THE MAIL BAG

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. Each correspondent should remember that there are hundreds who wish to discuss a problem or offer suggestions. We cannot publish all the immense number of letters received and ask that each correspondent will keep his letter as short as possible. 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. The aim is to make this department of great value to readers and no letters out of public interest will be published.

LAMB VERSUS STEEL

Editor, GUIDE:—In yours of the 11th May is a letter from Mr. Geo. Steel, M.P.P., of Glenboro, demanding that I show him that government owned and operated elevators would be a paying proposition for the government. Now, I could not show him that government ownership of elevators in competition with privately owned elevators would produce enough revenue to pay interest on investment and running expenses. An elevator of any kind would produce no revenue unless the people patronized it, and no person could just say where the people are going to store their grain. But it is labor applied to land that produces all the revenue now, the revenues obtained by governments and the revenues obtained by the private ownership of elevators. The labor of the people is the source of these two varieties of revenue. If all the revenues went to the government then the government would be able to remit the innumerable other tax burdens that it now lays on our backs. Surely people would patronize an elevator that they themselves owned in preference to one owned by private corporations. Surely they would rather run the stream of revenues from elevators into the public till than into the private pockets of others. And if they haven't sense enough to see this point, then it might be that government owned elevators in competition with privately owned elevators would not pay.

Government ownership of elevators is not the solution of the economic problem but it is a step towards that solution. There are many businesses that the government might easily take over instead of "farming out" those businesses to private parties as now—businesses that are practical monopolies. It makes a great difference whether revenues are going into the public treasury to help pay public expenses, or whether revenues are going into private pockets to build up a class that prey and plunder on the great wealth producing masses. And it is the business of the government and their solemn duty to prevent any one class or any one man from hurting any other man or set of men. Governments are intended to promote peace, justice, security of life and prosperity among people; not to make laws and regulations that allow and protect one class to plunder and rob other classes. One class or set of people cannot be very rich unless we have others very poor. One cannot "get" without earning unless many others "earn" without "getting." One man cannot get a pile unless others work and make that pile for him. The rights of labor are the rights of property because all property is the result of labor and under a just government those who work most would have most. This is the sum and substance of what Mr. Steel terms "My sympathy with labor and laborers." He represents a constituency of labor and laborers, and therefore, as a public man representing such people, should be far more interested in "labor and laborers" than I am. Labor has cleared the forests, broken up the prairies, erected all the buildings, produced all the crops, hauled all of them market, built the elevators, the railroads, the stations, mined the coal, fired the locomotives, turned on and off the brakes, in short, labor has done all that is done and the people whom it represents have done their share, and if justice prevailed, then the laborers everywhere would have big bank accounts. But they haven't. Surely here is a problem for statesmanship, and it is to our public men that we must look for solutions of these problems and for protection to the rights of labor, the oldest of human rights, but a right that apparently has been lost sight of in our greedy chase after dollars sweated out of the people.

Now, since Mr. Steel is not in favor of government elevators as a step in the direction of securing to labor the fruits of toil, will he, as a public man, be good enough to let us know what measures he does favor with that end in view.

In securing justice to others, we assure justice to ourselves and to our children, honorable alike in what we give and in what we receive.

W. D. LAMB.

Plumas, Man.

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MORE ROOM FOR INQUIRY

Editor, GUIDE:—Seeing an article in THE GUIDE regarding bulls running at large I thought I would express an opinion on the subject and say that I am right with the writer. The law at present is rotten; simply useless, and I am not afraid of my neighbors either. Nor am I afraid to tell our Live Stock Commissioner that quite a number of the farmers will expect him to do his best to see that we get a law that will prevent bulls running at large. We want no half hearted support from the Commissioner or the Minister of Agriculture. We want the goods and I think both are capable of delivering them.

THE GUIDE has published the story of the elevator robberies. More power to your pen. Now find out why the companies that were fined last year for selling short binder twine didn't meet with publicity. It seems to me that unless the name is published they can afford to pay the fine and still make money according to the figures in THE GUIDE, which is good enough for me.

D. G. MARKLE.

Lamont, Alta.

NOTE.—The only way that authoratitive figures on the elevator graft were secured was through a government investigation. These investigations are hard to get, but usually produce results. Their scope should be extended.—ED.

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OUR TARIFF TROUBLES.

