

"Passing of the Range Speech"

1907

I am before you by invitation, to make an address upon a subject selected by the program committee of this association, which is "The Passing of the Range, the Probably Extent of This Change and Its Bearing on the Future of the Cattle Industry of Texas".

This is a great question. One that probably more men are thinking of to-day than any other one that will be discussed before you. All trying to answer the question "what am I to do with my cattle, if the range is taken from me?" The passing of the range means changing of the control or ownership of the lands, on which grow our natural grasses, into other hands, probably not cattle raisers, and what will be the result thereof. High-priced land and grass and low-priced cattle, is the reasonably deduction which is the cause of the demand for this address.

The first thing to determine in this matter, is to understand what the range is that we are called upon to discuss. To find the result of this proposition, a review of the past and present and the prospects of the future becomes necessary. Therefore, we must look to Father Time, the tomb-builder and the leveler of all things, to tell the story.

SOUTHLAND.

Now, in looking back over the past, to see what time has wrought out, to draw some pictures from the past and to impress upon your minds, by comparison, which is the only thing we have to use in conveying the idea. In the first place, let me call your

attention to our beloved southland, and see what we can gather from her, as we are a part and parcel of that great commonwealth.

After the smoke of the great guns of the Civil war had blown away, she was left with absolutely nothing but her soil and the remains of a broken down army of warriors -worthy of any soil. Her lands had been trampled down by the late contending armies. No money, no credit; all gone, except her lands and her people. After a lapse of some forty years, what is her condition to-day? What did she gain last year? To explain it to you, I will put it in this shape, and tell you what she gained. If you had 7,300,000 steers for sale and could get three hundred and sixty-five dollars ²⁰⁰⁰ for them, you would have quite a large amount of money, wouldn't you? So you can draw your black books and pencils out and figure for yourselves. Probably some of you can figure what a bunch of steers are worth, without a book and pencil. The south gained last year - 1906- every day, counting Sundays, \$7,300,000. These figures are surprising. They were to me when I first read them. They came out February 7th of this year under the authority of the Baltimore Manufacturing Company, and the same association compared our gains with Great Britain, and found from the London Express, that she only gained \$7,000,000 per week. Think of it! The south leading that great country seven times with 300,000 to ^{per day} surplus account.

Let me tell you that for the next forty years the possibilities of Texas ought to be able to show as much gain as the south. As I do not wish to worry you with statistics, I will leave the south and draw for your imagination, the range country of Texas forty years ago.

RANGE.

The out-line of our range forty years ago begins with the Sabine River as our eastern boundary, some distance from its mouth and skirt the edge of its great pineries, leaving all the prairies and marshes on the south, as a cattle country, and probably strike the Central Railway twenty-five or thirty miles north of Houston. Follow the Central Railway to the City of Dallas. Then take the Texas and Pacific, follow it to about Terrell. Leave it there, move north to Paris on the Red River. Follow the Red River, leaving the Indian Territory on the north to the land of Oklahoma. Then the line of Kansas, then strike the city of Colorado, southern boundary; follow that to New Mexico, then to the far-away city of El Paso on the Rio Grande River. Then the Rio Grande River down to its mouth, leaving our sister republic on the west. Then take the Gulf of Mexico as its southern boundary to Sabine Pass, then back to the place of beginning.

What a country have I described! Capable of taking care of forty millions of people, and then not be as thickly settled as some parts of Great Britain. Think of her climate here in the south-eastern part along the Gulf of Mexico. We have a country that grows all the tropical fruits; where the winter's frost never reaches more than once in seven or eight years, and if the predictions of the scientist are true, which are to the effect that we have moved three to five hundred miles south and one hundred and fifty to three hundred miles east in our climate, owing to the change of the ocean current, it will probably never reach it. The past winter, however, is a strong indication that the prediction has some merit; how much, is left for you to determine.

Then take the north west, standing at the corner of Colorado and New Mexico and look north where you can see Pikes Peak, which is perpetually covered with snow, also to the west where you can see old Baldy in New Mexico, where it is never without snow. Such a climate and such a country, probably cannot be found on the globe to-day. Lying mid-way between the Atlantic Ocean on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west, between the Gulf of Mexico on the south and the Rocky Mountains on the north. In these boundaries one can select just such climate as they wish. Here is the place for the habitation of man in the coming future. What can be better than this? Take the soil, naturally rich and productive. The cattle formerly running upon it, grazing its vegetation carried through a manufacturing process, dropping it again upon the soil making the soil richer. What a picture for your imagination, but she is surely, slowly and steadily passing away from the cattle man. Take the south-east on the Sabine and along the Gulf of Mexico where we formerly raised herds of cattle known to us in the market places as swamp angels, on account of the low altitude, mosquitoes and ticks - looking more like a mixed jersey herd than anything else, leaving the milking qualities out.

