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HAMPTON'S ADDRESS

Ex-President Makes an Interesting and Valuable Talk Before the Stockmen's Convention.

Following is the full text of ex-President R.M. Hampton's address at the Nebraska Stock Growers' association convention, held in this city last week, and which is printed in full because of its interest and value to this section in particular.

Gentlemen of the Convention: We, as cattlemen have passed through a year of transformation, or in a transformation period, whether we have reached the base of that period is an open question. We are not alone as a class of men but most business interests have suffered equally with us. It would not be nature to remain stationary and it is not history that we always progress, yet the element of advancement with the individual for a period of years should mark his ability to succeed or fail in his undertakings, so that the standard by which we must measure the individual, the community or the business, must be taken for a period of years. The individual is frequently, quickly measured. The community, or the people as a whole will shape their destinies according to what nature has provided for them to develop. The industry with which we are engaged is but a link in an endless chain, and is not independent of any other link, whether that be the ship builder, farmer, or the man on the railroad section. We all stand together and while it is nature that we all endeavor to better our condition, a good result is a gain to us as a whole. It is true that many industries, many interests through their management by individuals, seeks an undue advantage over those not so well organized and protected—so that our organization must not only strive to advance our industry but to protect ourselves against encroachments. The record of the past for our industry might not justify us in saying we had advanced, but to go back ten years, and take the period of years into consideration, we are justified in saying we have a good record.

Fifteen years ago the country was a wild, open country—or about that time or a few years prior, we of us who came here mistook the country for an agricultural country and many of our best years, our toil and what means we had were wasted in following a course contrary to nature's own laws. It has in whole been a period of education, and one in which we believe the course is far from being completed. In the course of a few years we began drifting from the idea of plowing to one of fostering the live stock industry. Our first lessons in a, b, c's was the sight of the range cattle roaming at large subsisting on the natural grasses. We got our English and German mixed in this lesson for we only saw the painted picture of the enthusiast. We received this lesson as a beautiful dream and followed it as a man chasing the end of the rainbow to possess that pot of gold. It was a beautiful picture to look at and at last many men were in the chase. This went on till our range was overstocked and then came a period when every man seemed as if he wanted to drive the other fellow out of business, and excited by a period of high prices of cattle and easy money there was a race to see how many head of cattle you could call mine. This proved disastrous to all—we lost sight of the real object in the industry. The quality of our cattle degenerated, and with the first lesson still in our minds we were trying to live on the range and our herds were degenerating for the want of proper food. The last few years we have commenced to think about another lesson on this subject. We know now that it is not a business of chance, and can be followed only as any other business. We might treat this under three heads—first the man. The individual must at least be of ordinary makeup. Nature must first have provided him with some elements of advancement—with energy to work and this must be put into activity. Second a place or the real property wherein he can subsist. I question the advisability for the man to embark in this industry without first establishing a good home. A home where he can produce the necessary food—and in estimating this food proposition do not draw upon your imagination too strong or measure your hay with a rule that will give you only 1000 pounds for ton. Upon the care of your cattle will largely depend your success.

The amount of feed required to keep cattle varies largely with the nature of the grass in the locality in which you live, but in no instance ought a man to allow his stock to become poor during the winter. It is a question of pounds, and not heads that you are to produce, and stock will make more pounds in twelve months than in six months and there is no logic in allowing your stock to remain a part of the year with no growth. Growth and advancement should be sought for in each month of the year. A home for the individual is not all. A home for the live stock must be prepared, and while you eat three meals a day and seldom go hungry—how about the live stock under your care? If you are a man raising a family is the young child starved and hungered—if so what kind of a child does he appear from a physical standpoint? The same thing will apply to your cattle and horses. It is not

only cruel, and the individual so doing should be punished by law, but it is without profit, without reason, and I must say shows a weakness in the man. The same care should be given your live stock that you give yourselves. You keep your house supplied with meat, flour and groceries, so must your herd be supplied with the necessary food to keep them in a growing condition.

A home for your live stock means the real property if you have not more land than will keep a milch cow, then you are not entitled to more than one cow. The land question has been an aggravating one. The land of much value has been acquired title to as a rule—the surrounding or rejected lands of a less value has been a bone of contention and we believe will continue to be so until it passes into the hands of individual owners. The new law, called the Kinkaid bill, was intended to place this land in the hands of the homeseeker or the man who would acquire title to this land under the Homestead law. There is a wide range of opinion as to the merits of this law, but however that may be, or what the next five years will bring as an experiment it is going to have a disturbing influence upon the customs and beliefs now existing in this country. We believe a great portion of this rejected land will be homesteaded, while it is quite probable that ninety per cent of the lands so taken will be abandoned, but after this has been tested and if the land still remains vacant some other law should in some manner dispose of the land. Our belief is that we are fast approaching a time when we will occupy only that which we own and that the hay stack will be the key to the cattlemen's future.

