

# RANCH AND RANGE

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## This Great Northwest

The matter of fruit inspection in Washington is likely to have something of an airing now. J. E. Baker, state horticultural commissioner, has gone into print and advised the public that the seriousness of the fruit pest in the state has been overdrawn. A communication upon these lines will be found in this issue of RANCH AND RANGE, printed at the request of Mr. Baker. King county's inspector, Mr. Brown, does not take kindly to the optimistic view held by Mr. Baker, and seeks to show that the latter is altogether too easy going and does not realize fully the danger that threatens the horticultural industry of the state. In speaking upon the question at issue the other day Mr. Brown said, in part: "The criticism will have a misleading effect on the public mind. It matters not whether fruit trees have been shipped into this state by the carload, or in less quantities, found infected with fruit pests and destroyed by the county inspectors. The question to be solved is whether the general shipments were or were not infected with pests to such an extent as to legally justify the inspectors in causing them to be destroyed." Here Mr. Brown goes on to lay out the work he has done in a few cases where fruit trees shipped into the state were to be inspected. He recites that the first shipment came to his notice at the Puget Sound Nursery Company's yards by some accident, and makes it appear that neither Mr. Baker nor any other person had notified him of this shipment being in transit. The shipment was from the Pacific Nursery Company, of Tangent, Oregon, and was free from infection.

"The next shipment," Mr. Brown continues, "was from the Oregon Wholesale Nursery Company to the Puget Sound Nursery Company. This lot consisted chiefly of apple trees and plum trees. Of the apple trees I found at least 80 per cent. infected with woolly aphis, the balance being just as bad with cherry and peach tree borers. The entire shipment, so far as number was concerned, was not a car load lot, simply 1,775 trees. This lot, after being baptized with coal oil, was consigned to the flames, but not until after experts had examined them and decided they were bad in the first degree. The next coming under my notice was a shipment from California, consisting of about 600 trees, which were as bad, if not worse, than the second shipment. After consulting the law, they were consigned to the flames. Then came a dispatch to me from G. W. Phillips at Wenatchee, saying that a car of fruit trees from the Oregon Wholesale Nursery Company was due in Seattle billed to Wenatchee, that was thought to be infected with the woolly aphis, and asking me to inspect the trees or wire the purchasers what to do. This being a large car, containing \$5,000 worth of trees, I advised that the car be permit-

ted to reach its destination. This was agreed to, with the understanding that I would accompany it. This I did, but refused to inspect it on the ground that it was out of my jurisdiction, but sent a telegram to Mr. Baker, asking permission to examine the trees, and received the reply: "Neither you nor I have the authority to inspect at Wenatchee."

At this juncture Mr. Brown gives his opinion of the workings of the horticultural commissioner's office in no uncertain terms, and continuing, his talk upon the work in connection with the shipment to Wenatchee, says: "The fruit growers then and there refused to take the trees. By request of the agent, as well as the fruit growers, I consented to examine them, not as an officer, but as an expert. On examination I found all peach trees, as well as those grafted on peach roots, in a similar condition to those I have already mentioned. Some of those trees, owing to advices received from the horticultural commissioner's office, passed into the hands of the growers without inspection." Discussing the subject further, Mr. Brown says that while at Wenatchee some one asked him to examine a consignment of strawberries, for which the purchaser paid \$50. Mr. Brown found them to be worthless by reason of crown borers, but he does not state whose fault it was that they got through to their destination. Upon his return to the Sound Mr. Brown found a shipment of trees said to be from the Watters Nursery at Yakima, consisting of 2,500 apple trees, 700 of which were worse than worthless by reason of a contagious disease known as the crown gall. "Fearing the balance might be affected also," says Mr. Brown, "I telephoned Mr. Baker to come at once, but upon his arrival he unhesitatingly caused them to pass to the fruit growers."

