

The Adventures of
Dr. Duncan McNab McEachran
in Western Canada

S A N D R A V O K A T Y *

S U M M A R Y

Duncan McNab McEachran's early history and involvement in the formation of the Montreal Veterinary College as well as in livestock inspection were reviewed. His contribution to the beginning of the ranching industry in western Canada was explored in detail. In 1881, McEachran helped to establish the Cochrane Ranche, which was the first great ranch to be started in southern Alberta. He was employed as the ranch's resident general manager until 1883, in which year the Waldron Ranch was established. McEachran was this ranch's president and general manager until approximately 1909. During this time, he came under considerable criticism from both The MacLeod Gazette and The Calgary Herald. As Dr. McEachran maintained his obligations to the ranches while he was directing the veterinary college in Montreal as well as chief inspector of livestock for Canada, it was concluded that this feat alone would rank him as a remarkable historical figure.

R É S U M É

Les aventures du Dr Duncan McNab McEachran dans l'ouest canadien

L'auteur raconte les premières années de la vie de Duncan McNab McEachran, ainsi que son implication dans la fondation du Collège Vétérinaire de Montréal et l'inspection du bétail. Elle rapporte aussi en détails sa contribution à l'implantation de

l'élevage sur ranchs, dans l'Ouest canadien. En 1881, il participa à la fondation du ranch Cochrane, le premier d'importance à voir le jour au sud de l'Alberta. Il agit à titre de gérant général de ce ranch jusqu'en 1883, année qui vit naître le ranch Waldron. Il en devint le président et le gérant général, jusqu'aux environs de 1909. Au cours de cette période, il fut la cible de critiques acerbes, tant de la part de la MacLeod Gazette que du Calgary Herald. Comme le Dr McEachran s'acquitta de ses obligations à l'endroit des ranchs mentionnés ci-haut, en même temps qu'il assumait la direction du Collège Vétérinaire de Montréal et le poste d'inspecteur en chef du bétail, au Canada, on en vint à conclure que ce fait permettait à lui seul de le considérer comme un personnage historique remarquable.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

To most connoisseurs of veterinary history, the name of Duncan McNab McEachran is associated with excellence in both veterinary education and livestock inspection. However, this prominent veterinary surgeon directed his pioneering talents in a very different direction, one which has not received nearly as much attention. It is not generally known that Dr. McEachran was instrumental in the origination of the ranching industry in western Canada.

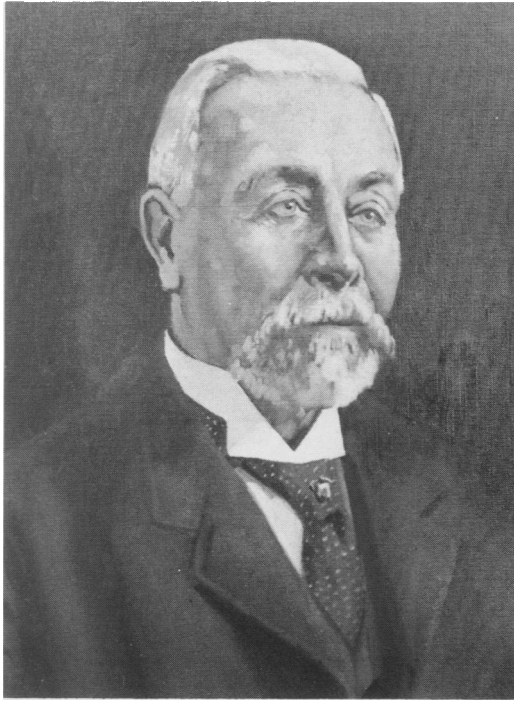
Duncan McNab McEachran was born in Campbelltown, Argyllshire, Scotland in 1841. He took his early education in that area, and entered Edinburgh Veterinary College at the age of 17. While attending the College, he and his classmate Andrew Smith studied under the celebrated Professor Dick.

He graduated in 1861, and emigrated to Canada in the autumn of 1862. He settled first at Woodstock, Ontario where he maintained a successful veterinary practice out of a hotel. His former classmate, Andrew Smith, had recently opened a veterinary college in Toronto, and he invited McEachran to lecture at the college. McEachran agreed, and lectured there during the winters for three years, from 1863 until 1866.

In 1866, Drs. McEachran and Smith had a disagreement about the admissions standards and curriculum of the college. This sparked a conflict

*Veterinary Student, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1.

