

OREGON CATTLE AND HORSE RAISERS TALK OF FUTURE

STATE CONVENTION IS OF GREAT INTEREST

Industry's Regrettable Condition Reviewed and Future Problems Discussed

Two Days Session Attract Large Attendance of Men and Women Who are Principal Live Stock Raisers of State

PROFITEERING BELIEVED TO REST WITH BUTCHER

Strong Talks Made by Men Well Versed in County's Conditions—Stirk and Wipe Out Debts Caused by Deflation Seemed to be Stockmen's Religion

(By Bruce Dennis)

Oregon's Horse and Cattle Raisers Association has closed its annual meeting at Canyon City, but in doing so it set in motion waves of sound and action that will gather momentum and have a decided effect upon the industry throughout the state and Northwest.

It was a body of serious minded men and women, serious to a point of intensity, for each grower realizes his financial condition; each grower appreciates the fact that after building up his cattle bands on the basis of high values, suddenly the props have been kicked out from under the industry and it is now facing losses that on one ever dreamed could occur.

Not only do they realize these losses but they realize another factor of even greater importance, namely the curtailed credit which in the future will displace the generous credit formerly given, and they are aware that the blame of this latter condition should rightfully be placed upon the Federal Reserve banking system and its management.

The growers also realize, and after considerable discussion, the realization crystallized, that the real butcher is the man who is making the tremendous profit on the beef steer from the time it leaves the feed lot until it is served in the hotel dining room.

No one is fooling the Oregon cattle raiser, for much as he is helpless to resist the onslaught on his business, he realizes who is taking the toll and forcing the consumer to pay fancy prices for beef, mutton and pork, when the price going to the producer scarcely pays his taxes and interest.

But with all these things firmly established no state ever possessed a better class of citizens to help readjust matters all along the line than are the Oregon live stock growers.

They know where they are being "gypped" but they are going to stick; they know that debts will be following them for several years to come because of this slump and unbalanced condition of the industry but nevertheless they gritted their teeth at Canyon City and expressed determination to keep the home fires burning, to improve the grade of their live stock and keep the range supplied with the beef steer and his sister, for which Oregon has long been noted.

Interior Country Ready for Meeting.

You can never catch the interior country of Oregon napping. And this instance was no exception for, beginning with the Sutter Valley railroad out of Baker there was cheerfulness and good fellowship. Conductor Dave Baird of the narrow gauge road had a smile for everyone and a stranger would have imagined Dave had a picnic party in charge, so thoroughly did he look after their wants. At Batesville, where is located the largest mill of the several owned by the Oregon Lumber company, the boarding house of the company had prepared dinner. Stagnation, however, was there to be seen for the hotel at the mill contained a million and a half feet of pine logs, the sidetracks were filled with loggers' cars all loaded with logs, but no sawmill engines were dead and no sign of life showed around the large plant. The journey on to Prairie City was a pleasant one, giving all who went by rail an opportunity to get acquainted with each other's cars

Canyon City Open Heated.

From John Day, where Henry Trowbridge lives, over to Canyon City is but a short distance and soon the party was entering the old town of Joaquin Miller—the town that has been the home of notable characters—the town that once had ten thousand people—the town that gave up to more than a million dollars in placer gold—the town that today is one of the substantial, thriving interior points.

Reception committees fairly swarmed the town and was out, every home was decorated and all visitors realized in an instant that a real Northwest American reception was being given. When so many showed up, Canyon City people decided to open the town and when the crowd arrived the evening was given over to dancing in the auditorium quite expressly for the stockmen's recreation.

PIERCE SEES DARK FUTURE

MAKES A FORCEFUL TALK AT THE CONVENTION.

Speaker Centers Out Representative of Swift Company for Special Question of Much Interest.

Hon. Walter M. Pierce, of La Grande was one of the chief speakers at the second day's meeting of the Cattle and Horse Raisers' association meeting in Canyon City this week and he made a forceful talk, but his vision of the future indicated darkness.

After paying a glowing tribute to the stockmen, reviewing the good time they had at Burns the previous year, he grappled with his subject, which was "Can Cattle Growers of Oregon Improve their Condition By Marketing Co-operatively."

He made it plain that he was opposed to socialism and that communism is the last step to decay.

"To start a co-operative market means a large investment of real money and an extensive credit, neither of which the stockmen possess now," was the way the speaker finally analyzed his subject.

Cattle May Follow Hogs.

Then, looking over at B. C. Darnell, representative of Swift & Company's Portland branch he warned him that if present conditions continue the cattle business of Oregon will go the way the hog business went and even the packers will be losers.

Centering out Mr. Darnell because of his connection with the packers, Mr. Pierce explained that nothing personal was meant for he realized that Mr. Darnell was but a helmsman for the big business of the present system.