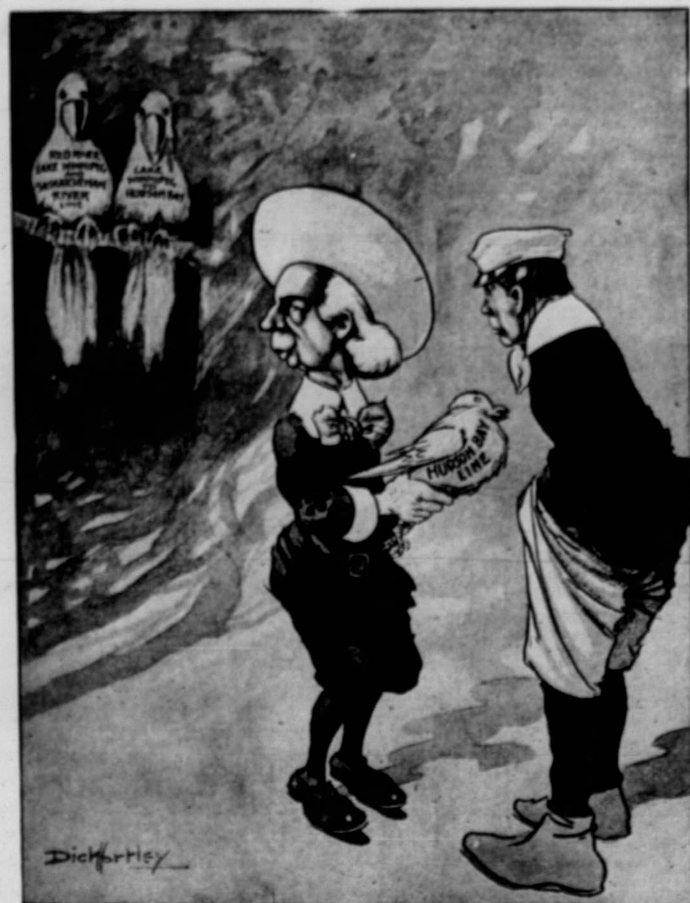
Editor, GUIDE:—In approaching this question which the GUIDE has justly described as a matter of more importance to the farmers of this country than to any other class, it is well to assume a somewhat judicial attitude and weigh the pros and cons of the case very carefully to avoid faulty conclusions. This matter, like any other, has two sides though we farmers are tempted to doubt this at times. The extreme views have both been admirably dealt with by Mr. Langley and Mr. Kirkham, the first named having presented the gospel of retaliation and the latter that of the extreme free trader. Now, somewhere between those two lies that compromise of conflicting interests which is the foundation of most legislation. Let us look first at retaliation from the manufacturers' standpoint and then look from the farmers.'

The manufacturers, through their powerful association, present their case to the government something like this: "The manufacturers of the country are investing their capital in industries which, when developed, will give this country a greater place among the nations in many ways, and unless protected by a tariff, cannot make headway by reason of the fact that manufacturers in the republic to the south can dump upon our markets the articles we are manufacturing at a lower price than we can sell them." This is possible for the reason that the United States have attained an economy in production impossible for us at present. Also the business which is necessary to carry on the business of the country would benefit by retaliation at the expense of the manufacturers of other countries. Another point which the manufacturers make is the one that Mr. Langley deals with referring to the fact that the United States taxes imports from Canada heavily and that we should hit back.

The farmers as a class love to fight and the retaliation cry is bound to find followers among them. The thinkers, however, represented by the Grain Growers' Association, are forced to the conclusion that the manufacturers would do the retaliating, but the consumer, usually of the farming class, will have to pay the piper. The curse of the whole question lies right here, in the fact that in spite of the present tariff, American articles can be purchased in Canada, after paying an import duty, as cheaply in most cases as Canadian manufactured articles. This shows, generally at any rate, that if the import duty on a certain article is twenty per cent. the Canadian Manufacturer of that article, tacks twenty-five per cent. on to the sellng price of his product, thus forcing the consumer to pay, not only the retaliatory tariff, which goes to the revenue, but also an unjust profit to the home manufacturer, when home products are purchased. If any proof of this is needed let the farmer figure on his machinery, comparing the figures of the Canadian and the United States implements. In many cases a magnifying glass would be necessary to detect the difference.

Does free trade offer a remedy? Under present world conditions, No. Any country brave enough to take the plunge would undoubtedly suffer at the hands of the highly protected countries each of which have natural and economic advantages along certain lines of manufacture which would enable them to cripple that particular industry in a Free Trade country. No, unless almost the whole world adopted Free Trade there is little hope for Canada along that line. Then again, the whole financial fabric of the administration would have to be re-constructed if Free Trade were introduced. We must not forget that a large share of the cost of running this or any protected country, is derived from import duties and if these were abolished that money would have to be raised by direct taxation. Although many of us belive heartily in the latter principle we must admit that the masses are not yet educated up to it.

What is the remedy? The first is an ideal, probably impracticable, but none the less a solution if means can be found to enforce it. The farmers of this country would be willing to consent to protect the industries if the latter would sell their products at a fair profit instead of tacking on the import duty, or part of it, as at present. Thus would producers and consumers be working together for the good of all. But, alas, for the ideal. Human selfishness is not likely to allow it to come to pass and therefore we must pass on to a sterner measure and that is reciprocity. The question was asked at the Prince Albert convention, why the Canadian Government did not accept the United States offer of Free Trade in agricultural implements, and the answer is, that the manufacturers' association proved to the government that, as the United States harvest is earlier than ours our markets would be flooded with cheap United States implements under reciprocal Free Trade, the United States manufacturers preferring to sell a little cheaper than hold over for a year. The farmers of this country, working out their own salvation through the Grain Growers' Association must fight the other interetss with their own weapons and so bring pressure to bear on the government along the line of reciprocity which is the only practical remedy in sight at present. We are told that the tariff is a dead issue but the answer to this is that the united



"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"

Wilfrid:—I think I'll let this one go and get after the big ones.
Little Boy West:—Oh no! this is the one you promised me, and I want it.