This study was done while the author was employed as a summer student at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in 1978.



between these two men which was to last for many years. The disagreement was part of the cause of Dr. McEachran's relocation to Montreal in 1866.

Dr. McEachran founded the Montreal Veterinary College, largely at his own expense, in the same year. He became its principal and professor of veterinary medicine and surgery. An innovation was the stipulation that a student had to attend three sessions in order to graduate. In this respect, the Montreal College was ahead of those in Edinburgh, London and Toronto, all of which had two year courses. As of 1877, admissions standards were made more rigorous than those of its Ontario counterpart, as students were required to have senior matriculation to enter.

In 1890, the Montreal Veterinary College became the Faculty of Comparative Medicine and Veterinary Science of McGill University. Dr. McEachran was appointed Dean and Professor of veterinary medicine and surgery. The Faculty was closely associated with the Faculty of Medicine at that University, where both veterinary and medical students were schooled in the basic sciences together.

At the end of the 1902-1903 academic session, the Faculty was closed for financial and other reasons, and Dr. McEachran tendered his resignation. In 1905, McGill University appointed McEachran Professor Emeritus in recognition of past services.

In 1876, partly due to McEachran's urging, the Federal government created a quarantine station at Point Levis, Quebec. This was the first quarantine station in the western hemisphere. In the same year, Dr. McEachran was appointed the chief

inspector of livestock for Canada, a position which he held until 1902. In this capacity, he was successful in keeping Canada almost disease-free, despite epidemics plaguing cattle in the United States, England and Europe during those years.

In 1881, Dr. McEachran and Senator M.H. Cochrane made an expedition on horseback to the foothills of Alberta. The purpose of their voyage was to survey the country and find a suitable piece of land to establish a ranching operation.

In 1876, in an effort to promote the development of western Canada, the Dominion government had passed an act permitting anyone to lease a tract of land up to 100,000 acres in size at the rate of one cent per acre per year. No doubt this new act had induced Senator Cochrane to invest capital in that part of the country.

Senator Cochrane already had established his reputation as a successful breeder of livestock. He began his career in Quebec by importing outstanding Shorthorn cattle from England, beginning in 1867. He was undoubtedly one of the most shrewd and successful dealers of Shorthorns of his time. He later gave up this breed to apply his talents to the breeding and importing of Aberdeen-Angus and Hereford cattle, Southdown, Cotswold, Leicester and Lincoln sheep, as well as Suffolk horses and Berkshire pigs.

At the time of McEachran and Cochranes' expedition, the "Northwest Territories" were wild and largely uninhabited by the white man. As McEachran related in a published account of this trip:

"The white population from the Boundary Line to Calgary did not number one hundred exclusive of Mounted Police and Government officials and surveyors.

The Indians on the other hand, nomadic tribes of savages, constituting a dangerous armed mob, numbering in the district named about 8,000, consisting of Blackfoot, Bloods, Peigans, and Sarcees were a source of danger and well grounded anxiety from their restless habits and unreliable dispositions and as they had not yet realized the fact that now that the Buffalo was gone, they were entirely dependant on the government for food." (3)

The party set out across the plains from Fort Benton, Montana. They camped at night, taking turns as "night watch" to prevent the loose horses from straying, and the stallions tied to the wagon wheels from injuring themselves. During the day, they were plagued by a multitude of mosquitoes, as well as another winged menace, the "bulldog fly." As McEachran recounts:

"It is larger than a bee, and is furnished with powerful mandibles and sucker. It makes a large hole in the skin and the blood flows freely from it. These flies are very pertinacious, and the poor horses become frantic under their torment." (4)

They endured these hardships, as well as stampedes of their horses at night, horses stumbling into gopher holes and throwing their riders, and the culinary products of their cook, Frank, of whom McEachran said, "Of cooking he knew literally nothing, but for eating he could beat any glutton who ever entered into competition in that line". (4)

Eventually, they reached Fort McLeod and Fort Calgary and then drove out to a small ranch on the Elbow River. In their travels, they selected the range they wanted for their own ranch. McEachran was very impressed with the countryside when he wrote:

"Here we had an excellent view of the range which we have selected for the stock-raising purposes of the Company. It is situated on either side of the Bow River at the confluence of Jumping Pond Creek. The land is rolling, consisting of numerous grass hills, plateaux and bottom lands, intersected here and there by streams of considerable size issuing from never-failing springs . . . The grasses are most luxuriant, especially what is known as 'bunch grass,' which resembles the English rye grass, but grows stronger and higher . . . These grasses grow in many places from one to two feet high, and cover the ground like a thick mat. Nowhere else has the writer seen such abundance of feed for cattle." (4)

On the way back to Fort Benton, the party met Major Crozier, who had known the war chief Sitting Bull. The Major presented each of them with a souvenir of Sitting Bull, McEachran receiving his riding whip and a pair of beaded mocassins.

