

The Mail Bag

CUSTOMS EXTORTIONS

Editor, Guide:—I was interested in your last week's issue to read an account in a letter from Maymont of charges at the Battleford customs office, as I have been bitten at the same office the last nine months, and would like to know how parcels will come through the Saskatoon office duty free, while at Battleford there is a charge on every parcel you receive. If it is done to help the manufacturers in this country they won't get any help from me, as the goods you buy in the stores in these Western towns are hardly worth the price of the soap you wash them with. At Battleford they charge you 35 to 40 cents for a small piece of cotton goods, almost as much as the goods can be bought for in the Old Country. It seems strange that at one place they should charge you up so, and it is a bad thing for any government who won't allow friends in other countries to send presents to help poor homesteaders out, without making them pay for it. They simply want us to cultivate the land, and if we won't support their manufacturers, well, we must pay for kindnesses which our friends are trying to extend to us.

NOT A LOVER OF THE TARIFF.

FOR A UNITED HUMANITY

Editor, Guide:—When the joyful news reached me that the U.F.A. had formed a union with the Provincial Trades and Labor Council in order to work together for their economic good, I met a farmer, quite prominent in his community, and a member of the school board, who said to me: "What is the sense of the U.F.A. joining issue with the labor unions when the interests of the two organizations are diametrically opposed to one another?" To get this man into an intelligent discussion of the subject was impossible, but he staunchly upheld that farmers were aiming to cut wages down, while labor unions seek the opposite. It seems as though no man of the slightest perception would maintain such a proposition, yet it appears he is not alone. Farmers are driven, of course, to hire their own labor as cheaply as possible, yet there is no class of employers who are so close to the "hired man" stage as the agricultural ones and therefore none who use their laborers better on the whole. To go further, who consume the products of the farm, the 15% of the nation who are capitalists or the 85% who are workers? Will a lower wage then, which takes the purchasing power from the workers, increase the price of food stuffs or not? Ninety-five per cent of the farmers have children who are compelled to join the ranks of the wage workers. How proud a father must feel if he has managed to lower the wages of his daughter as a domestic servant or toiling long hours in a mill or store. How he will revel in the fact that his son has received cut upon cut in wages and soon may expect to be jobless and destitute.

Poverty is the cause of drunkenness, infant mortality, prostitution and crime, and the farmer who uses his influence to lower wages, promotes all these hideous disorders in present day society. The United Farmers of Alberta are otherwise persuaded, thank the good God, who is today "filling the hungry with good things while the rich are being sent empty away."

Yours for a united humanity,
DANIEL F. BOISSEVAIN.
Strathmore, Alta.

DUTY ON THRESHING MACHINES

Editor, Guide:—Our attention has been drawn to the letter dated July 29, 1912, signed by "J. I. Case Threshing Machine Co., R. B. Coleman, sales Manager," and published in your paper, as follows:—

"Grain Growers' Guide,
"Winnipeg, Man.

"We have your favor of the 25th. It is true that the Canadian Customs Department has made a new ruling increasing the amount of duty collected on our class of machinery. Heretofore we paid 20 per cent. on 80 per cent. of the list prices. They now require that we pay 20 per cent. on 87½ per cent.

of the list prices. Ten per cent. is allowed on our factory list to cover agent's commission, and two and one-half per cent. to cover cash discounts.

"We have increased our prices an equal amount to customers. Our product has always been sold in Canada at factory prices, plus the freight and duty. In the United States we sell at factory prices plus freight. The increase that we are obliged to pay in Canada is collected from our customers.

"We are exceedingly anxious to keep the duty down as much as possible for the benefit of customers. To increase the duty makes somewhat of a hardship on the Canadian purchaser. It seems to us that it would be greatly to the advantage of the Western Canadian farmer if U.S. machinery was allowed to enter without duty.

"Our method of selling in Canada is public property for anyone who is interested.

"J. I. Case Threshing Machine Co.
"R. B. Coleman, Sales Manager.
"Racine, Wis., U.S.A., July 29, 1912."

We wish to inform you that neither Mr. Coleman nor any other person in the employ of our firm had any authority to issue said letter. In addition we

20 per cent. off the published list price. Some time ago we reduced these discounts to the trade from 20 per cent. maximum to ten per cent. and six per cent. for cash, or a maximum of sixteen per cent. discount. When we did this, we, of course, recognized that in shipping goods to Canada the law might compel us to pay duty on the new price made by us, only deducting the new discount instead of 20 per cent., which we formerly allowed. The Canadian customs officials could not do otherwise than collect duty on the price at which we sold the goods in the United States. We, therefore, ask you to inform the public to this effect, as we feel that an injustice has been done to the Canadian Government by the letter purporting to come from our firm, which was not authorized in any way by any one in authority, and which we deny as containing the facts and which we repudiate as not only being unfair but as coming from our firm, from anyone who had any authority to write on behalf of our company.

