The Administration of Canadian Rangelands

T. C. WILLIS
Superintendent, Range Experimental Farm, Kamloops, British Columbia

The rangelands in Canada lie almost exclusively within the four Western Provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The capital city of Manitoba, Winnipeg, is considered the central city in Canada and everything west of Winnipeg is called the West and everything east of Winnipeg is called the East. Rangelands are considered to be confined in the western portion of Canada. These four provinces lie between the 49th and the 60th parallels of latitude. Forty per cent of Canada's area lies north of the 60th parallel and this area amounts to 1,511,979 square miles.

This vast territory is rich in natural resources such as oil, minerals, furs, and game but the total population in Canada north of the 60th parallel amounts to only 25,000 people exclusive of defense personnel. Agriculturally this area offers a great challenge, as apart from the problems of high latitude, difficulties are magnified greatly by climate and distance. This North country has range problems and a fairly extensive range development of 24,500 square miles which is being used for reindeer range. Reindeer herds were brought in from Alaska and have been placed on ranges in the northern part for the production of food for Eskimos. This enterprise is working out fairly satisfactorily and the reindeer herds are on the increase.

Before discussing the administration of Canadian ranges in detail it might be interesting to note that since Canada's Confederation in 1867, public lands, with the exception of the lands mentioned above in the Territories and some reserved lands and Indian lands, are administered by the provinces. Moreover, the natural resources in Canada are administered principally by the Provincial Governments.

Federal Rangelands

Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act—P.F.R.A.

Within the Provinces certain lands have been retained by the Federal Government for specific purposes of which three may be mentioned here; National Parks, Reclamation, and Conservation. These involve grazing to some extent, particularly the Reclamation and the Conservation projects. The Federal Land Reclamation schemes in western Canada come under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act which was amended in 1937 to include the establishment of community pastures in the Prairie Provinces. This program was designed to rehabilitate people from submarginal cropping land and at the same time to convert those areas from a liability to a productive national asset. The Community Pasture Program has concentrated on retiring submarginal lands to grass and managing the areas as grazing units for livestock owned by local people. Through careful management plus the introduction of new and productive grasses, land that once was a liability has come to prosper as part of the community pasturing unit. At the present time there are 62 P.F.R.A. community pasturing units in operation representing a total of 1,678,736 acres. The average cost

LITERATURE CITED


of constructing these pastures has amounted to $2.35 per acre, and during the year 1953-54, 110,000 head of stock belonging to 6,421 patrons were handled on these community pastures. Each community pasture is equipped with livestock handling facilities and adequate water development. In addition to this, buildings are provided for the pasture manager and the riders. The livestock are handled by pasture managers and cow-boys employed by the administration.

The P.F.R.A. community pasture program has contributed greatly to the stability of the areas in southern Saskatchewan which became burnt out in the 1930's. The program is paying its way at the present time and is gradually being expanded into areas still in need of rehabilitation. By regrassing and conservation practices under the P.F.R.A. program the overall carrying capacity of pastures has been increased approximately three times from their original condition.

**Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Lands**

The forested eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in the province of Alberta have been placed under the control of the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board. The work of this Board is closely integrated between Federal and Provincial authority. The Board sets policy and plans range management, but direct supervision of the lands comes under the Alberta Forest Service, a provincial agency. The grazing area involves about 650,000 acres of good range of which about 500,000 acres are currently in use. Grazing dues are charged on a per head basis; the dues are set each year and based upon a 12½ per cent royalty on the estimated gain made by animals valued at the average market price the preceding year. Last year the grazing fees were about 40 cents per cow per month.

In turning to the rangelands within the provinces and under provincial jurisdiction, we are dealing with four provinces, four distinct programs of administration, and various agencies within the provinces responsible for the administration. Table 1 summarizes the rangeland administration in western Canada.

### British Columbia

**Forest Ranges**

In British Columbia all rangelands are administered by the Department of Lands and Forests. The Forest Service within this Department controls approximately 10,000,000 acres of crown range, all but approximately 1,500,000 acres of which can be classed as forest range. The management and allocation of this range is carried out in close cooperation with the range users and other agencies interested in wild land management. The estimated total acreage of forest range in British Columbia amounts to 15,000,000 acres. The unused range lies mainly in the north central portion of the province where commensurate spring and fall range and winter feed is lacking. Grazing administration in British Columbia is closely integrated with the other phases of Forest Service activity and is kept as decentralized as possible. Effective administration is achieved with the full cooperation of the range users and this is accomplished through the medium of Range Livestock Associations. These groups are voluntary associations of range users and are incorporated as societies. They are an invaluable aid in building practical range management and improvement plans.

Range surveys and resurveys are in progress during the grazing season to obtain an up-to-date inventory of the crown range resource. In these surveys the carrying capacities of various parcels of land are estimated, and an attempt is made to stock the range in accordance with the surveyed capacity.

All the above ranges are used on a grazing permit basis. In the issuance of grazing permits, preference is given to those stockmen who are in a position to provide feed for their stock from private properties controlled by them for the period during which crown range is not available. When there is insufficient available crown range to meet the demands of stockmen falling into this category, a priority system is set up based on continuous past use of the range.

