RANCH AND RANGE

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This Great Northwest

Shippers and dealers in fruits have had a great deal of trouble and expense in the matter of fruit inspection, consignments sometimes being condemned by the wholesale at the receiving end, the inspector claiming them to be either infested with scale, codlin moth larvae, or being diseased. It is not claimed that all fruit thus condemned is wrongfully thrown out, but there are cases where fruit condemned are found to be free of all diseases, the ignorance of the inspector being to blame. To avoid such wrong condemnations of fruit the shippers should have them examined and their freedom of disease certified to at the shipping end. Some states have very stringent laws touching upon this point, and if a consignment of fruit not duly inspected at the shipping point is condemned at the receiving end and the loss falls on the shipper he has no recourse but to pocket the loss—and has a good chance of being called upon to answer to the charge of violating a state law or set of laws. In the state of Oregon such a law is in existence, but it appears all fruit shippers are not familiar with its provisions, or else they disregard it and consider themselves competent to transact the business of shipping fruit without the fostering care of the state. Such action is likely to work more or less injury to the industry of the whole state than it can possibly profit a few individual shippers; and in the case of the Oregon shippers there is absolutely no excuse for not having their fruit inspected—the state provides the inspectors who do the work at no expense whatever to the shippers.

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The horticultural officers of our sister state to the south have had complaint on account of the wrongful condemnation of fruits sent out from that state, and after making investigations they have called upon the growers and shippers to observe the provisions of the law. They have instructed the commissioners of each district to inspect all shipments carefully, and if found clean, to issue a certificate showing that the fruits were duly inspected and found free from insects or disease, which certificate will carry its own proof, and, no doubt, will be recognized and respected by inspectors in other states; while, on the other hand, if found diseased or infected, to condemn the fruit at home, and not allow it to be shipped. In Portland the dealers who ship fruits to other states had the quarantine officer inspect their consignments and found that it obviated all the trouble of the nature at the receiving end. The Oregon law may be familiar to many of the Pacific coast shippers of fruit, but a reproduction of section 6 of the amended horticultural law may not be out of place. It provides that "every person who packs or prepares for shipment to any point without the state, or who delivers or causes to be delivered to any express agent, or other person, or to any transportation company or corporation, for shipment to any point without the state, any fruit or fruits, either fresh, cured or dried, that is infested with insects, pests or diseases injurious to trees, shrubs, plants, fruits or vegetables, is guilty of a misdemeanor." The penalty for violation of the law is a fine ranging from $25 to $100.

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The members of the old Le Roi syndicate of Spokane evidently have been making good money out of their operations, or they see in the future such conditions in the live-stock business as will assure a profit if operations are carried on on a large scale. Some of them have come together and organized the Columbia River Livestock and Trading Company at Spokane. It is intended to deal in ranches, ranges and livestock, with a good deal of attention to the raising of mules. The officers are: President, George Turner; vice president, W. M. Ridpath; treasurer, W. J. Harris; business manager, C. I. Helm. The company's business office will be in Spokane, but the scene of operations will be in Douglas county, where Mr. Helm will reside, although his nearest postoffice is Ellensburgh. The company is heavily capitalized and will carry on a large business. All the stockholders, except Manager Helm, are members of the old Le Roi syndicate. It seems to us that such a corporation, conducted strictly on business principles and infused into it the most careful management should be a great success, especially in a new and growing country where the new comers do not always find on hand the facilities for starting and carrying on agricultural operations. It is a heavy expense to the individual settler to have his teams and what few animals he needs brought to his place from a distand point—and he would as soon go to such a nearby place where he can secure what he wants at practically the same figure as it would cost him to ship in his stock. In so doing he saves time and eliminates that element of risk always attendant upon shipping in his stock. Moreover, such a company, being in the field all the time, is able to place before the new comer advantageous selections of land and stock.

