

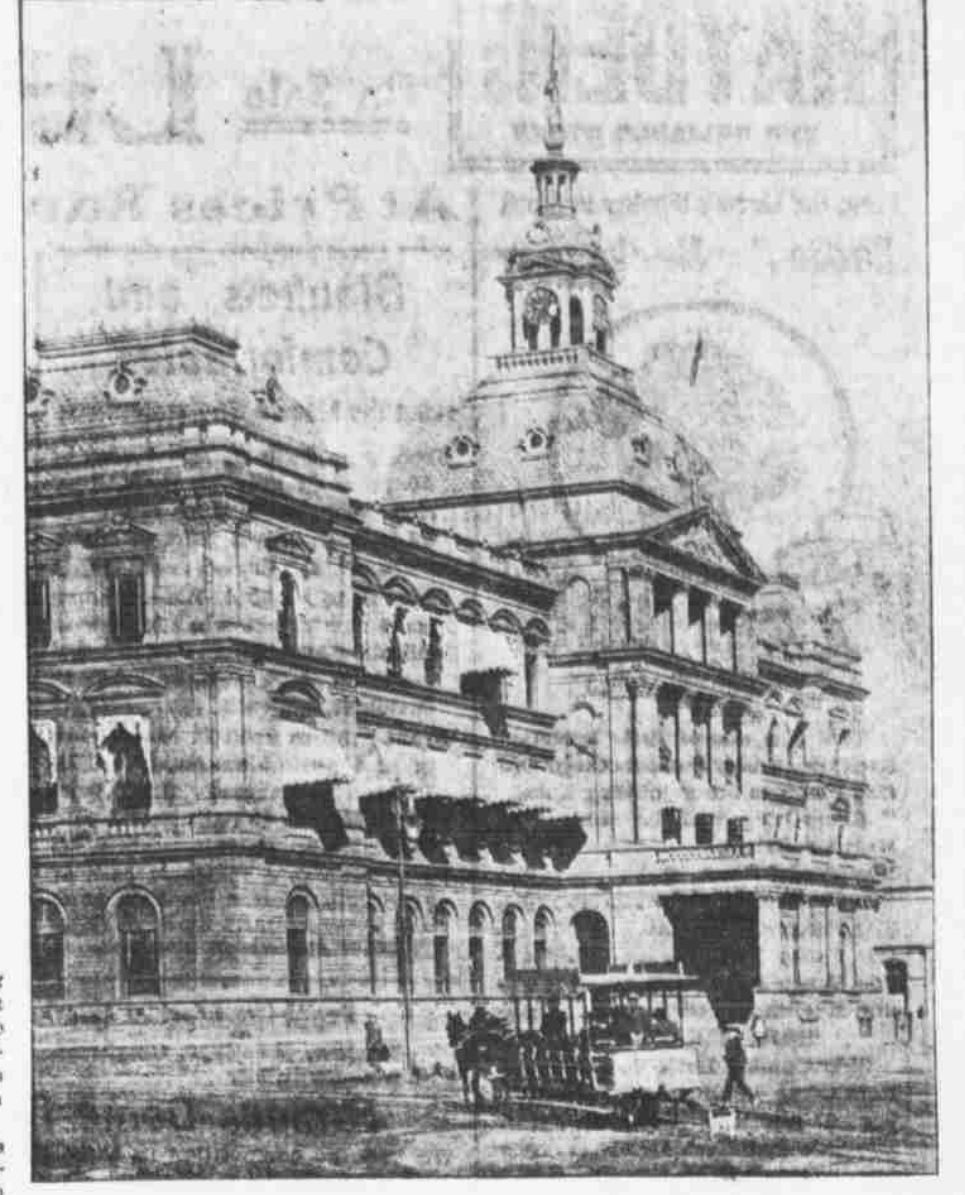
Some of the Queer Features of Farming in the Land of the Boers



GENERAL BOTHA.



CHURCH STREET, PRETORIA.