The group returned to the east, and the Cochrane Ranche Company (Limited) was incorporated by the Dominion Government on May 14, 1881. It was the first of many great ranching companies, owned by English or eastern Canadian capitalists, which were to be established in southern Alberta. Senator M.H. Cochrane was president and his son, W. F. Cochrane, was manager. Dr. McEachran was resident general manager and Major James Walker, a former North-West Mounted Police inspector, was appointed local manager.

The Cochrane Ranche, which started out with such bright prospects for the future, was to be the ill-fated victim of misfortune and management difficulties which would lead to its gradual demise.

In 1881, the Company bought 6,000 head of fine range cattle in Montana at the price of \$16 a head delivered at the Alberta border. Instead of driving the cattle to the ranch themselves, they contracted the job to I.G. Baker and Company at a rate of \$2.50 a head, an exorbitant price for that time. Their greatest mistake was the inclusion of a clause whereby losses from strays, stolen stock, and deaths on the trail would be the loss of the Cochrane Ranche. The trail boss, Frank Strong, moved the cattle at a very brisk pace, to save the

I.G. Baker Company time and money. This resulted in many casualties. The cowboys employed by the outfit also traded the calves for whisky and other commodities along the way. The cattle were exhausted when they finally reached the Cochrane range. Winter came before they had a chance to regain their strength, and the losses sustained that winter were enormous.

The ranch had a tandem system of management. Major Walker, the local manager, ran the ranch under orders from Dr. McEachran, who was in Montreal. This system had its difficulties, due to the large distance and poor methods of communication between these two men. There appear to be two schools of thought as to which of these two managers contributed more to the collapse of the ranch. The first group (7) feels that Major Walker was an unimaginative ex-policeman who would follow orders from his superior without regard to special circumstances, or his own judgement. The second group (1) believes that Major Walker was basically an efficient manager, but the constant advice and admonitions from Dr. McEachran and other members of the Company in the east prevented him from doing the best job he could. Perhaps the following three incidents will shed some light on the matter.

After losing so many cattle in the winter of 1882, Senator Cochrane restocked the range with a number of fine Hereford and Polled Angus bulls. Dr. McEachran instructed Walker to brand all the unbranded cattle on the range. Major Walker set out to follow these instructions and a number of the local settlers turned out to help with the roundup. One of the settlers noticed a cow and calf which belonged to him being herded in for branding. He alerted Major Walker to the fact that the pair was his. Walker replied that he had been ordered to brand everything on the range. The settler left in disgust, and word spread quickly through the others. They left as well, picking up many straggling Cochrane cattle on the way and driving them to their own corrals.

In the summer of 1882, Major Walker travelled south to Montana to purchase cattle to restock the Cochrane Ranch. He negotiated with ranchers called Poindexter and Orr, who agreed to sell him 4,000 to 5,000 head of cattle. Just before the deal was finalized, Major Walker received orders from Dr. McEachran in Montreal. He was to travel some 300 miles to Fort Benton. The I.G. Baker & Company was planning to stock an Alberta ranch and had agreed to buy cattle for the Cochrane at the same time. When Major Walker reached Fort Benton, he discovered that I.G. Baker had changed their minds and decided against stocking the ranch in Alberta. When he returned to the Poindexter and Orr ranch, he discovered that the same cattle in which he had previously been interested would now cost an additional \$25,000. Closing the deal, he resigned in disgust, agreeing to stay only until a successor could be found.

