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The Brain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 16, 1917

THE WHOLESALERS' STATEMENT

The most economical distribution of merchandise has been a serious and complicated problem in Western Canada for years. It seems to be losing none of that seriousness and, judging by the agitation prevalent today, especially within the trade itself, the position would seem to be more unsatisfactory than ever before. The suspicions of the public, evidenced by the demand for investigations into the methods of the whole distributing fraternity have not been allayed and the public still believes that this fraternity does not recognize or fulfill its proper duties to the consumer. The public generally has come to regard the middleman as the agent of the producer, instead of the long arm or chief helper of the consumer, endeavoring in every way to give the most efficient service to that consumer. The failure of the middleman to show to the consumer that he is giving the proper service, has led to new methods and innovations. Hence we have the mail order house, co-operative buying by the farmers, and now co-operative buying by the retailer. Recently there has been a belief among the wholesale men that they were being subjected to a larger share of the blame than they should be asked to assume, and they have protested. They have made a statement of the merchandising situation in the West as seen by a representative wholesaler. This statement is appearing in this and next week's issue of The Guide. It is the first statement of its kind to be made by the wholesale trade to the consumer in a Canadian farm journal. It deals with the relation of the retailer to the farmer, co-operative buying by the farmer, co-operative buying by the retailer, mail order houses, the banks and cash and credit systems. There will undoubtedly be wide diversions of opinion from that expressed by Mr. Pigott in these articles, but all concerned will be given an opportunity, after reading both articles, to express opinions on this matter. Hence it is the duty of all to study this problem, and give through The Guide to the public the full benefit of their experiences and opinions on this important question.

WHERE CORN IS KING

The experience of practical farmers shows that corn for fodder or ensilage purposes can be grown successfully in the three prairie provinces. That is made clear by the contributions on the subject published elsewhere in this issue of The Guide. In the movement towards mixed farming, which will proceed still more rapidly in the future than it has in the past, this is an important consideration. As a source of succulent feed so necessary in keeping cattle thrifty throughout the long period of winter feeding, corn is king wherever it can be grown successfully. In Ontario, for example, corn ensilage is largely taking the place of roots for this purpose. It can be grown cheaper and with less labor in the growing, harvesting and feeding seasons. In fact, it has in the West the advantage realized by these practical farmers, that it gives, at least in part, the purposes of a fallow, thus overcoming that serious objection to the summer fallow—the loss of a season's crop. The thorough cultivation necessary for corn growing, and the shading of the soil from the sun, serves to conserve moisture and thus partly counterbalances the loss of moisture taken for the production of the crop. The extent to which a corn crop can be used as a substitute for the summer fallow is worthy of an experiment on each farm. One good point concerning experiments of this nature when conducted by practical

farmers is that they also serve for demonstration purposes in the neighborhood.