"And," said Mr. Pierce, "perhaps if the truth were known the Swifts are only helmsmen for those still higher up on the industrial ladder—a product of present day system."

"Will the capitalistic system survive," demanded the speaker and then he told how eight per cent interest will eat through steel posts and barbed wire.

"Taxation—our direct tax burden—has reached thirty-five per cent of the rental values of land," he said, "and with a program already outlined for the public, it will have reached fifty per cent of the rental values before these programs are completed."

Producer's Expenses Too High.

He took the stand that the expense line of the producer is too high to ever permit low prices to prevail and business safety follow.

His attitude towards the packers was pronounced for before closing his speech he asked Mr. Darnell why Swift was feeding cattle in Oregon when the packing business was their line of work; why Swifts are shipping in Canadian cattle to break the Portland markets for Oregon cattle; why packers warned retailers where they must buy their goods, instead of asking the retailers to buy; and why Mr. Pierce, in closing, said with all the dark future and with all the troubles besetting the cow man, he would rather be one of them, wading up to his knees and snow to his hips, than to be connected with a corporation.

Must Complete With Others.

Replying to Mr. Pierce, Mr. Darnell admitted that he did not know why Swift was feeding cattle except that Edgar Swift had large land holdings in Oregon and he presumed he wanted to run cattle personally. He said his firm was forced to buy Canadian cattle, which are free of tariff duty, because other firms buy them and they had to compete. He stated that the packers' attitude toward the retailer was unbusinesslike and that a corporation is described as follows:

Transportation Not Minded.

"Either amendment or repeal of several features in the transportation act is imperative and must be brought about, as also must a decent protective tariff be established on livestock and other farm products."

"Necessary moral and practical measures are being taken by no one greater than the livestock producer. We as an industry cannot quit. Most livestock men have spent their lives in the business. They cannot wait because of financial depression. The bands of cattle are on the ranges, the Oregon range is good, the hay land will produce each year, and we can no more quit the business than can a merchant afford

Why He Could Not Pay

The following interesting letter from an Oregon stockraiser in reply to his banker asking him to pay his note, was read at the annual meeting of the Cattle and Horse Raisers Association at Canyon City, and so hit the general conditions of every farmer, that it was printed in a prominent place in the minutes of the convention. The letter follows:

"For the following reasons I am unable to send you the check asked for:

"I have been held up, held down, sandbagged, walked on, sat on, flattened out and squeezed. First by the United States Government for federal taxes, the excess profits tax, and the Liberty Loan bonds, thrift, capital, stock tax, merchants' license and auto tax, and by every society and organization that the inventive mind of man can invent to extract what I may or may not possess.

"From the Society of John the Baptist, the G. A. R., the Women's Relief, the Navy League, the Red Cross, the Black Cross, the Purple Cross, the Double Cross, the Children's Home, the Dorcas Society, the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the Boy Scouts, the Jewish Relief, the Belgium Relief and every hospital in town. Then on top of all comes the Associated Charities.

"The government has so governed my business that I don't know who owns it. I am inspected, suspected, examined and re-examined, informed, required and commanded so I don't know who I am, or why I am here. All I know is that I am supposed to be an inexhaustible supply of money for every known need, desire or hope of the known race; and because I will not sell all I have and go out and beg, borrow or steal money to give away, I have been cursed, discussed, boycotted, talked to, talked about, lied to, lied about, held up, held down, hung up, robbed and nearly ruined, and the only reason I am clinging to life is to see what in the hell is coming next.

Pollman Depicts the True Situation of the Year 1921

Baker Man Who Has Been the Chief Executive Since the Organization of the Association Declares Stockmen Are Not to Blame For Trying to Raise More Cattle.

With the opening of the convention President William Pollman, who has been the chief executive since organization of the association, depicted the true situation that confronts the stockmen and told of the reasons why the industry is so hard hit.

Mentioning the encouragement the government had given to greater livestock production, which in turn caused money for that industry to become freer, he stated that stockmen are not to blame for having stretched themselves to comply with requests from Washington to raise more cattle. The fact that every producer tried to patriotically increase his business never believing that a sudden drop would overtake them, is rather to be commended than censured, according to the president of the stockmen.

"It is well to review that portion of the history," remarked Mr. Pollman, "but conditions confront us now which no longer are theories, and in those conditions it is plain to see injustices that cannot be overlooked. For instance, while we as livestock producers are facing great financial difficulty and embarrassment, the transportation lines of this nation are, by act of congress, practically guaranteed six per cent earnings on their investments. While we are so heavily burdened to raise feed for the people, we see an essential industry getting our products to market at a profit and never before heard of rates.

