This method encouraged the men on the railroad lands to break up the land and farm it, and produce freight for the railroad to handle, which was of importance to the railroad company, in order to show the financiers of the East that the railroad traversed a rich country which would afford traffic sufficient to produce profits on its investment. The plan worked out to full realization for the railroad company, and it was not long until all its lands were sold and the wheat came into the loading stations so fast that they were unable to take care of it for want of cars and elevators. The railroad company then arranged with elevator companies to build elevators, and gave them preference over track-buyers and flat-houses by declining to furnish the latter with cars, and thus forced the wheat into the elevators. This was a justifiable proposition, probably, from the standpoint of the railroad company, but it was a bitter pill for the grain growers to swallow, and led to a strife between the farmers and the railroad company. The farmers finally made their demand a State issue, resulting in legislative enactments tending to relieve the conditions and to establish the principle of State control of railroads, which recently has been confirmed to the fullest extent by the United States Supreme Court.

It is interesting to recall the stages of development of this great Valley. First, we find it a stock country, necessarily so on account of the natural conditions. Transportation was of the crudest kind, mostly by ox teams over poor roads and across unbridged streams. The early settler lived snugly along the river bank, well sheltered by tall timber, in which he had a cluster of log buildings, used as dwelling and stables. He had a large herd of fat, sleek cattle, fed exclusively on prairie hay, which had been gathered on the vast unsettled prairie with a hand scythe and pitchfork, and which, possibly on account of its having been produced on virgin soil, may have contained a large amount of nutrition, which enabled the cattle to grow fat on it to the exclusion of other food. Unrestricted freedom was enjoyed by the pioneer; there was no encroachment by near neighbors and he had unlimited range for his cattle in summer time, with abundance of timber for building and for fire-wood. These were comforts which to some degree overcame the many hardships of the Red River Valley pioneer.

Then a change came. The prairie began to be settled and opportunities for raising stock began to diminish. Claim shanties began to appear on former meadows and pasture lands. Soon there were seen men driving two ox teams abreast before a breaking plow, turning down the green grass and turning up the black soil, making a field at the best rate of speed then known. Then some lands would be fenced, and soon the hitherto bleak expanse was dotted with shacks and well covered by fenced fields.

These conditions produced two classes of farmers—those who wanted an open range, and those who wanted each one to pasture his own cattle. This question was at one time a burning one in this community, and a spirited election to decide it was once held in the town of Vineland, as there was at that time local option by the towns on such questions. The party that favored pasture law was defeated, greatly to their disappointment, as they were anxious to extend their wheat fields. When the next Legislature passed a herd law for the State, there were those who attributed it to the railroad company, which, they said, was encouraging the grain growing to the greatest extent possible. This State herd law removed one of the main barriers of progress to the prairie farmers. The stock man adjusted himself to the new conditions, and soon the railroad companies were flooded with wheat; and then they began to agitate for more stock raising by the farmers. This is a question which still puzzles many wise heads, and is yet to be adjusted, according to professional critics, in a better manner than now prevalent.

DRAINAGE AN IMPORTANT FEATURE OF DEVELOPMENT.

Drainage became of utmost importance, especially so in the southeastern part of the county. The Sand Hill River lost itself on the flat country near Beltrami,