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The tax rolls of any state or county are pretty true a criterion by which to judge the general progress of such community. Our state is a new one and not so thickly settled as many in close proximity to us, but it is rapidly filling up and the county and state assessors have taken cognizance of the fact that values rise in accordance. The state board of equalization recently sat and adjusted land values. King is the only county of the first class in the state. Its property was equalized by the county board at $11.60 per acre in 1898, but the state board has placed it at $12.50, the same as it did last year. Pierce county is in the second class. Its county equalization was $8.80 per acre, and the state board lowered the valuation from $10.75 per acre last year to $10.50 this year. The counties of the third class, which include Island, Clark, Skagit, Whatcom and Snohomish, were lowered from $9 to $8.60 per acre, the fourth class, including Lewis Kitsap, San Juan and Chehalis, remaining at $7.50 per acre as equalized in 1898. The fifth class, including Clallam, Cowlitz, Jefferson, Mason, Pacific, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum, Columbia Spokane, Walla Walla and Whitman, were placed at $4.80 per acre. The sixth class, including Garfield, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Stevens and Yakima, were raised from $2.75, as equalized by the board in 1898, to $2.80 for this year. The seventh class, including Asotin and Okanogan, were raised from $1.40 to $1.60 per acre. The eighth class, including Adams and Douglas counties, were raised from $1.20 to $1.25 per acre, and Franklin, being the only county in the ninth class, was raised from 60 cents to 65 cents per acre. The improvements on lands in Asotin and Klickitat Counties were raised from $2 to $3 per acre, Adams, Columbia, Douglas, Garfield, Lincoln, Spokane, Walla Walla and Whitman were raised from $1.50 to $2 per acre, other counties remaining the same as last year.

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Our Northwest is receiving considerable attention at present from the federal department of agriculture in one way or another. The department is making investigations along several important lines, and one in which this section is vitally interested is the stock industry. Statistics touching upon the business are being collected and compiled for the census department, the agricultural department cooperating. A step looking to an extensive research along these lines was taken when the agricultural department sent Statistician Powers to Missoula, Montana, last week to be present at the meeting of the delegates to the National irrigation congress. With a view to carrying out the desire of the census officials to obtain all the information possible in regard to the situation in the stock region, Mr. Powers will have a conference with leading stockmen in the grazing sections in the northwestern states, and will then go to Denver and Kansas City to meet others interested in the stock business. He will try to secure the fullest information as to the number of livestock in the country and is under orders to follow up closely the question as to the necessity for intelligent irrigation methods in order to restore the ranges of the Northwest so they will afford grazing fields, the loss of which is believed to have had an important influence in reducing the number of beef cattle in the country during the past two years.

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The immigration bureaus of the two transcontinental lines are reporting a heavy business in immigration over each road and much of this is headed for the Sound country of Washington. On last Saturday two carloads of immigrants from Michigan and Indiana passed through Seattle over the Northern Pacific bound for points in the lower Sound country, principally Whatcom county, where they will locate on farms and become permanent residents of the state. These are of the more desirable class of immigrants, being people who have saved up considerable money pursuing agriculture in the Eastern states and they come to Washington prepared to buy farms and pay the money down. They are but a small fraction, however, of the great influx of settlers of the same class we may expect in the next few months. The Northern Pacific officials state that they are preparing to bring out to the Sound some two thousand farmers from the middle states—men who have families and have the money to put down for the farms they select. It takes time and much hustling on the part of all connected with immigration to bring so many to the state practically in a solid crowd, and the railroad companies, through their immigration bureaus are entitled to a good slice of the credit. We predict that when these new comers have been here a year or so they will say what all others before them have said. i. e., that they will not move back East under any circumstances.

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The good reports pouring in from the threshing crews all over the state have a very favorable effect on business. The yield is said to be phenomenal in many instances and the quality of the grain is of the best for more than 65 per cent of the crop thus far threshed out. It would seem that such a condtion would induce the producer to part with his grain at the good figures now offered him, but such is by no means the case. Not much grain is moving at the exporting centers, and it looks as if a good hot war is on between exporter and producer, both of whom have plenty of backing. The unsettled condition of affairs in the Transvaal and certain other sections in the East, and the certainty that the wheat crops in Russia and other European sections are going to be short, make it certain that the price of wheat will have to advance when the export demand is felt. Consequently the farmer of the Coast, being blessed with a good crop during three successive years, finds he will do himself but simple justice in holding his wheat. On the side of the exporters it appears now that they have enough grain to load all pre-chartered tonnage or that which is due, and they show no inclination to contract for making more exports unless there is a fair show of profit. Such being the situation the farmer of Washington and Oregon can afford to hold his wheat for better prices.

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At the last moment the Spokane industrial exposition has been obliged to add a large number of additional cattle sheds in order to accommodate the many carloads of cattle which are coming from different sections of the country and especially from Oregon. The contests for the premiums in the Jersey, Shorthorn and Holstein classes will be animated, for there will be many after the liberal cash prizes which are offered. There will also be good exhibits of other cattle, some fine herds of sheep and goats and some blooded stock in the swine department. Manager Bolster says some day during the exposition he will turn out all this stock in a big street parade.