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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Beef Breeders Plan For Action

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THE BEEF producers meeting here lacked the air of enthusiastic interest that marked the April meeting which set in motion the exploratory work and the recommendations made to Tuesday's meeting by the committee under Daniel Gass, Cornwall.

I leave the technical discussion of the relative values of the proposals agreed to here, to others who are better qualified, but I do want to make a few general observations.

The meeting approved the idea of livestock yards in the provinces where cattle will be offered on a competitive basis to buyers by commission agents of some already established and experienced organization. The Toronto stockyard operators were mentioned by someone as an example. But I think producers should realize the implementation of that recommendation is a long way off. First there is a need for a great deal of organization and planning.

I COUNTED about 30 hands raised here in support of the idea Tuesday night. The other 150, or possibly 200 people, didn't vote at all. I asked one of the veteran producers after the meeting why there was so little discussion. He told me "the proposals were new to us and we didn't know enough about them to discuss them intelligently." And perhaps that's the real reason why the meeting lacked the live feeling that was so evident at the one held the night before Good Friday.

The other observation is that I think we need a stockyard set-up. There are several reasons, but here is one of them. A veteran beef cattle producer lost more than \$300 on one shipment of a dozen steers this summer, because he didn't know enough about the market to ask enough for his cattle. We often blame the packers, or other buyers, for keeping the price down, but in this case the buyer paid exactly what the producer asked.

Buyer Is Not To Blame In This Case

I DON'T blame him for not paying more. I don't think many would. But had those steers been offered at a stockyard auction, for example, the competition among top buyers - for those were top steers - would, I suggest, have prevented such a thing from happening. I should add that the cattleman referred to is one of the province's best beef producers, and his animals belong in the top grades.

Committee members to whom I've talked feel there's merit in the "formula buying" suggested by Canada Packers and in the decision to form a beef producers' organization that will embrace the entire province. I gather there was little interest in the

“formula” method at the meeting, because it only covers Red and Blue and Brown or Standard brand cattle, and that only covers 30 percent of all the animals sold here, although it has been suggested that with better finishing, the number of Standard bred carcasses could be increased by 15 percent.

Springton Ghost Story Is True

I THINK it was late last year I promised a good ghost story, and I recall that Gavin Reid, Victoria Cross checked up on the promise later. The promise was based on a yarn I thought was coming out of West Prince, but research indicated it wasn't as good as I had expected.

But I did hear a good ghost story when I was on vacation. The best part of it is the story's true. Mrs. Arthur Jackman, 32 Passmore Street, Charlottetown told me one about her father Donald Alex MacIntosh who lived at Springton.

His home wasn't far from the cemetery there, and Mr. MacIntosh's team of horses stopped one night in front of the old burial place as he was hauling home a load of hay. He tried several times to get the team started again, without result.

THE TEAM made honest efforts, but they couldn't budge the wagon with its load of hay. That was a bit fearsome at that time of night - the place used to reek with ghost yarns, I know for my own home was close by and we had our share of similar stories - but more frightening still was the fact the hay rose behind him on the load every time the horses tried to pull it.

IT DIDN'T take long to convince Mr. MacIntosh that was no place for him and he climbed down, unhitched the team and made for home with all possible speed.

Next morning he went back to the scene and found the reason. The bolt holding the two ends of the perch - a piece of wood joining the front and rear axles - had come out, the hind part of the perch dropped on the ground, and it was digging into the ground every time the horses tried to go ahead.

The perch digging in not only stopped forward progress but it also caused the load of hay to lift a little, as the horses threw their weight into the collars. In daylight it was a simple thing that was easily understood. But at night, with that eerie feeling that surrounds cemeteries after dark, it was an entirely different matter.

I think that many of the old Ghost stories are like that. They wouldn't seem unnatural, perhaps, if they were examined and traced back to their origin.

But Some Things Can't Be Explained

MRS. JACKMAN met me at the home of my cousin, William Matheson in Rose Valley, a man who was my neighbour when I was a boy, and who shared with me many unforgettable experiences. I mention his name now because I'm going to tell you in a future column several stories of really unexplainable happenings - some call them forerunners - which involve him, and several others. I had heard many when I was a boy, but I was surprised to hear that this sort of thing has occurred much more recently.