

write this note the auctioneers are selling 66,567 bales of greasy Merino in Brisbane which will probably bring growers seven million pounds. No one could travel from Invercargill to Kaitia without seeing 20,000 sheep if he slept half the time, but the sheep begin in Australia where the coastal belt ends.

It surprised me all the same to see cattle grazing over all that sheepless country, and horses at nearly every homestead. The cattle were not always fat or well grown, and the horses were usually the nondescript animals to be seen on small New Zealand farms 30 years ago—draughts, often hollow-backed and pot-bellied, half-draughts, and indifferently bred hacks. Often, too, there were pigs, red, white, mottled, or black, and where they were running free they seemed to be finding enough to eat. I will say nothing about the piggeries except that they reminded me painfully of eye-sores nearer home. In one of them, however, a saddle-back sow just about the time we were rushing past was giving birth to a family of 25—not a world's record, the newspapers say today, but equal to the record and established in spite of cyclones and floods.

Cattle, too, have been making news over here. A bullock which jumped out of the Brisbane show ring three years ago and injured a spectator has this week cost the show authorities £3000. A bull which charged a 16-ton tram in Melbourne yesterday put a horn through the control mechanism, and without injury to itself stopped the tram dead and considerably increased the blood pressure of most of the passengers.

I WAS pleased when I reached Brisbane to hear over the air that the Government of the Philippines had decided to import 1000 cattle a month from Queensland and New South Wales. But I was smiling on the wrong side of my face. The cattle are not to be used to improve Filipino cattle in milking sheds and grass lands, but to displace them on Filipino tables. They are to go out alive so that they will still be fresh meat when they arrive a fortnight later. But their destination is "the works."

The story is in fact a little worse than that. Instead of buying fat cattle the importers are asking for second-grade only, which means that these animals will be rounded up in the bush and begin their journey to the sea without any internal reserves and with a poor chance of building up on the way. They will be wild cattle, nervous and excitable, and not at all likely to settle down on board ship to hand-feeding and drinking. They will also, I gather, have to be certified as "pleuro-free" before they leave Australia, and will probably therefore be driven through crushes and subjected one by one to blood tests. By that time many of them will be half mad with fright, and by the time they reach Manila most of them will be half dead with hunger, weariness, thirst, and the violence of their uprooting.

I am not quite old enough to remember the cattle ships of last century. But I am old enough to remember what happened to thoroughly domesticated horses on the transports of the Boer War. In any case the Atlantic cattle ships are a tale that has been told too often to be questioned in 1954.

(To be continued)

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