PARLIAMENT HOUSE, PRETORIA.

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PRETORIA—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—This letter is to be about the Transvaal. The states have been big in the eyes of the world for the last half dozen years. It seems small and poor when one travels over it. I entered it from Cape Colony at Fourteen Streams, above Kimberley, and came thence by rail through Johannesburg on my way here. The distance is a little farther than from New York to Washington, and it is about an equal distance from Pretoria to the east, where the Portuguese territories begin. I am just about 200 miles or so south of the boundaries of Rhodesia. These figures give you some idea of the area of the country. The Transvaal is about twice as big as Illinois or Iowa. It is high, dry and comparatively barren, and some of it seems almost a desert. On my way here I rode for miles without seeing a house, and all along the way from Kimberley to Johannesburg there are no towns of large size. The whole country has a white population less than that of the city of Minneapolis, and including the blacks, who number three times the white, it has not as many people as Philadelphia.

The biggest town in the Transvaal is Johannesburg. It has 100,000, and of these less than 30,000 are white. Pretoria has 35,000 and only 25,000 whites. Both towns claim more, but that is the official figures, and they include very one, negro, English and Boers.

Millions in Mines.

The great importance of the country is in its mines. It leads the world as to gold, and it bids fair to do so as to diamonds. I have already written of the Premier mine, which produced the Cullinan diamond, the biggest ever discovered. It lies within thirteen miles of this city, and it has turned out \$25,000,000 worth of precious stones in the last four years. There are other diamond mines near by, and there are also copper and including the black mines of the Rand, which lie within a few miles of Pretoria, their product is greater than that of any other region. They have added more than \$100,000,000 to the world's supply in the last twenty odd years, and they are now yielding more than \$25,000,000 a year. Of this I shall write more when I visit Johannesburg.

Farming in South Africa.

The chief importance of the Transvaal, outside its mines, is as a stock-raising country. The land is high and beautiful and the climate is fitted for white men. The most of the colony lies 4,000 or more feet above the sea. It is a vast table-land, composed of great rolling plains, crossed here and there by low ranges of mountains. A great part of the country is covered with scrubby brush, but much of it is semi-barren and so scantily watered that the grass burns up in the summer. The seasons here are just the opposite of ours. The winter is from April to September, and the summer from October to March. The winters are cold, dry and bracing. The summers are hot, with some rainfall to temper the heat.

So far only a small part of the land has been taken up. There are something like 20,000 farms in the Transvaal, and the average size of a farm is 4,000 acres, or nearly ten square miles to each farm. Most of the farmers are Boers, who cultivate only a small part of their land, and either graze the remainder or let it out to the native Kaffirs, who plant it in little patches of from one to five acres. The chief crops raised by the Boers are corn and millet. They farm under the direction of the owner and as a rule give him half of the harvest. All farming, however, is slovenly done, and that notwithstanding the demand is good. The Transvaal is now importing farm produce of \$10,000,000 per annum, and the main supplies for the gold mines come in from abroad. I have the market prices of Pretoria and Johannesburg lying before me. Chickens are bringing 25 cents a pound, butter 50 cents a pound and eggs are selling from 25 cents to 35 cents a dozen. Milk is worth 10 cents a quart and tobacco, unmanufactured, 12 cents per pound. As to grain, it is sold in bags of different capacities. Barley is put up in bags of 100 pounds and sells at \$1 per bag, or 3 cents a pound. Rye brings over 2 cents a pound, oats 3 cents and Kaffir corn almost 2 1/2 cents, while Indian corn brings 2 cents per bushel. This means that rye and corn each bring \$1.12 and that barley and oats bring, respectively, 94 cents and 94 cents per bushel, which is far more than they sell for, even at the highest, in our part of the world.

Some South African Pests.

