

The Times-Herald.

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UNABLE TO MOVE ELK.

Abe Simon, special correspondent to the Sunday Oregonian, writing from Bakersfield, California, says: Two attempts made by the United States Government to round up and ship the great herd of California elk from Kern County to Sequoia Park, near the Yosemite Valley, resulted in complete failure.

The herd of elk has been on property owned by Miller & Lux the largest cattle and land company on the Pacific Coast, for a good many years. There are more than 200 in the band on the land company's territory, located between McKittrick and Button Willow, only thirty-five miles from Bakersfield.

On the land near McKittrick, two sections have a high fence around them, with an opening half a block long at the northeast corner. The elk were at liberty to enter and depart at their leisure. Nobody was permitted to harm these animals under penalty of arrest, and rewards of \$500 by Miller & Lux and Uncle Sam for the conviction of any person caught shooting an elk assured their safety. From year to year the herd has increased in numbers. During the day the wild animals left the inclosure and rambled around the foothills and ascended the small peaks of the range near McKittrick. They entered the grain fields for feed and many associated with the cattle. Frequently

tame elk were found among cattle that were driven to this city to be forwarded to San Francisco.

Last year Miller & Lux presented the herd to the United States Government. The people of Kern regretted to hear that the band was to be removed to a Government reservation, as these animals were considered a great Kern County attraction.

With the beginning of November the Government commenced making preparations to transfer. Thirty-five of the most expert vaqueros in California were secured and made their start for the McKittrick rendezvous the day after election. Before daylight on Thursday, November 10, the cowboys entered the inclosure and rounded up 80 elk. They headed them toward the railroad, where large corrals were located.

Government officials, officeholders of Kern and surrounding counties and prominent citizens accompanied the party and gave much assistance in taking care of stragglers. Superintendent James Ogden, for Miller & Lux, was in command of the party, and orders were given that ropes were not to be used.

For nearly three miles the elk moved along at a rapid pace and gave no trouble. At that point railroad tracks of the Southern Pacific were passed and the wild animals did not enjoy crossing the road bed and rails. They grew scared about that time and ran fast and only the vaqueros could keep up with the herd. Most of the party on horseback that took part in the chase showed signs of exhaustion from the hot pace and retired. Timothy Sullivan, a prominent sportsman, who had been in the saddle from early morning, collapsed at 1 p. m. and was cared for by Assessor Jameson and Deputy Sheriff John Collins.

Two miles further on the elk grew weary, but the cowboys kept on driving them. Then great excitement prevailed. The elk learned that they were being forced and stampeded. They turned and dashed in all directions. Some powerful beasts attacked the vaqueros and ropes had to be used for self-protection. The greater part of the band easily out-footed the riders, but a large number were surrounded and forced along toward the corrals, which were only one mile distant. The elk that did not escape fought fiercely, the troublesome ones being roped and thrown, and after being tied were pulled toward the railroad. Five lovely specimens died from exhaustion before that point was reached.

The sight of the corrals, which were whitewashed, created a fierce stampede, and serious confusion followed. The vaqueros showed signs of their strenuous work, but drove the remainder of the herd through the opening in the corral. The elk paid little attention to the corrals and scaled the six-foot walls and dashed toward the foothills. At dusk that night eight elk were corralled, but they were tied and helpless.

The vaqueros went into camp for the night. Nearly all the elk that stampeded returned to the range near their inclosure about McKittrick. They whistled and cried nearly all night long and the calves kept up a pitiful wail. They remained away from their headquarters, being afraid to re-enter the inclosure.

At daybreak on Friday another effort was made to drive the elk to the railroad corral. The vaqueros rounded up 50 head that had not been molested the day before. They started out slowly, but soon were obliged to punch the elk, just as though they were wild steers. The stampede of the day before was repeated, but the vaqueros determined to land a number behind the whitewashed fence. Billy Woodruff executed some wonderful work at throwing the inclosure and ascended the small peaks of the range near McKittrick. They entered the grain fields for feed and many associated with the cattle. Frequently

rope in clever style and went over the extremely broad horns of a large specimen. At dark on Friday evening, November 11, ten more elk were in the corral, but five additional ones had died from exhaustion.

This method of transferring the herd has been abandoned as an utter failure. Ways and means of removing the band are now being worked out.

The government is very anxious to land this valuable drove in the Sequoia National Park. It is claimed by forest rangers that the Kern county herd is the largest in the country outside of a Government reservation.

Experienced cattlemen say it will be impossible to round up the herd and ship them in the manner attempted. Some people go so far as to claim that Uncle Sam will be obliged to be satisfied with moving the calves from year to year and allow the elder animals to die off.

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