SOME WAR ECONOMICS

Most people fail to realize that Canada and indeed nearly all the countries at war are riding on the crest of a great economic boom. This boom is of that peculiar and subtle character only true of war prosperity. It has stimulated the agricultural, commercial and industrial life of all nations by the creation of new and insatiable markets for both labor and the products of labor. Every war has shown the same result, but this one is on such an enormously greater scale that it resembles a great fire with a world-wide sweep and a degree of heat intensity never before approached. The wholesale destruction of the world's stored up capital now proceeding at such a fearful rate, and which normally goes to open up new enterprises and create new demands for labor must have very serious after effects. So far as material benefit is concerned, the capital expended for war by all the nations might as well be dumped into the Atlantic Ocean. Fortunately there must come an end to this expenditure, but at the same time there must come a total reconstruction in industrial and commercial activity. Many industries devoting all their energies to the production of war materials will be obliged to find new markets almost completely, while all industries that have thrived upon the war will be obliged to make great changes in their methods of operation. Every country engaged, and especially those that have not paid a large part of their expenditure by taxes as they proceeded will be under most serious financial obligations. They will have enormous interest bills and pension bills which can only be paid by heavy taxes, and their productive power will be impaired through such great losses of their best men. The great number of returning soldiers and the army of workers set free from war industries which will be closed down, must lead to chaotic labor conditions. The result must be lower expenditures with a much lower standard of living than is now generally experienced. The demand now prevalent for many luxuries must disappear and hence also the industries that supply that demand. Industries which catered to this class of trade before the war will be greatly handicapped as will many establishments of a highly specialized nature. Those countries that have reached the highest pitch of industrial production and the greatest industrial specialization will probably have the greatest after-war difficulties. Conversely, those countries chiefly concerned with the production of the necessities of life should find the readiest markets and the least upheaval in conditions. This is where Canada will have distinct advantages. Such markets cannot be expected to continue unusually good for any long period, but perhaps for long enough to enable the necessary industrial reconstruction to be made on a fairly satisfactory basis. Production at the lowest cost will be imperative, however, so that prices may be kept down to enable us to sell and not to be sold to. Thus we can have no excuse for artificially inflating prices of the products of labor by the supposed aids of tariffs if we hope to develop into a country of real agricultural and industrial importance.

WAR DEBTS AND FISCAL POLICIES

The finances of the war are staggering in their magnitude. Bonar Law states that the daily expenditure of Great Britain is now \$37,250,000. Advances to the Allies and to the Dominions average about \$10,000,000 a day.

The United States is making arrangement for the advance of \$400,000,000 a month to the Allies, besides her own war appropriations. At the end of the present fiscal year, Canada's war debt, according to Sir Thomas White, will have grown to \$1,300,000,000. The governments of the other allied countries are making equally heavy sacrifices, while the Central Powers are probably exceeding them. The human race is exhausting its resources in the war. The price the world is paying on account of Prussian militarism in material wealth, to say nothing of the number of lives offered up, will burden it for decades. But, no matter what the cost, Prussian militarism must be destroyed. The peoples of the allied countries will cheerfully assume whatever obligations are necessary to attain that end. The obligations assumed, however, will be so great as to warrant a careful searching into the methods used for producing revenue, to see that they are being discharged in the most economical way. With the present marvellously developed systems of wealth production, it would not take long to materially reduce the war debt if the resources of the nations were brought to bear on the reduction of the debt with the same efficiency that they are now being brought to bear in incurring it. In practical politics this question resolves itself into a matter of taxation. Fiscal systems by which four dollars is extracted from productive industry in order to produce one dollar of revenue are altogether inadequate for the rapid reduction of the huge war debt. In Canada the substitution for such a system of one under which the revenue produced would somewhat approximate the burden of the tax imposed would be equivalent to reducing the war debt by more than half. If productive industry were relieved from the burden of paying toll to privileged interests it could soon dispose of the public debt, enormous though it will be.

HONOR AND CAMPAIGN FUNDS

In no way does the standard of political morality in Canada stand more in need of amendment than in matters relating to the handling of campaign funds. The consciences of our public men and of the electorate generally need educating as to what constitutes personal dishonor in the handling of these funds. Investigation after investigation bears witness that public men do not consider their connection with the money contributed by the interests for the express purpose of defrauding the public as implying any personal stain on their character. Many who would cut off their right hand rather than touch bribe money do not hesitate to administer party funds which they know have been contributed with the object of effecting legislation in the interests of special classes. In this they are supported by large numbers of electors. Because they have not allowed themselves to become enriched through their connection with such funds, it is accounted unto them for righteousness. Even with the most unscrupulous of politicians, if it can be proved by investigation that they have not profited personally, they are looked upon as having more or less exonerated themselves no matter to what extent they have corrupted public affairs in exchange for contributions to the party war chest. There can be no justification for a standard of political morality that fails to safeguard the rights of the people from being bartered away for contributions to campaign funds. Both politicians and the electors must be educated up to the fact that it is just as personally dishonorable to connive in the dissipation of public rights and property in return for political assistance, as