That part of the country began to be settled up by the farmer, who raised cotton, rice sugar-cane and finally found oil, and the swamp angels are not heard of to-day. The same may be said of the country north east of Dallas. They raise some cattle, but not many, as it is taken up by the farmers. Consequently it is gone as a cattle country.

Then begin at Galveston and cut those two sections out. Take the Central Railroad through to Denison, as the eastern boundary of the cattle range.

We commence again west and north-west of the City of Galveston, and we raise quite a lot of cattle. They are a little better than the swamp angels, and named by the late great cattle man, Shanghai Pierce - sea-lions, but the farmer, rice, ~~cain~~ and fruit man took that country away, and we hear but little from the sea-lions.

Then we cross to the west of the Colorado River and take the country between that and the Rio Grande River, where we have had great herds of long horns. They too, are all fast being absorbed by the hereford and short horn herds. That country is being encroached upon by the farmer and the truck-grower, using artesian wells for water supply. This, you will see, is making the range shorter.

You would be surprised, standing at the City of Dallas, from February to April, to see the train-load after train-load of strawberries and early vegetables going to the north, bringing back large returns, which necessarily make the price of land too high for the cattle man. With but few exceptions, agriculturists of foreign countries are taking up that land.

We now move to the mouth of the Pecos River, which rises near the Rocky Mountains and empties into the Rio Grande. Its waters are from the snow clad hills of the Rockies, *here the cowboys will make his last stand* not far from where another grade of cattle, better breed, making finer heavier beef than the ones heretofore described. We find a dividing line just above that, closing the quarantine line where the cattle from the south are not allowed to mix with those of the north, on account of giving their northern brothers the splenetic fever, which caused a great deal of trouble at one time, but has been settled. Since then, everything is going smooth. ⁺

Here we strike a great table land country, ⁺

up to 1900
Grateful to be here

formerly very dry - but little water, save and except the streams, the Pecos furnishing most of it, and also find, like some of the south, two classes of cattle men. One of them is the renter or the lessee of land, the other is the owner of the land. The first named, with but few exceptions, does not make many improvements. His watering places are wells, far apart, nor does he improve the stock; taking it for granted that he does not know how long he can keep the land, and he does not believe much in it, any way. He is out of the business, practically speaking, and his herds are extinct, save and except west of the Pecos, some of these men and herds remain.

The other class of stock men, with their eastern neighbors the Englishman and the Scotchman, looking over the country saw what a rich land it was, and if it only had moisture, they knew such a country could not be found on earth; therefore, they began to buy the lands, as best they could. First from the railroads they obtained alternate sections. Then from the counties that had four leagues, granted to them for school purposes, and finally from the actual settler. They improved their herds to a great extent, and he is not a penniless man to-day. The only trouble with this class of men is that their range is being taken up, in many places, by actual settlers and their cattle are disturbed, and they scarcely know whether to sell out at present prices, or run their cattle, believing if they do sell they will sit down in days to come and tell their sons they sold too cheap.

To give you some idea of the drouth that formerly hovered over that country, I will tell you the story of a young man who came to Ft. Worth some years ago to attend a cattle convention. During the session of

the convention, it began to rain slow and steadily. The young fellow pulled his hat off, stood in the street, threw his face up and took the rain. Several gentlemen in the hotel said to him "come in out of the rain." He did not heed their request. They finally said to his father -"Mr. Beemas, have your son come in out of the rain." His reply was "let him alone." He was raised west of the Pecos River, is eighteen years old and never saw it rain before." Thanks to the Almighty, giver of good things. That whole country has been blessed for several years with copious rains, and what a change it has made on that rich land.

*But
of late*

For instance, a man who rode over that country fifteen or twenty years ago, ~~he~~ he was blind-folded and set down in some parts of it, he could not locate himself. The grass is so much taller, so much thicker than it ever was before.

After Horace Greeley went west and saw this great country, his advice was "go west young man and grow up with the country", and after a long, long time, the people are finally taking his advice. I have talked about the cattle range, and some about the cattle, but have not told you who the cattle man is. The cattle man is a benefactor to his race. He is large-hearted, living on those large prairies makes his mind broad. He is a hale fellow, well met. He is the man who opened up this great country, I have told you about. He is the man who drove away the Indian and the buffalo, the man who dug wells and found water in the dessert places, which country we were taught was a dessert, ^{in our school by a man} no water. He is the man who caused railroads to run over those great plains; the man who is building up your cities. Go to San Antonio, Galveston, Houston, Austin, Dallas,

Ft. Worth, Amarillo. If you will inquire, you will find more cattle men own good buildings, than any other one class. He is a benefactor to all man kind. He is a benefit to his race in furnishing good, healthy beef.