These prices are largely due to poor labor, lack of transportation and insect pests. One of the chief pests is the locust, which sweeps over the country in swarms of great magnitude. I have ridden through miles of such swarms on the cars. At times the locusts are so thick that they almost hide the sun. The air is filled

with the flying beetles, with sparkling white wings, and one looks on and on, seeing nothing but locusts as far as the eye can reach. Looking down along the sides of the train the ground is covered with these crawling insects, and you can hear them in front of the engine. The locusts seem to be sweeping them apart like a snowdrift, and this work continues for miles and miles as the train goes on. Sometimes they are so many that the wheels of the cars, going over them, crush them upon the rails, and the rails thereby become greased and the wheels roll round without catching. At some of the stations I have stepped out of the train and scooped up a handful of locusts. They look just like our grasshoppers and are probably the same sort of insects as those which almost ruined Kan-

sas and Nebraska some years ago. When the locusts come in almost every green thing. The grass disappears and the sheep and cattle perish for want of food. At present the different governments are paying a certain price for locust destruction. The farmers receive 50 cents per bag of 200 pounds, and in Natal locust eggs are bringing 15 cents a pound. The eggs are laid in cocoons, and it is estimated that it takes 40,000 eggs to make a pound. They will last for years without hatching, so that although the locusts are killed, a new crop may come forth again and again from the dormant eggs.

The African natives are all fond of locusts. They eat them, and I am told that the Boer farmers frequently use dried locusts for chicken feed, paying as high as \$2 per bag for them. Another trouble that the farmers have in many regions is the drought, and there are also cattle fevers and other diseases.

Agriculture Since the War.
 Since the Boer war new interest has sprung up in agriculture, and the government is now doing all it can to open up the country and to improve the condition of the farmers. It has already established experimental farms in several places and is trying to better the live stock. Many new plants are being introduced, the ter-

ritorial legislature, and which historians agree was liberally padded, was less than 4,500, the metropolitan city of Omaha being a village of not more than one hundred and fifty people, containing a half a dozen cabins, a few shanties, and a tavern in process of erection called the "Froggie house." Seemingly, to Mr. McDonald's surprise, the "claims were all taken from two to three miles around Nebraska City," and to procure such claims they were desirous of getting, containing some timber, they journeyed westward thoroughly exploring the territory of the Big and Little Nemaha rivers with some of their tributary streams. After a hard day's ride, at times hungry and with nothing procurable for food, they slept out on the open, at one time in a dreaching rain. On Turkey creek they found a hospitable family named O'Loughlin and made that their headquarters for some weeks, glad indeed for so kindly a reception though they "had no pocket money" for their beds, a luxury which those who repose on downy pillows know nothing of. After weeks of searching, Mr. McDonald on July 4 located a claim on Turkey creek in Pawnee county. On part of this claim he planned the townsite upon which has been built the splendid town of Pawnee City. Arthur McDonald soon tired of the privations of frontier life and before the close of the boating season, taking the mules and saddles purchased with his money, returned to his eastern home. Charles, though possessing but \$3, was delighted with the country and had then as since abundant faith in its unlimited possibilities.

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As to prices of farm animals, they seem fair for this far-away country. Goats are worth about \$5 each, pigs from \$10 to \$20 and merino sheep from \$5 to \$6. Almost any kind of a good horse will sell for \$100 and a mule for the same. Native oxen bring from \$60 to \$70 and those imported from the Cape of Good Hope sell for \$100 and upward.

No Place for Poor Men.
 Notwithstanding these figures I do not advise Americans to come here expecting to make money in farming. This is hardly a poor man's country. The native labor on the farms is made up of Kaffirs, who receive from \$10 to \$15 a month, including their board and lodging. White men can-

not do the black man's work without losing caste, and the farmers would rather not have white men to do such work. The line between the white and the black is carefully drawn and the white fears that his race will lose caste if he employs his own people to do the rough labor. Even the government, anxious as it is to have settlers, does not advise men without capital to come to South Africa. In a little book of information for the benefit of emigrants I see it stated that it is necessary for an experienced farmer to have from \$20,000 to \$30,000 if he wishes to start into stock raising in the Transvaal. The price of land varies according to the soil, water and nearness to market. Farms on the high veldt, with a certain amount of land irrigated, can be purchased from \$2.50 to \$10 per acre. In the lower country, known as the bush veldt, the price is considerably lower. Nearer the towns the land is high, and where there is plenty of water the prices are much above those I have mentioned. The government advises that a farm should not be less than 2,000 acres in size for stock raising and not less than 3,000 where the country is poor. It desires small cultivators who will do mixed farming and truck farming. Such men should have from \$1,500 to \$2,000 each, and they should be prepared to work with their own hands.

