

# THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL

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## THE CATTLE QUESTION.

Dear beef has been the subject that has for some days past been vexing and annoying the thrifty housekeeper, who seeing from the daily papers that it was proposed to carry out the quarantine law with respect to live cattle brought in from the United States for purposes of slaughter, began to imagine all kinds of contingencies. A scarcity of beef, and therefore higher prices was the not most unnatural order of argument, and then came the inquiry of how was this going to be provided against? The facts, as we understand them, are that on November 13th, 1890, an order in Council was passed at Ottawa, ordering that the provisions in force regarding the importation of cattle into the province of Manitoba should be applied to the province of British Columbia. This law, which provides for a quarantine of ninety days for cattle coming in from the United States, never having been enforced here, recently, some Calgary stock breeders visited the city, and brought the matter before the notice of the Collector of Customs, urging him, it is said, to carry out the law. The Collector at once wrote to Ottawa for instructions.

According to the local butchers, glad as they are to utilize province-fed stock during some months of the year, it is impossible for them to do so all the time, as no fat cattle are available. Then they are compelled to look to Washington, Oregon and California, the freight and charges from the Canadian Northwest Territories being a serious obstacle in the way of making use of beefs from that section of country even should they happen to be in condition, which is not the case. However, the Calgary cattle men, understanding that the tariff of Canada is a protective one, have made up their minds that if there can, by any possibility, be any advantage to them from it, they are bound to have it. In a word, they propose to work off their thin beef, which they cannot sell in the east, on the British Columbia market, and that at exorbitant prices, since, by the assistance of the customs duty, they hope to control this market which cannot, like Ontario and Quebec, make any use of frozen meat.

The other day, utterly ignoring questions of policies or sentiment, Mr. L. Goodacre, the well known Victoria butcher, thus presented the case: "At present, the local butchers import 600 head of cattle per month into the Island, averaging 420,000 lbs. in weight. Now the price of prime

beef to our customers is 15c. per lb., but, should the law you speak of be enforced among us, the price, at the very lowest computation, will be raised to 20c., counting freight, wharfage and duty. So that the people of this island will have to pay per month \$21,000 more for their beef than they are doing to-day." This statement is one that is well calculated to alarm the consumer.

But, on the other hand, Mr. Van Volkenburg, himself a well-informed stock-raiser and butcher, has given an opinion that is entitled to considerable weight. He says:

"The Government at Ottawa know what they are doing when they make a law like the one under discussion. It will be the finest thing that could happen to the Province if it is carried out in its entirety. It is foolish to talk about a 'beef famine.' There could not possibly be anything of the sort, as beef, and good beef, is always available from the other side, and would cost no more than it does now. The wholesale price now, in all the Sound cities, is from 6c to 8c per lb., and, adding the freight and duty to this, the butchers in Victoria would not dare to offer it for sale for more than 11c wholesale, or 15c retail. If they did, they would have the Sound butchers over here competing with them, and running them out. Let us put every cent of duty we can on live stock, except for stock purposes, from the United States, and soon you will see hundreds of small farmers starting to breed cattle in this Province."

If it should happen that the present regulation be carried out to the letter, even though it be in the end a blessing in disguise the vast body of consumers must suffer materially unless, as has been represented, dressed meat from the Sound cities comes in at prices sufficiently low to prevent the retailers from selling the article at exorbitant rates. We fully agree with the idea of encouraging local industry to the utmost extent possible, but at the same time recognize the fact that there are consumers as well as producers who are entitled to consideration. By all means let every possible opportunity be given to the British Columbia farmer and stock raiser, who if they will only be content with a moderate amount of assistance will obtain all that is really necessary to enable them to make their industry in every way prosperous and thoroughly successful, as they have all the natural conditions necessary to that end.

## THE LAST OF THE STRIKE.

For some months it has been manifest that the promoters of and those who were mainly responsible for the continuance of "the state of strike" at Wellington have been losing the confidence of the members of the Miners' and Mine Laborers' Protective Association, and that at any time it was possible the *ante bellum* condition of things would soon be restored. We have said "the state of strike" for it was only a strike in name. The miners were all working as usual, and there were only a few miners out of work who were living at the expense of their fellow members—the majority of whom were anxious to be relieved of the responsibility and cost involved. The leaders in the Union have, it is charged, done their very utmost to prevent a full and free expression of opinion on the part of the miners, who

have been led into tacit acquiescence in what was being done for fear of the hard names that would be applied to them in the event of their failing to comply with the imperious demands of the men who were responsible for the whole trouble and to whom after the organization of the boycott at San Francisco, the return of the old order of things would be a terrible blow. We are not in the humor to moralize upon the collapse of the miners' movement; we are glad to see the strike ended, and would say that our hope is that past misunderstandings will be forgotten and that a better condition of mutual relations will be inaugurated for the future.

## THE BRAZILIAN REPUBLIC.

In view of the recent attention drawn to Brazil, a few words as to the resources of that rich country will not be out of place. Brazil, as is generally known, is one of the largest countries in the world, its area being somewhat greater than that of the United States, not including Alaska. Its resources are simply enormous, and, as yet, are practically undeveloped. It has a population of nearly 15,000,000 and a considerable export trade, yet less than one per cent. of its available area is under cultivation. It can produce enormous quantities of tropical products. Its forests are among the greatest wonders of the world, being so dense in places that it is impossible to penetrate them. The elevated table lands furnish pasture for millions of horses, cattle and sheep, and the wild animals of the forest are more numerous and of greater variety than can be found anywhere else. No country in the world is richer in gold, silver, iron, copper and precious stones. With all these sources from which commercial greatness can be developed, with a coast line three thousand miles long, fairly supplied with harbors, with a river system affording at least 10,000 miles of inland navigation for large craft, it is not exaggeration to say that Brazil, in the hands of the right people, must become one of the most influential countries in the world.

ALTHOUGH it has been known by the public for some time, it is only now it is officially announced that the letter rate to Australia has been reduced to 5 cents per half-ounce, with news paper postage correspondingly lowered.

DESPITE all the troubles of the past in connection with the sealing industry, there appears to be a strong probability that it will be carried on with increased energy during the next season, as announcements continually come from the east that additional schooners have either been chartered or purchased for the business.

ACCORDING to the *Canadian Trade Review*, the city of Quebec shows a considerable decline in both steam and sail tonnage arriving at that port this year as compared with last season. Up to October 22 the total sail tonnage arriving at Quebec was 220,406 tons against 313,217 tons last year, while the arrival of steam tonnage declined from 574,617 tons to 546,747 tons.