The Cattle Raisers Association is also a benefactor. *W. Educator* After the war, we find that our cattle in Texas had gone unmarked and unbranded. It was hard to tell who owned them. Then began the maverick-ing and conscripting, which was taking cattle that were one year old and marking and branding them by the rustler, the owner being unknown. This went on until it became intolerable. They did not wait for cattle to be a year old. They began branding when they were sucking their mothers. Public opinion rose up and said this was not right. The Cattle Raisers Association was formed for the purpose of trying to do away with such hazardous business. It had gone so far that the rustler drove the cattle to the northern ranges, whether branded or unbranded, and sold them. Often when the cattle were rounded up, a cattle man would see his cattle in the round-up but before he could get them out they would be scattered again.

on the Range
So, Mr. President, if you will look back on your book to the first years of this association, you will find the whole of your books on round-up question Appointing over-seers, bringing order out of chaos.

The next thing was to raise a tax by volunteer subscription and put out inspectors to see that every man got his cattle, and such it is to-day. Consequently I claim that the Cattle Raisers Association is a great benefactor. *W. Educator*

Now, you are up against another question "the passing of the range." The only thing I know of

that you can do is to pass a fraternity bill for the man who has gone into your range and made his home. Induce them to raise cattle and join your association.

CHANGING OF THE RANGE.

This brings me to the second part of this discourse, which is "changing the range of the cattle industry." The flag of this industry is surely trailing in the dust. It is not surprising to your speaker, for he warned you time and time again that such would be the case, and there are men in this association who heard me when making a fight for the cattle industry of Texas, and upon being defeated in my effort, remarked that "Lum dies hard." A number of you believed with me then, that the course matters were taking would eventually rob cattle producers of all his profits, but the packers having great sums of money loaned to many cattle men. The cattle men were afraid to say that their heads were their own. X After being defeated by the great combinations of the beef manufacturing industry of the north, your speaker then took this matter up with the Butchers National Association of America, who were being robbed by the same parties of their business, and there was formed a great combination known as the "Beef Producers and Butchers Association". At one time I was elected president of that association, which had the appearance of being the nucleus out of the large and powerful combination to take care of the interest of the cattle man, but what was the consequence? The packers or manufacturers of our beef saw they were liable to be out-done, therefore, by some hook or crook, I know not how, they induced the beef cutters or butchers to join them, and with them and the rail-

Send
a word about
P.D. Drum

road combinations, they have left us no profits scarcely at all on our cattle. You do not hear the butcher of to-day making any complaint. They have him in a position where he can sell their beef to the people at a high enough profit to make him satisfied.

The Blockade
Hummer

Now let us reason from causes to effect. How did this come about? Go back with me in the past. With immense capital at hand, the packers began to build and equip large commodious plants to manufacture our beef into the product for the table. They used all the economical appliances in killing and cutting up our beef; taking care of the offals, hides, hoofs and horns, driving out every facility of competition, which is the life of trade. By one way or another they destroyed all markets, save and except their own, and to-day the cattle producer stands at the mercy of those same men. Here human nature crawls in - selfishness. They buy our cattle as low as they please and sell them to the consumer as high as they please. The consumer cannot obtain it without going through their hands.

Public opinion, although slow to make their verdict, has written that they have made a trust called the beef trust. This was all accomplished by organization. The organization that brought this about was so powerful with money that they got the ear of our government and passed such laws as they desired. Therefore, I ²saw, every reasonable man who has followed me, is not at all surprised that the beef industry's flag is trailing in the dust. Where is your remedy, and as Nelse Morris says, "what are you going to do about it?"

Now I wish to draw on your imagination from the picture I have given you of the coming south in making money. Money, it is said, is what makes the mare go. One of the great wealth^{makers} of the great south-west is our beloved southland, and in joining together the south and the west, which in the future will furnish ample means and population of sufficient strength for the promulgation of the doctrine announced by Thomas Jefferson of "equal rights to all and special privileges to none!" This will be heard again in the halls of our congress and the south and the west, combined in producing cotton and wool for clothes and meat and bread for the sustenance of man, will rise up in time to come in their might and right things yet. Then and then only we can look for wholesome laws on our statute books that will give every beef producer a fair compensation for his marketable stuff, and allow the packer a reasonable profit for manufacturing and giving it to the consumer at low and reasonable prices.

