

The Mail Bag

THE BEAUTIES OF PROTECTION

Editor, Guide:—Just in the heat of your Mail Bag discussion of the tariff the Octopus has thrown out his tentacles and drawn me into contact with protection and given a demonstration of its beatitudes which I think will add a little zest to the discussion. The facts and incidents are as follows: A certain homesteader living in my immediate vicinity and with whom I am well acquainted, lost his whole crop of wheat and oats by the hail storm of the 13th of last August. Brave and energetic, he did not whine or pine, but set about the preparations for a crop for this year and plowed down his hail-damaged grain, disced and harrowed the ground in good shape for it. This spring he borrowed money and bought seed wheat and put in the 80 acres of prepared land and Dame Nature, supplementing his noble, manly efforts, he has a fine field of wheat which promises comfort to him, his patient wife and five bright little girls. His homestead is not the best, but his untiring energy is making vast improvements on it, and he has taken off some three or four hundred loads of stone, piling them up in out-of-the-way places and using many of them to beautify his home surroundings by curbing his driveway and walks with those of suitable size. Along these walks and drives chrysanthemums, petunias, balsams, poppies and pansies turn up their bright faces to gladden the hearts of the little girls as they come home from school and to welcome the chance calling neighbor or stranger, while in the lawn, which is covered with a fine carpet of Kentucky bluegrass, beds of portulaca and verbena, lend their bright tints to the peaceful beauties of this home. The ninth of this month the sister of this homesteader's wife, whose husband is a merchant at Omaha, Nebraska, and well to do, arrived in this home for a visit, but her trunk did not come on the train with her. Day after day they went to the station for the trunk but none came. The station agent finally wired an inquiry and learned that it was at North Battleford in bond for customs. Scared and confused the two sisters took the morning train to Battleford to open that trunk and display its contents for inspection, that somebody might be protected against this visiting smuggler. Now the natural impulse of family affection prompted the two brothers and this visiting sister,—all of whom live at Omaha and are prosperous,—to buy and place in this trunk various gifts for the members of this homesteader's family, and knowing the circumstances, they selected their gifts along practical lines, as the list will show, to wit: Two percola shirts for the homesteader, valued at 75c each, \$1.50; taxed 35 per cent, or 51½¢ (to brace up his patriotism?); 28 yards gingham for dresses for the mother and little girls, valued at 6c per yard, \$1.68; taxed at 35 per cent, or 58¢ (to warm his sympathies for Canadian-made goods, eh, Mr. Robertson); 14 yards Galatea cloth, valued at 15c per yard, \$2.10; taxed at 35 per cent, or 73½¢ (to keep the devil out of Canada, I suppose, according to James Milliken); 50 yards muslin for sweepstake purposes, valued at 5c per yard, \$2.50; taxed at 35 per cent, or 87½¢ (in order that Canada may "achieve industrial supremacy," as per J. S. Willison, eh?); 48 yards of calico at 6c per yard, \$2.88, taxed at 35 per cent, or \$1.00 (on account of this homesteader's contribution to patriotism and the 2,600 manufacturers who can bring half of the population of Canada to the verge of starvation at will); one 5-lb. box of candy, valued at 20c per lb., \$1.00, tax-