Poindexter and Orr were contracted to drive the herd to the Cochrane range, at the rate of \$2.75 per head. Poindexter, an experienced cattleman, decided to move the herd rapidly to avoid an early snowstorm. In spite of his efforts, they met with a blizzard at Fish Creek, although it was still September. He suggested to Walker that the cattle remain at Fish Creek for a month, as they were too tired and weak to make it through the deep snowdrifts. Walker insisted that his orders from McEachran were to get the cattle to the Cochrane range as soon as possible. Poindexter did as he was told. When they arrived at the "Big Hill" of the Cochrane ranch, he is reported to have said, "Hear your cattle, Major Walker. I've carried out my contract and delivered at the Big Hill. Now get and count 'em because half'll be dead tomorrow." (7)

Major Walker left, and Frank White, a railroad man, was hired as treasurer. W.D. Kerfoot, an experienced rancher, was employed to take charge of the livestock. Several disasters followed, and the ranch was moved to the Waterton Lakes area in hopes of milder winters. The Company began to pasture horses, and to graze sheep. Although these enterprises met with short-lived success, the Cochrane Company continued to operate at a loss. In 1888, the sheep and Cochrane leases south of the Bow River were sold. The last of the original Cochrane lease was sold in 1894.

Dr. McEachran resigned as manager of the Cochrane in 1883. That year, he helped to organize the formation of a new ranch called the Waldron, located in a valley between the Porcupine Hills and the Oldman River, in what is now southwestern Alberta. It consisted of between 300,000 and 400,000 acres of land, which was thick with strong, luscious grass.

The ranch was named after Sir John Waldron of Middlesex, England who arranged the financing. The name was usually abbreviated to "Waldron" or "WR" which was the ranch's brand. The ranch purchased cattle and saddle horses in Montana, and imported three or four hundred Clyde and Shire horses. In these endeavors, they were much more successful than the ill-fated Cochrane Ranche.

Dr. McEachran was appointed President and General Manager with headquarters in Montreal. It is difficult to ascertain exactly how much time he spent at the Waldron, however it is certain that most of his time was spent in Montreal, where he was still principal of the Montreal Veterinary College, as well as chief livestock inspector for the Dominion government. Nonetheless, according to the diary of Frank White (6), who was treasurer of the Cochrane at that time, and weekly gossip columns in the *MacLeod Gazette*, he made frequent trips to the west, combining his duties as livestock inspector and manager of the Waldron Ranch.

It seems that he did not completely sever his connection with the Cochrane Ranche Co. when

he started the Waldron. On February 2, 1884, Frank White attended a meeting of the Cochrane Ranche executive in Montreal. In his diary entry for that date, he records:

"Dr. McEachran and Lawrence called. Dr. McE followed me into private office and protested against being excluded from a meeting, and against Mr. Browning, Mr. Cochrane and I holding caucus meetings on company's business. Both Mr. B. and Mr. C. talked plain to him and told him that they could prove he had done all in his power to injure the credit of the company, and that his conceit and pomposity was standing much in the way of his advancement." (6)

From this account, it seems that Dr. McEachran preserved some interest in the Company, but there is no record of how long he continued to do so. The executive were clearly bitter about the Cochrane's poor success, and laid part of the blame on Dr. McEachran.

The Waldron flourished, but not without its own difficulties. A character called Dave Cochrane who had belonged to the North West Mounted Police moved onto the Waldron land in 1883. He spent much of his time at the police barracks at MacLeod, where he managed to pilfer quite a few articles, including a new stove. Whenever Dr. McEachran suggested that Cochrane should move off the Waldron land, Cochrane made subtle suggestions as to how easily a fire could spread on the range or disease through the cattle. In a desperate effort to be rid of Cochrane, the Waldron settled for \$2,700 in lieu of his "squatters rights".

In 1883, another squatter named J.D. O'Neil settled on what McEachran claimed to be "the most desirable part of the Waldron lease. . .". Although by law, no homesteader could locate on any lease granted before 1886 without written permission of the lessee (2) O'Neil, in partnership with a Mr. Roland, selected a quarter of land, built a two story house, a barn and corrals. Although he was told to leave by the Waldron, he went east to collect his family and some stock and equipment. O'Neil asked Dr. McEachran personally for permission to homestead, and was refused. He asked for compensation for his improvements, and was again refused. These incidents sparked a public controversy which was reflected in an interview with McEachran by the *Montreal Herald* (Nov. 10, 1888) and a letter to the editor from O'Neil published in the *MacLeod Gazette* (Nov. 29, 1888). Not much seems to have come of it, and O'Neil subsequently homesteaded near Calgary.

By far the most serious problem which Dr. McEachran encountered in the west was the bad publicity which he received in the *MacLeod Gazette*. Its editor, Mr. C.E.D. Wood, a pompous, verbose newspaper man, took every opportunity to criticize Dr. McEachran's actions. As this publi-

cation had a wide circulation among Alberta ranchers, this bad publicity did little for Dr. McEachran's popularity among his fellow stockmen.