the present spacious banking building was occupied. Though Mr. McDonald has been reputed to be a wealthy man, he has not been without financial trials and discouragements, he having suffered numerous losses, one notable one being when he lost over \$15,000 worth of hay by prairie fire.

Mr. McDonald is a member of the Masonic fraternity, having been made a mason at Rogersville, Tenn., in 1883. Later he transferred his membership to Covert Hill, electric city, and when Elmer Valley lodge was organized at Fort McPherson in 1876 he was one of the prime movers in the work. For several years the lodge room there was in the second story of his store building and supposedly it was on account of Masonry that he incurred the displeasure of the commanding officer, who was bitterly opposed to it and would make it so unpleasant for subordinate officers and privates who were members of the Masonic order that the lodge meetings were frequently held *sub rosa*. For six years Mr. McDonald was master and for thirteen years treasurer of this lodge. He was also a member of Elphinstone chapter, No. 16, and of Palestine commandery, No. 12. Because of his prominence and fidelity, as well as because of the esteem in which he is held by the entire fraternity, his birthday was celebrated last evening by a surprise gathering in his honor at the Masonic temple. The spacious building was crowded with Masons and their families and a royal good time was indulged in. The program included music, informal addresses and refreshments. During the evening Mr. McDonald was presented with a beautiful loving cup, the presentation speech being made by General Superintendent W. L. Park of the Union Pacific railroad and a member of the lodge.

Religiously Mr. McDonald has always been a Cumberland Presbyterian in faith, having united with that church in early manhood. That denomination not being represented here, he has attended the Methodist church, of which his wife was a member, and frequently has communed with that body.

Mr. McDonald has always been one of the most prominent citizens of this community having been identified especially in early years with all the enterprises looking to the building up of a strong community. During the years of drought and grasshoppers he assisted many worthy, but helpless people, permitting them to have groceries from the store and for which he has never been compensated. He has been a liberal contributor to local enterprises, including irrigation canals, creameries and the state experimental farm. Many individuals who have since become prominent remember him well as a ranchman while located at Cottonwood Springs, where he supplied the government with large quantities of hay and the railroad company with thousands of ties during its construction. On the completion of the Union Pacific railroad at Cheyenne he conducted a large mercantile business and also had large property interests for many years.

Mr. McDonald was united in marriage at Omaha October 14, 1868 to Miss Orta H. Henry, sister of the wife of Governor James E. Boyd. Seven children have been born to them, namely: Frank, the eldest, dying in infancy; William H., the first white child born in Lincoln county, cashier of the McDonald State bank; Mrs. W. C. Reynolds; Charles A., who died October, 1894; James Boyd, of the firm of Weingard & McDonald, clothes; George W., who died October, 1896, and Mrs. Frank L. Mooney. Mrs. McDonald departed this life December 25, 1898.

Though Mr. McDonald has reached the end of his eighty-second year, he is in good health, remarkably vigorous and able daily to attend to his business affairs. Indeed, it is doubtful if he himself feels as old as he did more than half a century ago.

