

The Ranch



A JOURNAL OF THE LAND AND THE HOME IN THE NEW WEST.

WASHINGTON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
EXCHANGE LIBRARY

VOL. XXVII. No. 2.

KENT AND SEATTLE, WASH, JANUARY 15, 1910.

50c Per Year, 10c the Copy

Among the notable utterances in Congress at the present session, are those of Representative Douglas, of Ohio, on "The Increased Cost of Living." A subject very close to the farmers of the nation. Among the statements made many should be remembered. He said: "It is not in any sense as an alarmist that I call attention to a fact known more or less accurately to every Member of the House, indeed to every head of every family throughout the land, that the prices of food products, especially of the products derived from the farms of the country, have risen and are rising out of all proportion to any increase in wages or salaries, and to an extent that is bringing actual suffering to many millions of our people.

"Great crops usually bring low prices, but today, in spite of the most abundant crops perhaps the country has ever known, the prices of corn, wheat, and other cereals remain exceedingly high. The explanation lies very largely in the fact that our food supply, raised upon our farms, has not kept pace, relatively, with our increase in population.

"What is true of all farm products is especially true of the great meat staples of the country. The production of cattle, hogs, and sheep is in nowise keeping pace with the increase in our population. Cattle of the best grade today are selling in the Chicago market at \$9.25 per hundred pounds on the hoof, a price unknown within the memory of most of us here and hogs are selling at \$8.50. It is certainly in no selfish spirit that I call attention to these prices, for if it can be said to have any business since I became a Member of Congress, it is that of a feeder of cattle and hogs. But when buyers come to the farm and offer the present prices for fattened cattle and hogs, I confess that like the boy in the picture, I am 'ashamed to take the money.' So is this information common to the people and so much has been said, and well said, about it in the magazines, notably a recent article in *World's Work*, by Mr. J. J. Hill, concerning the falling production of wheat, that figures to substantiate it are hardly necessary. At the same time some of them relating to our meat supply are interesting and striking, and with the favor of the House, I want to call attention very briefly and very generally to a few of them.

"Between the census years of 1880,

THE INCREASED COST OF LIVING

By Representative Douglas, of Ohio.

when the population of the United States was 50,189,209 to 1900 when the number was found to be 76,303,387, the population of the country had increased 26,114,178, or just about 52 per cent. During that time according to the same authority the neat cattle of the country, other than dairy cows, had increased from 27,232,413 in 1880 to 35,286,195 in 1900, an increase of 8,053,782, or just about 29½ per cent, thus failing to keep pace with the population by 22½ per cent.

"The milch cows of the country, ultimately used, of course, for food, increased from 12,027,000 in 1880 to 16,292,360 in 1900, an increase of 4,265,360, or 35 per cent, 17 per cent less than the increase in population. "The hogs in 1880 numbered 49,772,670, and in 1900 they were enumerated at 62,868,041, an increase of 13,095,371, or an increase of 26 per cent, just one-half of the increase in population.

The sheep in 1880 numbered 42,192,274, and in 1900 had actually fallen to 39,852,967, an actual decrease of over 5 per cent, or in actual numbers 2,339,107 less than twenty years before.

"These figures, as reliable probably as any that are obtainable, certainly indicate a condition in our meat supply which, if it has continued to the present time, is of startling significance. But what was true of the meat supply of the country was substantially true of all the rest of the farm products of the country, with perhaps two or three exceptions. Notably among these exceptions are rice, comparatively little being cultivated in 1880, and barley, but little used as food the production of which increased in the twenty year period under consideration by about 172 per cent.

"During these twenty years the acreage of corn increased but 33½ per cent, the acreage of wheat only 11.8 per cent, the acreage of buckwheat actually decreased 22 per cent, and

the acreage of potatoes increased 41 per cent.

"In spite of the fact that during these twenty years millions of acres of the public domain were taken up as homesteads, the cultivated acreage of all of the farm lands of the country increased during these twenty years only 45 per cent, and the average yield per acre of most of the cultivated land decreased, so that Germany today produces substantially twice as much wheat to the acre as we do and Belgium two and a half times as much.

"What are we going to do about it? Nothing radical, for there is no panacea surely for this condition which confronts us. But that there are things we may do and ought to do seems to be apparent. The public lands of the country are largely taken up. "The lure of the land," about which something interesting, but rather fanciful, was written in a recent magazine, can no longer be satisfied in this country out of the public domain. The tide of immigration is turning backward. Lands today are cheaper, relatively cheaper according to their actual value, in New York than they are in Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska. The old land of the Eastern States can and must be made more productive. Just the other day, as I sat with Secretary Wilson in his office talking over this subject, he told me of an instance in his office the state of New York within 6 miles of Ithaca, the seat of the great agricultural institution of New York, where land had been recently sold for \$2 an acre. He told me of an actual case there of a man upon a poor, worn-out hill farm on which he had raised the year before only 20 bushels of potatoes to the acre, and, as the man himself said, none of them large enough for market. This farmer was induced by an agent of the Agricultural Depart-

ment to try an experiment with his land. The man confessed that he had had no new seed except such as was raised upon the land itself within his recollection. He was supplied with seed potatoes at the Government's expense, and thereby induced to cultivate a few acres of potatoes strictly according to methods indicated to him by the government employee.

"The result was, as Secretary Wilson assured me to be within his personal knowledge, that, without the use of any fertilizer whatever and simply by improved seed and methods of cultivation, the same land that had produced but 20 bushels to the acre produced more than 200 bushels to the acre of excellent potatoes. Whether there be the slightest exaggeration in this story or not it is certainly indicative of what may be done throughout the country and of what I know is being done to some extent right in my own community at home.

"This whole question resolves itself into the problem of keeping enterprising, intelligent, progressive men and women in the country and on the farms. Yet when we plead here for a great and widespread extension of the work of that branch of the Agricultural Department known as the "Office of Roads," when we plead for a great multiplication of experiment stations, and for more general activity along all the lines pursued in the Agricultural Department which have proven locally so efficacious, we are met by the insistence that the revenues of the Government have been otherwise expended and do not permit increased appropriations for these purposes.

"Last year Congress appropriated to the army and to the navy and to military pensions a total of \$385,000,000, or 67½ per cent of our total revenue, and we appropriated to our great department of Agriculture \$13,000,000, or about 2 per cent of our revenues! I am not criticising the wisdom of any item of these appropriations, certainly not that of pensions to old soldiers and sailors, but I do submit that the daily bread and meat of the men and women who toil, of the very soldiers and soldiers' widows and children, dependent upon their little pensions, are at least as important as coast defenses and battle ships."

Tar may be removed from either hands or clothing by rubbing well with lard, and then washing thoroughly with soap and water.