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"Necessary moral and practical measures are being taken by no one greater than the livestock producer. We as an industry cannot quit. Most livestock men have spent their lives in the business. They cannot wait because of financial depression. The bands of cattle are on the ranges, the Oregon range is good, the hay land will produce each year, and we can no more quit the business than can a merchant afford

GEORGE C. M'MULLEN TELLS OF CONDITIONS

With a clear conception of conditions as they are and with a clean cut opinion as to the future course of stockmen, George C. McMillen, commission man for the Kansas City Stockmen, delivered the following speech at the Canyon City convention:

"I am pleased to be with you again this year at your annual convention.

"In these troublous times of readjustment I am glad that I am connected with the livestock industry in preference to any other industry that I know of. In fact, they are all badly shot to pieces. While I think the cattle and sheep men have been hit as hard or more so than any other class of business men and that brings some resentment and produces a feeling that general conditions should be different and a desire to better them.

The pleasure of being a stockman lies in the fact that I am associated with the games and square wheel men on Earth, who do not whine and growl when adversity hits them. It may be that the temperament of a livestock man is moulded by the chances he takes; by wind, rain and sunshine; by the market uncertainties, high freight rates, tight money and God only knows what all.

Stockmen are Optimistic

Stockmen are, as a rule, optimists and do very little hollering. But, for the last year and a half, they have had a big holler coming, but they have taken their medicine with the least kicking of any class of business men I know of. They just seem to feel there is a God in Heaven and all is well.

A good many of us, in the last eighteen months, have felt like a certain wild and reckless fellow who, having been repeatedly exhorting by a good minister to repent and change his ways, and who was caught in a cyclone and whirled through the air for about a mile or so and landed on a haystack.

"When he recovered consciousness, the same minister was with him and remarked to him: 'Jim, what might have happened to you if God had not been with you?' Jim answered, 'If He was with me, He was sure going some.' So it is with us, whoever has been engaged in the livestock industry for the past eighteen months has been going some.

Back to 1914 Level.

However, this much is certain, the livestock industry, though hit hard and jolted back to pre-war price basis before any other business—in fact, it is about the only business that is down to the 1914 level—will be the first to feel returning prosperity.

"This may not happen today or tomorrow or within the next thirty days, but I do feel and hope that we will 'note' a material improvement before the first of the coming year.

Remember, there are one hundred and ten million people in the United States who have to eat, and there are several hundred millions of people in Europe who would like to eat, and they will some day.

"The job and 'flog' of the work-ers' purchasing power cannot be fixed as to time limit, but they help control the demand for meat. On the other hand, it takes a state-time to produce beef. The reduction in cattle production has exceeded the increase in the unemployment, and the beginning of

Beef Supply Less.

"The supply of beef cattle in the United States January 1st of this year was about 4 1/2 per cent less than January 1st, 1920, or about 10 per cent less than 1919. A further reduction will show on January 1st, 1922.

"The statistics show that last fall there were more cows, heifers and breeding stuff shipped to market from the range from Texas and the Southwest, in fact, from all breeding countries, regardless of prices, than there has for a great many years. You know that this can only last so long until the breeders will be out of ammunition. You can guess what will happen then.

"While, at present, conditions in the livestock industry, the same as in all other industries, are very discouraging, I really think the logical thing to do with prices for cattle relatively low and the supply below normal, is to get back into the producing game. You cannot stuff production for any length of time without bringing a period when all would wish they had made the ante.

"Water always seeks its level, so with the cattle and sheep business. This is the main industry of this great country. You know the game, so stick to your trade.

Figures on Improvement.

"An export buyer has recently been purchasing heavy beef steers on the Kansas City market, which improved prices materially. Some cattle are moving into Old Mexico from Texas, Arizona and New Mexico. An English company in Rhodesia, South Africa, is buying grade and pure bred cows and bulls in America, so it looks to me like we should begin to figure on improving conditions in the livestock markets within a short time. What prices will be in the future would be nothing more than a mere guess, but the point I want to lay stress upon is that we have passed that period when we will be called upon to accept further material reduction, and conditions are strongly favorable for a better demand.

"I believe that I am safe in saying that there is more feed in the United States, from one end to the other, with a few exceptions, than there has been for a great many years.

"The corn belt still has approximately one-third of last year's corn crop on hand, a big reserve of rough feed and an excellent grass prospect in sight, and, if financial conditions would ease up some, which I think they will, we ought to have a pretty good market for stecker and feeder cattle during this summer and fall.

Hopes for Cut in Freight.

I also hope to see the railroads cut freight rates on livestock so that you can ship East again, and not be forced to sell your stock at one market, regardless of prices, etc.

"When the time comes we hope to see you on the Kansas City market again, where we have five large packing houses and the biggest stecker and feeder market in the world.

"Last year we handled 7 1/2 million head of cattle and, of that