The grazing fees are based on the yearly weighted average prices of total sales of cattle on the Vancouver market. The fees, therefore, change from year to year depending on the market value of the cattle. In 1955 the grazing fees were as follows:

- **Cattle**—13 cents per head per month
- **Horses**—16½ cents per month
- **Sheep**—3 cents per month

One-half the total fees collected each year are put back into range improvements where necessary on the forest ranges. These improvements involve construction of stock bridges, cattle guards, drift fences, mud-hole fencing, stock trails and water development. Useless horses are taken off the ranges, and if owners cannot be found, the horses are shipped for slaughter. This practice has resulted in a great reduction in wild horse numbers and has figured heavily in the improvement of crown range.

**Open Range**

In addition to the lands administered by the B. C. Forest Service, the Superintendent of Lands administers approximately 600,000 acres of range lands which are non-forested and generally open grasslands in the very dry areas of the Province. These ranges are used under lease agreements with the Provincial Government. The tenure of the grazing leases runs from 1 to 21 years. Rental rates for grazing purposes at the present time have no direct relationship with carrying capacity but are based on the classification of the land. First-class land rental is 25 cents per acre, second class—15 cents, and third class land—4 cents per acre.
### Table 1. Administration of Canadian rangelands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Range Area—Acres</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Rental System</th>
<th>Rates—1955</th>
<th>Range Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>Private—3,000,000</td>
<td>Lands and Forests</td>
<td>Forest Service</td>
<td>Permit per animal based on livestock price</td>
<td>13¢/month—</td>
<td>½ grazing fees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gov't. Forest—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cattle</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,000,000 used;</td>
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<td>10¢/month—</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5,000,000 unused</td>
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<td>Horses</td>
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<td>3¢/month—</td>
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<td>(Not taxed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Range</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>Lands Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lease per acre 1 to 21 yrs. (based on land classifications).</td>
<td>25¢/acre Class 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>Private—22,000,000</td>
<td>Lands and Forests</td>
<td>Director of Lands</td>
<td>Long term leases; grazing permits; rental based on price of livestock and carrying capacity.</td>
<td>14½¢/acre on 20 acres/head-land (not including taxes).</td>
<td>¼ cost of improvement borne by Government.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gov't. Range—</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>Private—17,600,000</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Director of Lands</td>
<td>Rental based on carrying capacity and price of cattle.</td>
<td>3½¢/acre on 20 acres/head-land (not including taxes).</td>
<td>Free use of land for 2 to 4 grain crops followed by grass seeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gov't. Range—</td>
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<td>6,400,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>Private—information unavailable</td>
<td>Mines and Natural Resources</td>
<td>Director of Crown Lands</td>
<td>Arbitrary.</td>
<td>7¢/acre</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permit area—</td>
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<td>290,000</td>
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<td>Leases—</td>
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<td>150,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.F.R.A. Pastures</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
<td>Federal Dept. of Agriculture</td>
<td>P.F.R.A.</td>
<td>Fee per head per month.</td>
<td>75¢/head/month Rehabilitation at Govt. cost.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Rockies</td>
<td>Forest Lands—</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500,000 used</td>
<td>Eastern Rockies Forest Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>Per head based on price of cattle.</td>
<td>40¢/cow/month Careful management by Board.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>150,000 unused</td>
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</table>

### Alberta

Of the 26,000,000 acres of rangeland in Alberta the Department of Lands and Forests administers approximately 4,000,000 acres of Government grazing lands. These fall into several categories of leases and permits.

1. Long Term Grazing Leases. These are issued for varying periods up to and usually for 20 years. If leases are kept in good standing, they are renewable and may be assigned to other parties by the leaseholder at a price agreeable to both. Leases must be held for a period of three years before they can be assigned. This is to act as a check on speculation in grazing lands.

2. Grazing Permits. Grazing permits are issued on lands which for various reasons are not available to be held under long term tenure. Such permits are of one year duration and are renewable each year with priority given to the previous
permit holder unless they are required for some other purpose than grazing.

3. Head Tax Permits. Head tax permits are issued on lands in unsurveyed districts. Permits are issued for the grazing of a given number of livestock for a given number of months without regard to area boundaries. Rental is charged on a cow-month basis.

4. Grazing Reserves. In well settled areas where extensive farming operations are carried on, there are frequently fairly large local areas too rough to farm. Rather than issue a lease to one individual on the grazing area, the local residents form a Grazing Association and apply for the available land under the Association's name. The Association appoints its own officers and allots to the membership the number of animal units each can place on the pasture. Each Association is an autonomous body being responsible to the Department of Lands and Forests only to the extent that annual rental is met regularly and the land held under long-term grazing lease is not overgrazed.

Those who may apply for available Government controlled lands in Alberta are:

(a) Canadian citizens
(b) British subjects
(c) Nationals of foreign countries who declare their intention of becoming Canadian citizens.

The Alberta Department of Lands sponsors a range improvement program whereby the Department pays one-quarter the cost of stock watering, dugouts, or dams, or reseeding programs on areas under long-term grazing lease.

