

The Brain Growers' Guide

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INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION

The resolution which came before the Brandon convention in favor of independent political candidates in support of a Free Trade policy was merely the expression of a very wide spread feeling thruout the prairie provinces. The Free Trade movement in these provinces has been growing in strength for a number of years and is certain to continue to grow until some relief is secured from the oppressive burden which the protective tariff places upon the Western farmer. The situation has been clearly placed before the Ottawa Governments of both political parties many times and the only proposition for relief that has ever been made was the Reciprocity Agreement of unfortunate memory. It should not be forgotten that the Reciprocity Agreement provided only for free exchange of natural products, but, with one or two minor exceptions, gave no relief whatever in the taxation on manufactured goods. The protective system was established and is maintained for the purpose of allowing Canadian manufacturers to charge a higher price for their products, and incidentally to secure revenue for the public treasury. It has been repeatedly declared and never disproven that on manufactured goods the amount of duty collected by the government is about a quarter of the actual taxation which the protective system places upon the Canadian consumers. Every farmer in Western Canada who reads or thinks is well aware that the protective system is taxing him on practically every article that he has to purchase for use upon his farm or in his home.

Despite the fact that the Free Trade movement has been spreading and growing thruout the West the protective tariff burden has been increased instead of decreased and the members of the House of Commons from the prairie provinces, with few exceptions, have done but little in protest against this heavy burden upon their constituents. It is quite natural that the farmers should desire more definite action. At the next general election there will be 43 members elected from the prairie provinces, and in at least 36 of these seats the rural vote will be a majority. If even 20 bona-fide Free Trade candidates could be elected at the next election there would be a mighty force for Free Trade. Year by year the demand for a third party, or independent party or something similar, grows stronger in the West. It comes up for discussion at the annual conventions and in the local associations. An error, however, is being made in attempting to convert the farmers' associations into political organizations. It would be most undesirable even if it were possible to turn the farmers' organizations into political parties. These organizations all have their work to do in education, organization and commerce and it would be a very dangerous matter to force them into the political field. In fact such a proposition must not be considered seriously. But nevertheless political action is necessary and can be carried on without interference with or danger to the organization.

The biggest question in the West today is that of Free Trade and we believe that the organization of a Free Trade League would provide the opportunity for the educational work on this great reform and also the opportunity for political action whenever it was deemed necessary or wise. A Free Trade League might be established with central headquarters in charge of a paid secretary from which office might be distributed propaganda literature to be placed in the hands of every voter in the prairie provinces. It would be quite possible to establish branches in each of the large cities and towns and if at any time it was desired to put candidates in the field

headquarters for the league might be opened in each federal constituency. The farmers of the West realize the protective burden sufficiently that we believe they would contribute freely to a Free Trade fund so that there would be no difficulty in raising \$10,000 or \$15,000 per year to carry on the work. This does not represent by any means the full force of the movement for the reason that literature would be circulated by friends and public meetings addressed by the same people without any expense whatever. Another advantage of taking up the work thru a Free Trade League would be that very strong support would come from every city and town. In these centres there is always a considerable proportion of Free Traders and by uniting Free Traders of the towns and country an irresistible force would be created for the movement. We believe the plan of which this is but a brief outline would furnish an opportunity for those who want to take definite action and want to devote themselves to the cause of Free Trade and at the same time it would relieve the farmers' organizations from the danger which would be sure to follow their entry into active political warfare.

YOUR IDEA OF SCHOOLS

All over the continent the system of education is becoming more and more the subject of discussion and investigation. The aim of all this effort is to provide a system which will place within the reach of every child an opportunity for that kind of education which will best fit him or her for the life's work of service to their fellowmen. In Western Canada the problem is not by any means solved and this applies particularly to the rural school. The city and town schools naturally receive more attention than the rural schools because all the educational experts are located in towns and cities where they have more frequent opportunities of investigation and consultation. No doubt a great deal of valuable aid towards the improvement of rural schools will come from the towns and cities, but to make the rural schools what they ought to be the rural parents and the rural teachers will be the chief factors in the improvement. In working towards this desired end we would like to offer The Guide as a medium thru which ideas and suggestions may be circulated as it is only by this means the best can be secured. As a beginning we would like to ask as many of our readers as are interested to send us an answer to these two questions:—

1. Of all that you were taught at school what has proved most useful to you in after life?
2. What have you learned since leaving school that you might have been taught while there?