Next we have quality, the good animal or the bad animal. If we are raising cattle for milk we look for a different type than if we are producing for beef. Most of us are working in the beef part of the industry. Too much care cannot be given to the subject of quality in your herd. The inferior quality and the weak constituted cattle should every year be weeded out of your herd and shipped. They are not money makers and should be disposed of. I do not feel competent to attempt to inform you of what is good and what is bad but every man should make a study of this subject, and must depend upon his own judgment. We have noticed there has become a tad, to look at a bunch of cattle and call them good because they are all red or because they are all white faces. I hardly think there is anything in the color of the hair the animal is covered with. We ought to think and inform ourselves on the points in an individual animal that go to make him a good animal or a poor animal. The packer or the man who buys beef for the slaughter house bases his price on the percentage of beef the animal will dress. Our education should be along the same line, quality means weight and percentage of the best meats the animal will produce. Our agricultural schools are accomplishing a good work along this line. There is as much need of education in our farmer, or our stock grower as there is with our doctors or lawyers, each one educating himself in his particular line. After you have secured the good individual—you will still make a scrub of it if you are not prepared to properly care for it, and furnish it with the necessary food. We ought to make our industry a strong link in the endless chain, but if you leave one part of the industry without the proper care, the link is weakened in that spot and your efforts fail. The industry itself is the natural and principal industry of our part of the state. The future is in good hands. We believe nature has smiled upon you. It rests with the people to work out the future for good or bad. The individuality in your cattle will be one of the great factors in the future. The country is full of common cattle and while we can work some of them off in shipments it will be a slow process—and we must look more particularly to the bulls we use. To use a full blood or papered animal is not sufficient. I think the percentage of so-called full bloods—or at least those which have come under my observation are at least fifty per cent scrubs—and a good individual is not all that is required. The good individual may be a grade and the ancestors poor in quality. You should know something of the ancestors and this can not be too carefully adhered to. Then the buying of an eastern animal must be guarded against, the corn bin bull. You cannot get good results from seventy-five bushels of corn fat. Fat on an animal covers up many bad points in the individual. To use a grade animal with grade cows will produce you a scrub. Now after touching on the man, the home, and the quality of your herd, let us go back to the home and its management. There should not simply be a place to stay—it ought to be made a home in the true sense of the term. A home where it is a pleasure to be, a pleasure to see and a pleasure to think about. There is no reason why the rancher should depend upon his saddle horse, lariat rope and spurs to make him a living. Every man in the business can have his garden and a good one, can have his truck patch, the potato, the roasting ear, the currant, the gooseberry, the plum. Most any and all small fruits can be produced with a profit. The three should be looked after, it beautifies the home if nothing more. You can have the chickens, the pig, the cow with milk and butter, and in fact if you follow more of the farmer's plan the expense of operating the ranch can be reduced to a very small item. This is not a theory of mine, I am operating a ranch and the party in charge will raise 400 or 500 chickens. They have their pigs, the cows, and the butter, the garden and the truck patch. We sell eggs, butter, and have most everything we use on the table produced upon the

place. There is no reason why a ranch man should buy all he eats and have the grocery bill that the cattle must pay. This item was lost in our first lesson in the industry. It was when we mixed our English and German. Let us add this phase of ranch life in our study of the industry, it will prove to be one of interest and profit. The horses needs more attention from the ranchman. Every man in the industry uses horses—and he can produce them at a very small cost, but while you are producing them you should have a good kind. I would say keep your eye on the draft horse. Get you a good stallion and keep one on the place. To get a good one does not mean that you should buy a high priced horse or because some one else raised him or because he is imported, there are plenty of good horses in the country. Buy you a good colt, one that has good ancestors—and raise him. This will not require the outlay of much money. Have a few good horses to sell each year, they will help to pay some expense bills. These are matters every man can spread out on his own table and think about them. Then we have an organization or the interest of our people collectively, we want to be together and work together. We should be bound closer to one another and through our organization be able to protect the industry from encroachments.

We have good laws and bad laws. Conditions and other enterprises make it necessary for new laws and some one to enforce them. We ought to be able to have something to say about who will make those laws and whom we will entrust to enforce them. A public official is a public servant, or at least we have been educated to think so, but too often the public official is simply farming the public. As an organization we have a right to discuss these matters and look for good men to serve us. We are not politicians and should not be bound by a political name. We do not want to be classed as a stump speaker of past events, but look for something good in the future and go after it. We want better service from the transportation companies taking our cattle to market. We believe that we are paying too much money for the services contracted for and that our stock is not being handled as they should be. The return transportation has been restored to the shipper. This is as we think it should be, but we, the shippers, have a duty to perform in the matter. The matter of having some one to go on our shipping contracts, except parties in actual charge of the cattle and those necessary for the care, is not within the spirit of the contract and should be guarded against. Our organization is for the benefit of its members—protection in all markets where we have our inspectors working every day and your secretary's report will give you some idea of the good we are accomplishing there. We do not stop at the yard inspection. Cattle rustlers know we are in the land of the living and the court dockets and the state prison will be in evidence in this line. The influence in the west has been to drive out the bad man, encourage and stimulate the good man. We want this influence to go on until all men are good. We want all cattlemen to come with us. It will help you.

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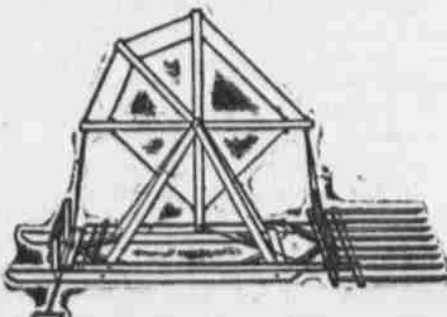
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