This is your hope, and is why I have drawn the pictures before you that I have. Look them over carefully, search them from every point of the compass, and see if I am not right.

Since the advent of the twentieth century, our cattle have been depreciating steadily, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty and probably sixty per cent, while in all of this time, it is said beef has gone up in price to the consumer. It is hoped that the packer will see that it is to his advantage to give us more money for our cattle, and therefore not kill the goose that laid the golden egg, by making it impossible for the cattle raiser and feeder to keep up his business.

During this time our lands have risen from ten to nine hundred per cent, making it cost more to raise cattle. Now a glimpse at the future cattle industry, and I am done. Many of our cattle in Texas, no doubt, will be driven away to Mexico, where land is cheap and grass is plentiful. Some will probably go to New Mexico, and Arizona and no doubt some to California, and so the number of cattle on the Texas ranges will be reduced, but by the agriculturist and farmer coming among us, the time is close at hand that by better breeding ~~and better breeding~~ and sheltering, we can produce as many pounds of beef on half the number of cattle. As I have said before, our packers see it will not do to keep prices down until the industry is killed, and times are getting better for the cattle man.

Taking all facts into consideration, ^{the} cattle ^{Industry} will not be materially changed by the passing of the range, but in all probability will be for the better.

I wish to say something, in regard to your fat stock shows, believing too much cannot be said in its favor. It is a move in the right direction and should be encouraged by every member of this association, as well as our citizens in general. By giving good premiums to the best feeder, it will thereby induce a larger number to enter into the contest. Money spent in this manner will probably bring the best results possible, and determine the best breed of cattle, and the best mode and manner of producing the best beef. It is hoped, besides the premiums awarded that when these fat cattle are offered for sale, that our home packers will see to it that they bring a good price and are killed and dressed in our home market, thereby encouraging the stock raiser to bring

his cattle to the market well finished. By doing this, competition will gradually grow, from the fact that each and all will be striving to carry off the blue ribbon. By such encouragement you will have a better class of cattle men in every way.

You will find, on visiting the stock yards, that the Long S brand is represented, fed by my foreman John Joyner.. They are four year olds and might have been just as good two years ago, as they are to-day, if they had been properly cared for.

I am willing to be one of the men who will take a twenty pound steak out of ^{his} own raising of cattle, delivered to me in Dallas at \$1.25 per pound.

The day is at hand and coming when baby beef will be the paying beef. You take your well bred Hereford or short horn calf of seven months away from his mother, worth say \$20, and put \$30 worth of feed in him, and you will have a yearling beef weighing a thousand pounds. This yearling will cut for the butcher six hundred pounds of good juicy, tender meat, worth to him at 12-1/2 cents per pound \$74. The hide is worth \$14, the offals and by-products are worth any way \$1 to \$2, say \$1, then he should net about \$90. He cost you \$50. \$5 for freight and commission makes him \$55. He is worth to-day on the market \$60. You get \$5, then somebody gets \$30. Cannot the packer divide that matter up with you and give you one to two cents per pound more? You must prepare your cattle for the packer in first class condition, so that he can sell his meats not any higher than he does now, but give better satisfaction. You can feed these calves on the product of the farm with your cotton-seed, Indian and kaffir corn, milo-maize, and alfalfa and let him run on your wheat and rye pastures, sheltering him at night and make him a

first class animal, which sells at small profits, will be the motto of the coming cattle man. The only thing to do is to get the right breed and take the right care of him and you will always find a ready market.

So we conclude, from the foregoing, that the result of the changes of the ranges and the incoming of the farmer will, in all probability, be a benefit to the cattle industry of the future. This country is not being taken up by the man with the hoe. He is too dull, but is being taken up by the steam plow. Some of them are running now on your prairies, carrying from twelve to fourteen plows each, cutting from twelve to fourteen inches, turning over many acres per day and doing it right. The farmer has learned how to manage his crops and the stock man must learn how to manage his herds. *Ed. red in allos*

So I will end by saying, look out for the future coming white city of the plains of Texas, but cannot say where it will be located, but some day you will see probably the greatest city of Texas on the rich plains that I have described, with teaming millions of happy, industrious people, railroads everywhere, all becoming cattle growers on a small scale, taking care of his cattle well, feeding them when they need feed and housing them when they need it, lying down at night and not feeling that the humane society ought to be after him for the prevention of cruelty of animals.

Now I have brought out my little brigade, and tried to untie this badly tangled know, and if I have succeeded in bringing to your minds anything that will be of material good to you in days to come, and I am repaid.