Yours truly,

J. I. Case Threshing Machine Co.,
F. W. Norton, Treas.

Racine, Wis., Oct. 7.

THAT JUICY MELON



From the Calgary Albertan
The people of Canada should at least receive a vote of thanks from the C.P.R. Shareholders just to show "there is no hard feeling."

desire to state that the statements contained therein are incorrect. Representations have been made to us that the letter has been used to convey the impression that the present government has changed the tariff rate on agricultural machinery, and for this reason and only this we have advanced our prices. On our part we wish to remove this impression, and ask you to inform your readers that no change had been made in the tariff on agricultural implements by the present government. The tariff now in force is exactly the same in so far as threshing machines or any other agricultural machinery as it was for several years past.

For some years we sold our machines in the United States and allowed a maximum discount of 20 per cent., and the Canadian customs based their duty on the price at which we were selling the goods in the United States,—that is,

NOTE.—We gladly publish the above letter, being anxious to do justice to all parties. The letter complained of was signed "J. I. Case Threshing Machine Co., R. B. Coleman, Sales Manager," and was published by us in good faith.—Editor.

C.P.R. AND NO TAXATION

Editor, Guide:—There is much ventilation let in on this subject nowadays, nevertheless I would like to add my mite. We in this district of McCafferty, Alta., have just formed a school district, in which there are 11,595 acres, but owing to the C.P.R. owning 2,254, only 8,460 acres are taxable, there being one school section and 241 acres of Hudson's Bay land also. The result is that in order to raise sufficient funds, the settlers have to be taxed the first year to the limit, \$16.00 per quarter section. There is not a wealthy man in the set-

tlement, and we have had two bad harvests, and have had this year's crop made a partial failure by the early drought and late heavy rains. The man who considers the law fair that allows a great wealthy company such as the C.P.R. to go free and makes the man who is struggling against adverse conditions to earn a living, carry the extra burden, must either be a shareholder in the C.P.R. or a well paid employee. The settler is the best, though most unwilling, servant the C.P.R. has, for he enhances the value of their land, and pays his own and their share of the taxes as well; while their land produces a good percentage of the gophers that do the farmer such incalculable damage annually. In this particular township, 42-4, W. of the fourth meridian, and I suppose many more are similarly fixed, the C.P.R. owns so much land, that no pre-emptions are granted, although we are within the pre-emption belt.

HERBERT SPENCER.

Doley, Alta.

FRANK CRITICISM

Editor, Guide:—I know the letters which appear in the Mail Bag are personal opinions, but the comments which appear after the letter, and only when it is unpleasant, are certainly by the editor, and I believe this is not right.

I believe free trade has ruined the farmers in England, and let me tell you that it is unfair to compare the situation now with sixty years ago. Then there were no railways, no steamers and even with free trade it was more costly to haul by roads, some land products costing as much to move one hundred miles as it now takes to move from Alberta points to Liverpool. Living to a certain extent everywhere on a local market it was not affected or little affected by free trade.

But let me refer not to sixty years ago, but to 1897, and read the report of the Royal Agricultural Commission established in 1893. I think it is hard to have a better work or better information. The conclusions were as follows: The values of land in England and Wales were, in 1879-80, £51,798,930; in 1893-94, £40,065,831, or twenty per cent. less. In Scotland the decrease, even smaller, was great.

There was the same decrease in laborers and wages. The total population from 1871 to 1891 in Britain increased by 6,955,888. The number of farm hands decreased in the same time 242,053. If that is a success it is hard to prove.

About the situation in Alberta, I think that our association instead of fighting for reciprocity had much better take up other questions. We need a wider market, that is self-evident, but what is more self-evident is that all our products in order to go abroad must be handled by some middleman and hauled by railways. All we buy is in the same condition.

By reciprocity I suppose we can sometimes get better prices and the duty removed would give a smaller cost to imported goods. But that is not so sure as many think, because the big combines who are strong enough to wring out of us extortionate prices now will be strong enough to do the same again. But I suppose we will pay smaller prices for our purchases and get better for our sales.

It is a fact absolutely beyond dispute, that the railways are extorting excessive rates on all our sales and purchases. By its charter the C.P.R. is not obliged to decrease its freight rates until the shares are paying over ten per cent. I don't know how the reports are made, but I know that as soon as a

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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.