Alberta has set up a very effective program of land rental based on grazing capacity and the price of beef. The simple formula is as follows: $250 \times \frac{P}{10} = \text{rental per acre}$

and taxes per acre, where 250 equals the annual gain in pounds of beef on grass, $P$ equals the price of beef, and $G.C.$ equals grazing capacity in acres per head. The $\frac{1}{10}$ was the original royalty claimed by the Government and now it has been changed from 10 percent to $1\frac{1}{2}$ percent. The rangelands have been divided into grazing zones according to their carrying capacity. Four principal grazing capacity zones were established, namely, zones that would carry one head of mature cattle for each 24, 32, 40, and 50 acres respectively. Thus for beef averaging 20 cents a pound from land with a carrying capacity of 40 acres per head, they would arrive at a grazing fee plus taxes of $15\frac{1}{2}$ cents per acre per annum. This method of setting up the land rental system has apparently been very successful, as an appeal board set up to deal with complaints was not called upon to decide a single case during the first six years of the operation of this system.

Saskatchewan

The Province of Saskatchewan has approximately 24,000,000 acres of grazing lands with about 6,400,000 of this area under Government control. Their present grazing policy has been in effect for eight years and according to the report of the Director of Lands, the principal features of their grazing policy are:

1. A rental based on the carrying capacity of the land and the price received by the primary producers of livestock products.

2. The establishment of six classes of grazing land based on the number of head of cattle or equivalent animal units which may be grazed on the land during the seven month grazing season.

3. Provision for the lessee to improve the grazing land by sowing to a suitable grass mixture without incurring increased rentals for the period. In more recent years the lessee has been allowed to retain from two to four crops of cereal grain while preparing a grass seed bed. These two factors provide an incentive to regrass and offset the cost of regrassing.

4. Provision to put up and store sufficient feed for wintering livestock grazed on the leased land.

5. Tenure up to 33 years to give security.

Rentals for grazing land are subject to change at the beginning of each calendar year providing that the average price of cattle marketed during the preceding six months at the Winnipeg Stock Yards varied beyond certain limits set out in the lease agreement. In their best grazing class, that is, 20 head or more per quarter section carrying capacity, the grazing fees for 1955 amounted to $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per acre.

Manitoba

The Province of Manitoba was settled some years before Saskatchewan and Alberta and a greater portion of surveyed land was alienated through the homestead method of settlement. Even lands which were unsuitable for general farming but suitable for grazing, were homesteaded in the early days. The disposition of rangeland, therefore, in Manitoba is not as big a problem as it is in the other western provinces, and there is not a large volume of rangeland to administer. At present approximately 2,000 grazing permits are in force on 270,000 acres of land. These permits are issued to bona fide farmers on adjoining or vicinity land to supplement lands which are suitable for the purpose of home farms. Their basic permit rate is 7 cents per acre. The grazing permit fee is collected to include the tax.

In Manitoba there are also lands leased for grazing for ten year periods. These leases include the hay and grazing privileges as well as the right to grow tame hay and green feed. The lease areas are relatively small amounting to approximately 150,000 acres and most of these leases border the major lakes.

There are a number of P.F.R.A. Community Pastures in Manitoba and the Provincial Government operates two community pastures. The Manitoba Community Pastures
have been recently used to accommodate cattle in distressed or flooded areas. The Manitoba Government does not expend any direct effort to improve rangelands but the grazing lessees are encouraged to seed down pasture lands to obtain better feed wherever range improvements would appear to be in order.

Summary

1. Public lands and natural resources in Canada are administered by the Provincial Governments rather than the Federal Government.

2. British Columbia has the largest acreage of Government-owned rangeland. This large area is still held by the Government probably because of its low carrying capacity, and also because it is forest range with other values.

3. The Federal Government controls certain lands for special purposes among which grazing is quite important. These lands are in the National Parks, the P.F.R.A. Community Pastures, and the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Lands.

4. Alberta has developed an effective land rental scale based on carrying capacity of the land and the price of beef.

5. The policy of handling ranges in all the Provinces now emphasizes management, where previously it was purely administration with the collecting of dues and enforcing the prohibitions the main concern.

Sources of Information

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British Columbia Department of Lands, 1948. The Grazing Act, Grazing regulations.


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Pendray, W. C., British Columbia Forest Service. Personal communication.


WANTED: IDEAS FOR THE PHOENIX PROGRAM!

“We want to be sure that the Society members generally have the opportunity to suggest ideas for the 1958 Program. This can best be done through the Sections. We would appreciate it if each Section Chairman would solicit suggestions for the Annual Meeting program to be held at Phoenix, Arizona, in January, 1958. This can be done either in the first Section Meeting or by direct contact with members. Consider such items as a general theme for the program, possible topics for panel discussion, and appropriate speakers to be invited. How about field trips, programs for the ladies, banquet speaker, etc.? We probably will have some simultaneous sessions; what subjects can best be handled in this way?

The Program Committee would appreciate receiving your specific suggestions before May 1, if possible. Please send your recommendations directly to the Committee Chairman:

Dr. Hudson G. Reynolds
Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station
107 Agriculture Building
Arizona State College
Tempe, Arizona.

R. S. Campbell
Vice President