It is difficult to determine exactly what triggered the animosity between these two men. It may well have been an incident which took place in 1888. Although there are two very contradictory accounts of what transpired, it appears that Dr. McEachran paid Mr. Wood a visit and asked Mr. Wood, secretary of the Stock Association, to call a meeting of that Association. He mentioned that he was dissatisfied with the Association for many reasons, one being that its meetings were held when ranch owners could not be in attendance. He did not feel that the Waldron Ranch was being properly represented at these meetings. Dr. McEachran said that "he would not belong to the Association unless the membership were confined to leaseholders and that he would send in his resignation that day." (8)

Mr. Wood apparently became upset at this threat, claiming that this issue could divide the country, causing a "civil war". From that point on, the gloves were off and the two men sparred, each trying to out-insult the other.

In an editorial on July 4, 1888 the *Gazette* became openly malicious, hurling all sorts of accusations at Dr. McEachran:

"We hope to have considerable to say about the government official who advises young men with capital to go to Texas; who has run several good settlers out of the country; about the chief quarantine officer who has locked a band of cattle in quarantine without a really infectious disease, while his own diseased horses are turned loose on the range. Oh yes, we have plenty of material, and, what is better, can back it all up." (9)

In a counter-attack in the next issue, Dr. McEachran defended himself by saying:

"... if the introduction of about half a million of dollars, invested in the best cattle procurable in Montana, the best thoroughbred bulls procurable in eastern Canada, over 200 of the best Clyde mares, and five imported heavy draft stallions constitute me an enemy to the district I plead guilty. If through my efforts most of a million more should be so invested of both English and French capital before a year goes by, I show enmity to the district, I again plead guilty, and as to recommending young men to go to Texas, why you must know the public east, west and in England, know that no country has ever had so persistent an advocate as a stock country that I have been for Alberta..." (5)

Mr. Wood repeatedly accused Dr. McEachran of inspecting only the Waldron Ranch stock on one of his visits to the west. However, if one closely

examines a series of editorials which take up this particular case, one cannot help but notice Wood's gradual exaggeration as his malice for McEachran grew. On August 19, 1888 Wood said: "About the only 'inspecting' Dr. McEachran did was that of the Waldron Ranch, of which he is manager. While in this district we doubt if he visited half a dozen ranches, outside of his own." It should be noted that, from this account, McEachran visited up to six ranches apart from the Waldron.

On August 30 of the same year, Wood said: "The doctor's inspection, if that was what it was supposed to be was confined entirely to the Waldron Ranch." To the discriminating reader, these two statements give blatantly conflicting accounts of the same visit. This would lead one to wonder how often Mr. Wood used this subtle ploy to berate Dr. McEachran.

The *Gazette* continued its personal war by attacking Dr. McEachran's quarantine of American cattle. It cannot be doubted that the purpose of the quarantine was to prevent diseases prevalent in the United States from spreading into Canada. However, in a vicious attack, Mr. Wood accused Dr. McEachran of slapping on a quarantine as soon as he had imported all the cattle he wanted from the States (10). In a series of editorials which gradually grew more incensed, Mr. Wood called for the government's abolition of the quarantine against the States, claiming that there was no disease among cattle in Montana, and that Dr. McEachran had initiated the quarantine to meet his own selfish ends (11).

In a less than complimentary description of Dr. McEachran, the *Gazette* said:

"We have heard that, as an obscure and modest horse doctor, Mr. McEachran was not at all a bad sort of fellow, but that, like all such people, he cannot stand prosperity, and that the consequent swelling of the head has rendered him oblivious to everything except his own self-importance. We must resist the temptation that always comes to us to enlarge on our friends' virtues whenever we write about him. His strutting reminds one of a peacock..." (12)

Thus the feud continued, Wood writing scathing editorials in the *Gazette*, and Dr. McEachran writing rebuttals in the *Montreal Herald*. It must be noted that although the *Gazette* repeatedly assured its readers that it could back up all of its statements, it never actually did so in print. A case in point is that of Dr. McEachran's alleged advice to a young man with capital to go to Texas. Dr. McEachran repeatedly said that this had been a joke. Mr. Wood clung to his story, and brought it up every time he had a chance to rake Dr. McEachran over the coals. Dr. McEachran challenged him to produce the name of the Texas man. Mr. Wood refused to do so, replying that "We do not feel called upon to produce any names at present."

