The Chairman stated that what the Alberta farmer wanted was a fair price for his hogs, and the assurance that the demand will be constant.

Failure of existing methods

Having referred to the necessity of a suitable outlet for stock, a necessity we believe to be very real, and having outlined some of the advantages which we are convinced would result to the whole stock raising industry, and the country generally, if a better market could be assured; we will now deal briefly with the reason why the existing method has failed to meet the case, and has consequently failed to place the industry on a sound and satisfactory basis.

Present system of marketing

One of the first requisites for any country such as this, which is producing, or is capable of producing, meat animals largely in excess of its own requirements, is a ready and convenient means of disposing of its surplus, either as live animals, or as dead meat and packing house products, in the large centres of population, and important meat markets of the world. Up to the present the only manner in which this has been attempted in Canada on a large scale, and in an organized way, as regards cattle, has been by transporting long distances and exporting on the hoof; in handling hogs also this same method of transportation has been largely adopted, with the result that districts distant from important market centres, and which are not provided with packing house facilities are in an unfortunate position as regards their products, and consequently have no other means of disposing of their stock. The disadvantage of this method for the individual producer can, we think, be clearly defined. It is impossible for him to get directly in touch with the larger and more important markets; in the export of live cattle to the British market for instance, the means of reaching it by that method are so tortuous, involve so many and varied operations, and the whole system generally is so hedged round with difficulties, delays, and risks, that it is practically impossible for the ordinary rancher or farmer to adopt that method of marketing his stock himself with any certainty of success, and the business can only be carried on by firms who are particularly strong financially and able to stand the heavy losses that sometimes occur. In evidence taken before the Beef Commission, a large exporter of live stock stated, that it was often impossible to figure out the result of a shipment of live cattle, that loss after loss would sometimes result, perhaps to the extent of $50,000 before a profit was made, and that it was only by staying with the business that he was able to come out on the right side in the long run. The above factors all make for extreme fluctuations in price, and tend to throw the business into the hands of a few: and even if the producer is able at times to obtain a remunerative price under this system, it seems certain that at other times he will be compelled to take for his stock a price that will hardly cover the cost of production; this certainly has been the case with the stock industry in Western Canada in the past, and there is no indication that the existing method is likely to result differently in the future.

Objections to present methods

If the above is a fair statement of the position of this important industry, as we believe it is, it will probably be asked why, if the live cattle export trade has failed to provide a stable and satisfactory market, other methods of handling and exporting have not been substituted long before this, or at any rate adopted in conjunction with the present system. The answer to this question, which is a perfectly reasonable one, is not far to seek, and the explanation appears to be as follows: The few large firms engaged in the live stock export trade, undoubtedly find that the business, even if accompanied by certain disadvantages and risks, suits them on the whole very well; carried on as it generally is in conjunction with a local