ed at 35 per cent, or 35c (to fence out the annexation carnivora that is prowling about south of the line); 1 corset, valued at \$1.00 (which the visiting lady brought for her own use in case a steel should break in the one she was wearing yet, as it was not laced, although the lady insisted it was for her own use and would be taken back when she returned to the States in three weeks or less), the inspector insisted on its being listed for customs and collected a tax of 35 per cent, or 35c (so that the surplus help loafing about here in the West in forced idleness may find remunerative employment, according to J. S. Willison); lastly these kindly disposed brothers and sister thoughtfully put in twelve spools of thread for the sewing of these goods and the inspector required them to be listed and valued them at 50c per dozen for customs and taxed them 17½¢, so as to make the thread sew better, I suppose. Summed up, this homesteader was compelled by this great (?) national policy of protection to pay the sum of four dollars and sixty cents on goods he did not feel able to buy and which were given to him and his family by those whose hearts were tender towards them on account of their misfortune and necessities. Now, to collect this four dollars and sixty cents it took two collectors four days—the one sitting straddle of the trunk to keep this smuggler from getting it out of their reach and the other looking up the prices in the various lists covering these lines of goods which, at the wages of ordinary farm hands would be \$9.50 apiece per day or \$20.00. Thus by this system the people have been bled for \$15.50 more than they got; the homesteader has been bled for \$4.60, while two women have been scared, humiliated and worried almost to prostration that someone who is engaged in a certain line of production may levy an increased price on his products. Mr. Protectionist, how does this smell? No use to say it's a fake. I've got a carbon copy of the list with the collector's receipt and signature right here on my desk and was in Battleford with the sisters the day they opened the trunk. If this doesn't nauseate you take a look at a great government violating the privacy of trunks, grips and traveling bags, treating all and sundry as though they were thieves; peeping into mails and tainting gifts of friendship and benevolence with a tax, a tribute levied on seven millions of persons that 2,600 manufacturers may live off this extensively rotten blood money. This is not an "economic question" soaring among the stars and confusing by the juggling of figures and so-called statistics, and consequently out of reach of and worrying to the common mind. It is a concrete example of the dirtiness of the blood money system. But then riches, prosperity are very desirable things, and since 35 per cent, is making us rich and prosperous—what's the matter with making it a 1,000 per cent, and all get rich in a hurry?

READER.

Maymont, Sask.

ACTUAL FARMING IN ENGLAND

Editor, Guide:—In your issue of July 31 I notice a letter, the effort of Mr. J. Robertson, Bradwell, Sask., which being so remarkable a conglomeration of delusions, calls for a correction. Mr. Robertson states that farmers in the United States and Canada are very well off indeed, "if not actually rich." Further, he states English farmers would be better off under protection in England. I farmed in England sixty acres and paid as much in rent for one year as would buy an improved quarter section in Canada. Is it any wonder that Canadians, unfettered by rent, rates and taxes can do better than the English farmer? When a man can get 160 acres of land free and has a little capital to work it, is the credit due to protection that a man gets on? He states also that if the English farmer had his wish free trade would be doomed. I would like Mr. Robertson to take a trip to England and see for him-

self whether his statement holds weight. I have in England friends who are farming there who are staunch free traders and recall with horror the "black days of the forties" when protection cursed the land and the workingman ate barley bread. According to Mr. Robertson many farmers have been ruined through free trade. Also, only the monied ones and the energetic held out. From actual association I am able to say the monied ones are certainly not energetic, and I doubt if one of them knows how to handle a plow. All they do is grind a man down to work for \$2 a week and supply him with a small pig sty to live in, and if they feel inclined, give him a rabbit occasionally. These are the monied ones who keep a man down and it is little wonder that they hold out and manage to find enough to spend a season in London. If these men were allowed their own way, we should have protection in England, then the English tenant farmer would be ruined. He remarks that the price of landed property has been dropping steadily for a long time. From recent accounts I have seen landed property in England is higher than ever, and should Mr. Robertson desire proofs I can furnish same. In conclusion, I would like to add that free trade is for the people and protection only protects the monied ones. If we had free trade in Canada we should be able to live at half the cost and better stuff at that, but the capitalist benevolent society says no, buy made-in-Canada rubbish and be patriotic. If this is being a patriot, I do not think a lot of Canadian patriotism. If Mr. Robertson would just sum up just how much he pays for protection by buying made-in-Canada goods he would find he paid more than \$200 per year in tariff taxes. Protection is a fallacy and of no benefit to the farmers of the workingman, and I would advise Mr. Robertson to wake up and read a little more, then he would not waste his own time or other people's by writing such statements, which are obviously ridiculous and utterly lacking in common sense. I agree with the editor that there are thousands who can answer Mr. Robertson's letter, and what is more, give facts which no protectionist living can do. I will conclude with one more argument. Would an English farmer under free trade, with 160 acres of land free in England, be able to compete with Canadian farmers? There is no doubt that it is not protection but the monied ones who make a man pay \$10 an acre rent that burdens the English farmer. If the protectionist enthusiasts were to decrease the rent English farmers would be even with Canadians.

R. J. MESSENGER.

Wadena, Sask.

