



The New Buffalo Herd on arrival at Lamont, Alberta.

1.—The Wire Fence around the Enclosure. 2.—Dragging a Buffalo from the Car. 3.—The Special Corral for the Unloading.  
4.—Some of the Animals in the Enclosure.

Photographs by Mather, Lamont.

Pacific, Great Northern, Canadian Pacific to Strathcona, thence via the C. N. R. to Lamont. The total time consumed in the trip was sixty-six hours. The contract called for Michel Pablo to deliver the herd to Strathcona, where the government took possession. Of the two hundred buffaloes, only four were lost in the shipment, two by Michel Pablo and two by the government. Of these two, one was an old cow, and the other had been wounded in a fight, so that it is considered a creditable achievement to have had such small loss. At Calgary, seven of the bulls were exchanged for seven from Banff National Park.

Immediately upon the arrival of the trainload of seventeen cars at Lamont on Saturday, the work of unloading began. Extensive preparations had been made. A chute had been built from the track to the corrals, from which there were openings to a large enclosure. This connected in turn with a wide "runway," which had been built for the distance of the three miles to the park. Howard Douglas, superintendent of Banff National Park, who has conducted the negotiations for the government, was in charge, and associated with him was Frank Walker, M.L.A., of Fort Saskatchewan, who also has taken a prominent part in the transaction. Michel Pablo himself, the owner, was there, a tall, broad, swarthy Mexican, and also a number of typical Montana cowboys, who looked very wild and terrible in their ranching costumes.

The majority of the animals were driven out with long sticks by men on the roof of the car, but many had to be pulled out with a rope. There was one particularly vicious bull, which caused a great deal of trouble. It took half an hour to get him out. In the compartment next to him was a dead steer, over which he was unwilling to cross. Ropes were attached to him, and twenty-five men pulled for a quarter of an hour without causing him to move! This gives an idea of the strength of a buffalo. Finally, urged on with sticks behind, and by twenty-five men in front, he yielded, and made a wild dash down the chute. He pawed the earth in his rage, so that no one dared to go near the fence,

for, if the bull had tried, he could have broken it like matchwood. His head was of such an enormous size that the sight of it was startling. It was interesting to notice how the animals acted upon regaining their liberty. Some dashed from the chute, through the corral to the enclosure, and around the field. Others, weakened by the long trip, waddled slowly along. The buffalo is an ugly animal at best, but, at this time of year, when he is shedding his fur, he is particularly so.

The greatest sight, however, was the driving of the buffaloes to the park on Sunday afternoon. The gates of the enclosure were opened, and the herd began to move over the plain, driven by half a dozen cowboys. It was a sight which very few of the crowds of spectators, who followed on horseback and in conveyances of all kinds, ever had seen. Two hundred buffaloes tramping, tramping, across the Alberta prairie! For two miles the plain is flat, and a splendid view could be obtained. Before the entrance of the park, however, there is a wooded hill, over the crest of which the buffaloes, one by one, disappeared. The majority were easy to drive, but one was very obstinate (it was the same bull which had given the trouble during the unloading). He would move forward a few yards, and stop. He kept repeating this for a long time. Finally, the cowboys began to drive him hard, but suddenly he turned, dropped his head, and charged the horses. Like a flash the cowboys wheeled round, and spurred their horses to breakneck speed.

The park in which the bison have been placed is four miles square. Of this area, about one-fourth is open grazing land, but the remainder is wooded. There is one large lake and several smaller ones, in which are situated a number of islands. The park was intended originally for elk, of which a large number will be placed there this fall. The woods in the district are said to be full of them. The presence of both buffaloes and elk will make the park a famous one. In 1898, thirteen buffaloes were placed in Banff Park. To-day there are eighty-eight, of which ten have been given to zoological gardens in the east and elsewhere. At this rate of increase, the new herd will assume large proportions in a short time.