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In 1878 he engaged in the banking business under the name of the Bank of Charles McDonald, being now the oldest bank in western Nebraska. So solid and substantial has been this institution that it successfully withstood the years of drought and financial distress of the nineties, when most others in this district went down with the crash. In 1902 the bank was incorporated as the McDonald State bank, with a capital stock of \$25,000, and now has a surplus and undivided profits of \$45,000 additional. It was at this time also that

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FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Charles McDonald Who is Eighty Years Young

IT MAY seem foolhardy for any one in this great state of Nebraska with a city like Omaha approximating 150,000 inhabitants, with numerous other municipalities ranging from 5,000 to 50,000 people and hundreds of smaller towns, in addition to the great herds of individuals who contentedly cultivate our millions of fertile acres, to state that will cast 250,000 votes in the great presidential election within the next fortnight, to assert that there yet lives anyone who at any time in his history was acquainted with all the people living within the borders of this great commonwealth. Yet, regardless of the great systems of railroads, with their spurs and tributary lines traversing well nigh every portion of the state, regardless of the hundreds of substantial towns and cities with their teeming, bustling populations; regardless of the scores of high schools, normal schools, business colleges, conservatories of music, denominational and professional colleges and the state university, with the tens of thousands of students, regardless of our hundreds of banks and thousands of mercantile establishments, North Platte is proud to number such an individual among her citizenship. In the person of Charles McDonald, the successful ranchman, merchant and banker, who today celebrates his eighty-second birthday, western Nebraska has a citizen who was closely identified with the leaders during the years of the establishment of the territorial and state governments and who himself helped to direct the policies of that period.

Mr. McDonald is a native of Tennessee, having been born near Ooltewah, Jefferson county, October 25, 1826, his father having emigrated from Virginia, where at least three generations of his ancestors had resided. He was the ninth of eleven children and owing to the difficulties incident to property providing for so large a family his educational advantages were confined to rural subscription schools. But like that rugged and distinguished fellow-citizen of Tennessee, who worked on the tailor bench by day and studied by night under the supervision of his wife, President Andrew Johnson, whose friendship he enjoyed, having been entertained by him and shared his bed at the executive mansion while he was the governor of that state, Mr. McDonald has been a student especially of men all his life.

In his early manhood he had a longing for the west and on May 10, 1858, having bade goodbye to friends and loved ones at McDonald's Gap, Hamilton county, Tenn., in company with his cousin Arthur W. McDonald, he started for the great El Dorado beyond the Missouri to build his home and carve his fortune. With the luxurious Overland Limited trains, that trip is nothing now, but that was the day when there was no train west of the Mississippi. The journey was made by boat from Nashville to Memphis, down the Cumberland and Ohio rivers to Cairo, Ill., thence up the Mississippi to St. Louis and then up the Missouri past the Kansas City of today to Leavenworth, Kan. Here the young men arrived the day an election formed and the life of the plains began. Mr. McDonald's diary of the first few months spent upon Nebraska soil is intensely interesting. The total population of the territory, according to the census

taken that year for representation in the territorial legislature, and which historians agree was liberally padded, was less than 4,500, the metropolitan city of Omaha being a village of not more than one hundred and fifty people, containing a half a dozen cabins, a few shanties, and a tavern in process of erection called the "Froggie house." Seemingly, to Mr. McDonald's surprise, the "claims were all taken from two to three miles around Nebraska City," and to procure such claims they were desirous of getting, containing some timber, they journeyed westward thoroughly exploring the territory of the Big and Little Nemaha rivers with some of their tributary streams. After a hard day's ride, at times hungry and with nothing procurable for food, they slept out on the open, at one time in a dreaching rain. On Turkey creek they found a hospitable family named O'Loughlin and made that their headquarters for some weeks, glad indeed for so kindly a reception though they "had no pocket money" for their beds, a luxury which those who repose on downy pillows know nothing of. After weeks of searching, Mr. McDonald on July 4 located a claim on Turkey creek in Pawnee county. On part of this claim he planned the townsite upon which has been built the splendid town of Pawnee City. Arthur McDonald soon tired of the privations of frontier life and before the close of the boating season, taking the mules and saddles purchased with his money, returned to his eastern home. Charles, though possessing but \$3, was delighted with the country and had then as since abundant faith in its unlimited possibilities.

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