of our race-tracks, it requires a good deal of faith to believe that these fiendlike creatures are brothers of our ponderous Percherons and colossal Clydesdales. Such, however, is the case, and it is only another striking example of what environment and conditions will do for an unrestrained animal. The human animal is not exempt from similar influences.

As near as can be ascertained, the origin of these wild horses is as follows: Away back in the early days, explorers and prospectors would come on horseback from the older countries of the East and South. Many of these pioneers perished in their search for gold, while their horses would survive. Other horses would stray from their owners, and these would join the ranks of the bears, panthers and mountain goats which, at that time, made up a large part of British Columbia's population. These horses formed the nucleus of the wild bands of to-day. Then, in the late fifties and early sixties, when the gold fever raged in the Cariboo region, many horses were brought in from the south for pack and saddle purposes. In some cases a drove of 40 or 50 would be brought in at one time, and, with nothing but a path to follow, one of the easiest things imaginable is that some of these horses would get away from the band and join the ranks of those already enjoying the freedom of the wilds. It is easy to understand how these horses, away from all restraining and civilizing influences, would quickly forget—as men often do—their home-training, and adopt the manners and customs of their companions of the wilderness. These interesting creatures resemble but little the stock from which they sprang. Extreme cold, driving rain and biting snows, as well as prolonged periods of starvation, have all had their influence upon their growth and development. Instead of the fine specimens which have been developed by man's aid, and of which we are justly proud, we have a degenerated, long-haired, vicious creature, of no value to man. They are reared under conditions so adverse to growth that the average wild horse of the mountains will probably not weigh more than 700 pounds, and, unless they change their ways, they will no doubt become smaller, rather than larger. In color, they vary from black to white—some with large white spots, others cream color, and still others with a mixture of all these. Most of them possess that vicious, varied eye, which is sufficient warning for those with wisdom to keep away.

Opinions regarding the number of these horses vary from 500 to 5,000, and to secure definite information on the subject is difficult. There are, however, several bands of these wild horses located in different parts of the Province, so it is reasonable to conclude that the latter figure is more nearly correct. One of these bands has made its home on the mountains skirting the Okanagan Lake. In an interesting conversation with one of the oldest settlers in that district, I found that the originators of this herd had escaped from a pack train in Cariboo gold days. One of these was a very fine animal, and numerous attempts were made to capture her. Fences which led to a corral were built across a valley, but from this she escaped with ease. A posse of Indians was organized and stationed in a relay-race fashion, so that when one horse got tired a fresh horse and rider would take up the chase. This was kept up for two or three days, until she was finally captured; but their work was in vain, for she died that night of exhaustion, complicated by a broken heart. I was told of another, which, after a long chase, was finally driven into deep snow, and lassoed by cowboys on snowshoes. When attempts were made to lead her, she would open her mouth and attack her captors, using all the arts of a tiger, until she was at last given up as an impossible project and allowed to pursue the evil tenor of her way. Another band is frequently seen scaling the mountains of the



A FINE FARM RESIDENCE.
Home of Isaac Delson, Souris, Man.