FARMING CONDITIONS IN ENGLAND

Editor, Guide:—In answer to Mr. Robertson's letter I wish to say that up till last April I was a property owner in England. I had 11½ acres of land there which I paid £400 for, and last April I sold it for £500 which goes to show that all land in England has not gone down in valuation. But where I was born, in Leicestershire, England, there were a few farmers with the same idea as Mr. Robertson who were farming rented land but their ideas don't remain with the working class. Because quite a few of the land owners are sportsmen they reserve the right to shoot all the game which the farmer feeds and raises on the rented land. And Mr. Farmer has the honor of going to the shoot and driving up the game which should belong to him, for the landlord to kill. When the sports and killing of the game are finished Mr. Farmer is invited to go to dinner with the landlord about once a year. This is intended for a school to show Mr. Farmer how he is to vote. Mr. Landlord requires all his renters to vote as he votes. Most of these landlords are Tories and the renters have to be Tories, so that they can be slaves for the landowners. When a person tries to rent land he is asked how he votes and if he votes as his landlord

he often passes his qualifications to become a slave. Now Mr. Robertson's letter shows me he is one of this class, as his argument is a disgrace to an Englishman.

Now we will deal with protection. What is protection? It is the Godfather to graft legislation which gives one class of people a lawful right to steal from another class of people. I believe in free trade and in free men, also. I don't believe in masters and slaves. I believe in direct taxation. A man would know then what he was paying, but Mr. Robertson today doesn't know what he is paying. I would be pleased for him to tell the rest of the farmers through The Guide.

Now my father is farming in England under free trade and when he got married 37 years ago he did not have sufficient capital to buy a table to eat from and they got along with a bacon packing case. Today, he is not rich, but I believe he has got £2,000. If space would allow I would show that protection was digging its own grave and the sooner it is buried the better off Mr. Robertson would be.

WM. TRACEY.

Dundurn.

MILITARISM A MENACE TO PEACE

Editor, Guide:—Your editorial note to J. M. C.'s letter in your issue of August 7 is very good and quite true as far as it goes, but it is only a sweeping dictum like its antithesis, "If you wish for peace prepare for war," and I think that the present occasion demands a more searching analysis and keener criticism of the question of militarism. J. M. C. represents a certain type of mind nurtured on the ethics of paganism, a type that is still too common even in Canada, the nation of the twentieth century. And we have got to reckon with J. M. C. and to reason with him. And when J. M. C. places a signet before us and calls it a fact we should ask for proof. J. M. C. says that it is a recognized fact by all thinking men and statesmen that the greatest safeguard of peace a country can have is to be prepared for war. Now, it is a fact well known in Canada that thinking men and statesmen believe the direct opposite; for there is a certain treaty made by statesmen and gloried in by all thinking men, which provides that neither fortress nor warship shall desecrate the boundary between us and the United States. We might ask J. M. C. whether he conscientiously believes that we could have enjoyed a hundred years of peace if each of these two nations had been preparing itself to repel an attack from the other? Would some blatant Sam Hughes or some intriguing Dr. Jamieson not have stirred up strife or made a raid, if they could muster a big enough band of trained manslayers to back them? Another question also occurs to us: If there is security only in trained battalions and dreadnought ships, what of the nations that cannot boast of either? Or, is there a case in history of any civilized nation that was conquered because it did not fight?

Ask any citizen of any nation why he supports an army and navy, and the invariable answer will be, "for defense." Now ask yourself who is the offender? Then follow up to the logical conclusion: It is because we are all on the defensive that the fight is inevitable. The man who is wise enough to throw away his club and put on a smile will thereby become safe from attack. There is not much use placing Christian truths before a pagan, even should the pagan wear a priestly stole or preach from a Christian pulpit, but I would like to remind any sincere Christian who happens to read this that Christ only taught in accord with reason and experience when He said that "the meek shall inherit the earth," and that "they who take the sword shall perish by the sword." J. M. C. claims that there is lack of discipline among the boys of the West. Now, what is discipline? Essentially, discipline is obedience to one's teacher. The Western boys and

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NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

This Department of The Guide is maintained especially for the purpose of providing a discussion ground for the readers where they may freely exchange views and derive from each other the benefits of experience and helpful suggestions. Every letter must be signed by the name of the writer, though not necessarily for publication. The views of our correspondents are not of necessity those of The Guide.

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