It must be remembered that during most of the years he was running the Waldron, Dr. McEachran could not devote all of his time and energy to this task, as he was also principal and professor of the veterinary college in Montreal as well as Chief Livestock Inspector for the Dominion government. Any one of these three responsibilities would certainly have been a full-time career to an average man, but Dr. McEachran managed to juggle all of them simultaneously for some years. The ability to cope with this amount of pressure should rank as one of his foremost achievements.

In 1889, it was discovered that there was an epidemic of blackleg among the young cattle in Alberta. The Department of Agriculture issued a circular, which was published in the *Gazette*, instructing farmers to move away from water carcasses of animals that had died suddenly, and to burn them and bury the ashes to prevent the spread of the disease. Sick animals should be isolated from the rest of the herd (13). These suggestions were immediately condemned by Mr. Wood as being ineffectual.

In 1891, Dr. McEachran became embroiled in another settlement dispute, which went so far as to be debated in the House of Commons in Ottawa. In the September 25, 1891 session in the House, Mr. Flint, the Member of Parliament for Yarmouth, brought up the case of Robert Dunbar vs. the Waldron Ranch.

It seems that Mr. Dunbar had migrated with his family from Ontario to Alberta, settling on land which was later leased to a Mr. John Hollis. His three sons located on adjacent lots. They set out to build a house and plough the land, and made homestead entries at the land office at Lethbridge. They received entries in 1889.

Mr. Hollis's lease was cancelled in 1888. The Waldron Ranch Co. lease being at some distance from the lease in question, Dr. McEachran arranged with the authorities an exchange of his land for the land in question. As a number of people had applied to have his original holdings thrown open for settlement, the government quite happily transacted the exchange.

When the Waldron moved onto the new piece of land, it was discovered that the Dunbar family was living there. Dr. McEachran gave them notice of eviction, and ordered them to stop cutting hay on the property. In 1890, Mr. Dunbar's sons received a letter from the government, cancelling their entry, and offering them a half section of Dominion land in lieu of the original land. It was reported that the entry had been granted to his sons inadvertently.

A hue and cry arose about the cruelty and unfairness of the cancellation of the Dunbars' entries, which would result in separation of the family. Dr. McEachran was depicted as the tyrannical capitalist, with the ability to break up families. The case was held up as an example of the

power of the large lease holders over settlers. The government was at that time under considerable pressure to abolish the lease system and throw the land open to settlers. The Dunbars' eviction was also purported to be bad publicity for would-be settlers planning to migrate to Alberta.

In defense of his department, Mr. Dewdney, the Minister of the Interior, said:

"Mr. Pearce was sent to make a report, and his report was that Dunbar, Senior had settled on the land prior to survey, and prior to Hollis getting his lease. We then gave instructions that a patent should be issued to him for his land. With respect to the two young men, they were sons who lived with the father, who made no claim outside of the old man's pre-emption, and it was not until representations were made by Dr. McEachran that they were endeavoring to secure the springs, that we came to the conclusion that the sons were not entitled to land, that they were not *bona fide* settlers, and had done nothing but a little ploughing and had not carried out those extensive improvements stated by the hon. gentleman opposite, but had done work to the value only of \$50 or \$75... With respect to the young men, they received an entry for the land, not on account of the lands being opened, because they never were opened as stated in the petition by the hon. member for Wellington, but when Mr. Hollis indicated his intention of giving up this lease, and we were negotiating with Dr. McEachran, we notified our agent not to give entries on the Hollis lease. In the face of that instruction, for some unaccountable reason, entries were given, and these resulted in rather serious complications. The matter was submitted to the Justice Department, and we received a report stating that the young Dunbars had not right to the land, and consequently we cancelled the entries." (14)

Mr. Dewdney went on to say that when the matter had been brought to his attention, he had contacted Dr. McEachran to convince him to arrange some sort of settlement with the Dunbars. Dr. McEachran had agreed to buy them out and they were notified of this. As Mr. Dewdney said,

"However, the country appears more favourable than it has been and although at one time they were perfectly willing to sell out, the Dunbars have now changed their mind and propose to remain there." (14)

Mr. Watson said that he believed the cancellation of the entry was affected by Dr. McEachran's influence as Dominion veterinary surgeon.

Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier stepped into the discussion, stating:

"If an injustice has been done, unwittingly and involuntarily, as may happen in the best

regulated administration, and if in consequence of those mistakes either the capitalist or the settler must suffer, in my humble opinion it should not be the settler. No one can deny that it is more important, if we want to settle the North West rapidly and effectively, that every favour possible be shown the settlers." (14)

The Waldron Ranch (Limited) was thrown into voluntary liquidation in 1898, as several of the original shareholders had died, and the money in trust funds had to be divided by the heirs. As the business had been profitable in its fifteen years of operation, all of the Directors and most of the shareholders of the old Company subscribed to the new one, and shares were not put up for public sale. The company was made a Canadian company under the joint stock company act of Canada, with its board of directors in Montreal. Dr. McEachran was retained as general manager, and Dr. David Warnock, veterinary surgeon, as local manager. The horse ranching business was discontinued by the new company. The bulls were all castrated, as only pedigreed Shorthorn bulls were to be used for breeding.

Mange broke out among Alberta cattle in 1899. In a circular letter which was reprinted in the *MacLeod Gazette* of June 2, 1899, Dr. McEachran urged the Stock Association to assume the expense of building and maintaining a dipping station for the cattle. The stockmen agreed and the dipping station was built at Long Bottom on the Belly River near Kipp. In addition, a quarantine was established on all the range country in southern Alberta. Surprisingly enough, the *Gazette* appeared to support McEachran in the dipping shute and quarantine issues (15).

When war broke out in South Africa, it was found that the British had great difficulty against the Boer soldiers, who were mounted on rugged, sturdy horses, conditioned to the type of terrain found in that country. Lord Strathcona appealed to Dr. McEachran for help in the formation of a Canadian mounted regiment.

McEachran realised that the cowboys in western Canada and their horses worked under conditions not dissimilar to those in South Africa. Operating on this premise, he set out in 1900 to organize a unit known as Lord Strathcona's Horse. The regiment was a great success, as men hastened to volunteer with patriotic fervour. McEachran personally selected the horses, travelling through southern Alberta to purchase them from ranchers.

Once again, his actions came under fire, but this time from a different direction. In a February 15, 1900 article, the *Calgary Herald* claimed that McEachran was buying horses of very inferior quality.

"The animals purchased by Dr. McEachran at Calgary for Strathcona's Horse have been renamed McEachran's corks, the term "cork" being understood to mean an old and useless horse . . .

Mature years in an animal seemed to be sought for rather than otherwise, and the doctor is today the owner of more than one venerable equine with bones so brittle that if a board of officers were to sit on them, they would break their backs."

The problem seemed to stem from the fact that Dr. McEachran would not, or could not, pay more than \$75 per horse. Apparently, this price would not buy a top grade horse.

The people of Calgary became incensed, and a special meeting of the Board of Trade was called. It was considered a public embarrassment that such a poor contingent of horses had been selected to represent the horse breeders of southern Alberta. In a February 17, 1900 article about the meeting, the *Herald* said:

"The representative public bodies of the city have lost no time in endeavoring to protect the fair fame of this district as a horse breeding country from the sneers and jibes of the outside world which may form its conclusions from an examination of the horses recently purchased in the city for Lord Strathcona's contingent."

In the House of Commons, Dr. J.G. Rutherford, the Member of Parliament for MacDonald, Manitoba said: "The prices offered by Dr. McEachran in the Northwest Territories are such as to make it quite possible in fact probable, that he will not be able to secure what he wants."

Support for McEachran came from an unexpected source. The *MacLeod Gazette* said that the purchased horses were a "good, clean serviceable bunch" and that it was to be expected that a few of them might not be up to scratch. On March 2, 1900 Mr. Wood said,

"They may not be the standard of English army cavalry horse, but Dr. McEachran, we are quite sure, whatever anybody else may have stated, never suggested that he wanted horses of that type. What he wanted was a number of the ordinary saddle horses, common to the ranching country; horses that may not be paragons of beauty but which are tough as they make them; and certainly, in so far as this part of the country is concerned, he got what he wanted . . . The horses taken are for the use of Mounted Infantry, a fact that seems to have been overlooked by the Doctor's opponents, they are not intended for a cavalry regiment . . ."

The *Gazette* also pointed out that every person selling a horse to Dr. McEachran was required to sign a document testifying to the age and general soundness of the horse. If it was true that the horsemen of Calgary had sold McEachran nothing but old nags, then they had all perpetrated a fraud in signing those documents.