To reply to these questions will necessitate some thought on the matter and will also afford an opportunity for an expression of views as to what should be taught in the schools, particularly the rural schools. There is no limitation placed upon the views which may be expressed, the aim and object being to ascertain what part of the teaching received was most useful or helpful and what could be taught in the schools which is now left to be learned in later life at much greater expense. We would like all these answers to reach The Guide office not later than February 10 and no answer must exceed 150 words in length. Every person is invited to answer, including teachers, preachers and trustees as well as those who hold no official position. Particularly we should like to hear from the men and women on the farms.

A SQUARE DEAL FOR SOLDIERS

With maimed and invalided soldiers returning to Canada on almost every boat, it is opportune to enquire if adequate provision is being made for the support of the men who have given their strength and their limbs in the defense of their country, and of the wives and families of those other heroes who have sacrificed their lives on the battlefield. All will agree that it is the duty of the state to take care of the wounded and the dependents of the killed, to support them if their injury is such that they are incapacitated and to make up to them as far as money can do so for the loss which they suffer as the result of partial disability. The present scale of pensions allowed to Canadian soldiers and their dependents, however, is totally inadequate. The pension of a private soldier rendered totally incapable of earning a livelihood as the result of wounds or injuries received, or illness contracted in action, or in the presence of the enemy, is \$22 per month, while if he is injured or contracts illness on active service during drill or training his pension is only \$16 per month. In addition to these amounts a married soldier receives \$11 per month for his wife and \$5 a month for each child, and if his injuries are of such a nature that he requires the constant services of an attendant, such as the loss of both legs or arms, or the sight of both eyes, he may receive an allowance equal to one-third of his pension, namely, \$7.33 a month if wounded in action, or \$5.33 a month if the injuries were received elsewhere. The widow of a soldier of the rank and file receives \$22 a month and \$5 a month for each child, the allowance for boys ceasing at 15 years of age and for girls at 17. A widow's pension is discontinued when she remarries, but she is eligible for a gratuity equal to two years' pension. Officers and non-commissioned officers are entitled to a more generous scale of pensions, the \$22 per month of the private being increased to \$28 for a sergeant, \$31 for a color sergeant, \$36 for a regimental quarter-master sergeant, \$40 for a warrant officer or lieutenant, \$60 for a captain, \$80 for a major, \$100 for a lieutenant-colonel, \$120 for a colonel and \$175 for a brigadier-general, with allowances for attendance and for the wife and children in proportion. A married soldier without children who is totally incapacitated and requires the constant services of an attendant is thus entitled to a maximum pension of \$484 a year if he is from the rank and file, or \$2,370 if he holds the rank of colonel. In our view, and we think most people will agree with us, the scale of pensions is unjust in the discrimination which it shows between the different ranks of the service and totally inadequate in so far as it applies to the rank and file and non-commissioned officers. When a soldier has been rendered incapable of earning a living by injuries received in the discharge of his duties, whether in the firing line or elsewhere, the least that this country can honorably do is to give him a pension of \$75 a month, which is the irreducible minimum on which he can be cared for in comfort. If the present scale of pensions remains in force thousands of maimed and crippled soldiers will be dependent on charity and many of them will become beggars on the streets. Such a future for our wounded soldiers is intolerable. The wonder is that under such conditions so many men have been found willing to enlist. It is only because they have shut their eyes to the personal sacrifice and thought only of the country's safety that the men have been found. An influential committee has taken the question up at Toronto and drawn up a revised scale of pensions which they are proposing to the Dominion Government and we hope that this demand for justice will be