Mr. Brown shows himself very much disgusted with the workings of the horticultural commissioner's office in the matter of inspecting of fruit shipments in the state and if the matter is as bad as he pictures it in the foregoing and in the few minor cases recited hereafter it is fully time that the people knew the exact status in the matter. If there is any attempt at using the office to gain personal ends on the part of the commissioner and allowing illegal shipments to get in and pass inspection, to curry favor with outside nursery concerns, it is time the people demand an accounting. On the other hand, King county's inspector must be sure of his ground before he makes any serious charges. The controversy has been laid out in these columns as it appears from newspaper accounts, and we need only give a few more cases mentioned by Mr. Brown. One shipment of infected trees that came to his notice was a consignment from the Settlemire Nursery, Woodburn, Oregon. This

consignment was to a gentleman who acted as the nursery's agent. Mr. Brown heard nothing of it until after some of the trees were planted by the purchaser, and the inspector claims it contained just enough woolly aphis and peach borers for seed. Mr. Brown mentions two other shipments said to be from L. L. May & Company, St. Paul, Minn., of which he (Mr. Brown) had no knowledge whatever from the horticultural commissioner, although passing through this district. "Another consignment," says Mr. Brown, "to the Christopher Nursery, from an Oregon nursery, consisted of about 500 trees, 95 per cent. of which had peach borers to such an extent that the whole lot was girdled under the bark. This lot went up in smoke."

Now that the fifty-sixth congress has convened and the various measures which have heretofore been but a matter of speculation have begun coming to the surface, we may see that the agricultural interests in the various states are being pretty well championed by their representatives. The men from the middle states appear to be especially active in the introduction of bills that will benefit their respective states in one way or another. Prominent among the interests represented and bearing a close relation to the agricultural and stock interests is that of the forest reserves. The officials of the agricultural department expect that congress at the present session will make larger appropriations for the extension of experimental work of the division of forestry in the various states. Congress has been asked for a material increase in the funds for this purpose, and if it is allowed it will enable the department to consider applications of members of the school of forestry for assignment to practical work in the field. The secretary of the interior will also ask for some important legislation on this subject, principally a law empowering the land commissioner to adopt means to prevent forest fires on government lands other than forest reserves, it having been decided after the study of the law that the commissioner had no authority to authorize the appointment of officials to patrol lands which have not been made forest reservations by executive proclamation. General Andrews, state fire warden of Minnesota, has made the suggestion to the officials that the police on the Indian reserves be employed to do patrol duty on Indian lands, and this suggestion meets with general favor. While the Indian police are appointed to preserve peace in the vicinity of the agencies and new settlements adjacent to Indian reservations, the officials have stated the opinion that an extension of their duties would probably do much to prevent fires from destroying thousands of dollars worth of timber every year.

In his report covering the work of the United States department of agriculture Secretary Wilson goes into a lengthy discussion of the question of irrigation, a subject which has hitherto received but little attention at the hands of the secretary in his annual

report. In that discussion the secretary gives strong reasons for a general study of the whole subject. He points out the wide difference in laws and methods prevailing in the different states dependent upon irrigation, and states that most important rivers have streams supplying irrigation to half a dozen states. Inevitably, under these circumstances, differences will arise calling for legislation by congress, which should, therefore, be put in possession of all the facts affecting this important subject as early as possible. It is not possible, he declares, at the present time for the owner of an irrigated farm to know just what his rights are, and he propounds, as a problem calling for an early solution, whether the control of this element of production is to be left to the states or whether it will have to be assumed by the general government. Reviewing at length the work that will have to be done in acquiring information on this subject, the Secretary lays stress upon the difficulties encountered in finding properly qualified persons to assist in the work. He also points out that the usefulness of this investigation is by no means limited to the arid regions, but that irrigation could be profitably employed in large areas of the eastern and southern states. It is thus seen that irrigation is slowly but surely securing the attention that it has so long demanded, and its advocates may look forward with the utmost confidence that this important branch of agriculture will eventually receive a prominent place in the work of the agricultural department of the government.

As most of the Ranch and Range readers are aware, the investigations of the department of agriculture concerning the agricultural possibilities of Alaska were continued during the past season. Prof. C. C. Georgeson, the special agent of the department in charge of this work, has just returned from Alaska to Washington, D. C. He brought with him a collection of very fine samples of grains and vegetables grown on the newly established experiment stations at Sitka and Cook Inlet. The samples include several varieties of spring wheat, which matures perfectly, and also a dozen varieties each of barley and oats, besides rye, flax and buckwheat. All of these grains compare favorably with grains grown anywhere in the United States. The earliest sowing of grain was made April 20, and some of the samples were sown as late as May 26. The two varieties of wheat named were harvested September 5. Barley ripens by the end of August. The success in grain growing in Alaska suggests the possibility that the territory may produce some of the early maturing varieties. Among the collection of vegetables are some remarkable specimens of potatoes, onions, carrots, parsnips and rutabagas. Professor Georgeson says all hardy vegetables can be grown with great success in the coast regions of the territory.

The country papers are these days full of farmers' institute news and gossip—a very pleasing feature.