Dr. McEachran retired from professional life in 1909, to import and breed Clydesdale horses on his model stock farm at Ormstown, Quebec. He died there on October 13, 1924.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express her gratitude to N.O. Nielsen, Dean, Western College of Veterinary Medicine, without whose continuing encouragement and support this study would not have been possible.

REFERENCES

1. BROWN, D.E. The Cochrane Ranch. Alberta Historical Review. Vol. 4. No. 4: 3-8. 1956.
2. KELLY, L.V. The Range Men. p. 209. Toronto: Wm. Briggs. 1913.
3. MCEACHRAN, D.M. Impressions of Pioneers, of Alberta as a Ranching Country, Commencing 1881. Published in booklet form. File, Glenbow-Alberta Institute.
4. MCEACHRAN, D.M. A Journey Over the Plains, From Fort Benton to Bow River and Back. Reprinted in booklet form from The Gazette, Montreal. November, 1881. File, Glenbow-Alberta Institute.
5. MCEACHRAN, D.M. The MacLeod Gazette, July 11, 1888.
6. MCTAVISH, A. and C. REILLY. Frank White's Diary. Canadian Cattlemen. Vol. 18. No. 3 and Vol. 18. No. 4: 18-21. 1955.
7. ROBERTS, S.L. The Cochrane Ranch. Canadian Cattlemen. Vol. 18. No. 3. 1955.
8. WOOD, C.E.D. Our Financial Giant. The MacLeod Gazette. July 18, 1888.
9. WOOD, C.E.D. The MacLeod Gazette. July 4, 1888.
10. WOOD, C.E.D. The MacLeod Gazette. August 16, 1888.
11. WOOD, C.E.D. The Quarantine. The MacLeod Gazette. November 1, 1888.
12. WOOD, C.E.D. Dr. McEachran's Interview. The MacLeod Gazette. November 8, 1888.
13. BLACKLEG. Circular from the Department of Agriculture. The MacLeod Gazette. January 17, 1889.
14. THE MACLEOD GAZETTE. June 16, 1899.

BOOK REVIEW

Vertebrate Limb and Somite Morphogenesis.
Edited by D.A. Ede, J.R. Hinchcliffe and M. Balls. Published by Cambridge University Press, New York. 1977. 498 pages. Price \$39.50.

This book contains the Proceedings from the Third Symposium Meeting of the British Society for Developmental Biology which was held in the Zoology Department of the University of Glasgow in September 1976. Twenty three of the twenty nine chapters are devoted to an exhaustive analysis of limb development; the remainder partially describes the present knowledge on the mechanisms of development of the axial skeleton.

During the last twenty years embryologists have greatly increased their knowledge of the mechanisms by which genes control cell differentiation, but they know much less about how the shape of organs and structures, their relative sizes and their spatial organization are controlled during development. The limb bud appears to be an ideal system for the investigation of these interesting problems. Starting as a simple primordium formed by a mesodermic core surrounded by a thin ectoderm, the limb is capable of transforming through autonomous differentiation into a complex organization with numerous skeletal pieces and muscles arranged in constant patterns. It has been found that the primitive limb contains "organizing zones" which are capable of controlling, or, at least influencing, the evolution of the whole limb. Thirteen chapters of this book discuss in detail the experimental evidence indicating how two of these

organizing zones ("apical ectodermal ridge" and "zone of polarizing activity") are capable of influencing the orientation, spatial distribution and rate of growth of the various limb components. These chapters are written by members of different research groups involved in the development of these fields, and the reader thus can analyze, side by side, conflicting evidences and points of view.

A few chapters analyze, although only partially, the mechanisms controlling cartilage differentiation in the limb and there are some contributions to the field of limb regeneration. The discussions are by no means exhaustive, but they are of interest. Most of the material in the book is based on experiments performed with the avian limb bud, but a few pages of amphibian and mammalian material help to illustrate that evidence found in chick embryos is applicable to other vertebrate groups.

The research on the mechanisms of differentiation of the axial skeleton is at present comparatively meagre and is reviewed in the last five chapters. Although this aspect is only peripherally connected to the problem of limb morphogenesis, its inclusion in the book is of interest since reviews on the subject are not available.

The book has been very well edited and researchers and students interested in experimental embryology will find great pleasure reading it. The experience will be especially profitable to those readers who already have some basic knowledge in developmental biology. *R. Narbaiz.*