

# The Mail Bag

## CONFESSION OF A ROBBER

Editor, Guide:—I find your paper very interesting and profitable. I hold and have held the same views on the tariff question as yourself, but unlike yourself and possibly many who hold our views, I have profited by protection. My ideal was briefly this—if a band of robbers were operating in our country and we could not stop them, then join them. I have followed this in buying stocks in highly protected industries and in grabbing the unearned increment and have got most excellent results. If the farmer votes or elects to be robbed I am willing and will join the gang who does him up brown. If you publish this don't append my name as I am a little ashamed of this confession. However, I always vote Liberal or for tariff reduction and am willing to help stop the robber gang any time the electors decide to do it.

ROBBER.

Biggar, Sask.

## MUNICIPAL HAIL INSURANCE

Editor, Guide:—As secretary to the Hillview branch of the G.G.A. I have been instructed to write you to the following effect:—That this branch of the G.G.A., having had much local evidence of individual opposition and general apathy towards the Municipal Hail Insurance Act, would respectfully urge on all our branches of the association the need for stirring up interest in this matter both in their own districts and surrounding ones, and also of a few "anxious enquirers" in the direction of their local councils, for even councillors are only human. It has taken a long time and a lot of work and worry to have attained so far and we should be jealous of our position as a province in the van of progress in this matter of hail insurance. Surely, then, it is up to us as an association to exert all our influence in this direction and to see to it that the ground already gained shall but serve to give us securer footing to press onwards and may what is now accomplished be but an index to the future.

JOHN McNAUGHTON.

Piche, Sask.

## WANTS INDEPENDENT PARTY

Editor, Guide:—I regret to say that owing to the length of time that was taken up in organizing the Sunny Alberta local that I have been unable to organize more locals, and owing to such a pressure of work I cannot carry on any organizing for a while, although whenever I get a chance I try to give a very full and accurate account of the gospel of the United Farmers of Alberta.

Now, sir, I would like to draw your attention to the front page of the cover of The Guide, dated July 17, 1912. On this page we are told that the farmer is a manufacturer. That is granted, as part of the farmer's product is food in the finished state and part of it is the raw material, so the farmer is a manufacturer.

Again we are told that farming is the manufacturing industry upon which all other industries depend. Now there is where I beg to differ. The farming industry is just one cog in the machinery of production, therefore how can all other industries depend on farming? Now is not the farmer as dependent on the grocer and the dry goods manufacturer, the machine makers, etc., etc.? The capitalists take good care that none of the wealth producers can get along without depending on the other wealth producers for their very existence.

Now the question is asked, "Has protection made you rich?"

I would like to ask, "Has free trade made you rich?"

Now what difference does it make to us whether we have free trade or protection? These are only two palliatives offered by two different parties of hirelings of the capitalist class, who can so easily

gull the workers. Now England is a free trade country. Are the conditions of living any better there? I think not. This (Canada) is a protected country, are the conditions of living here ideal? I think not. In a free trade country the exploiters are given freedom in their exploitation of the wealth producers. In a protected country the exploiters are fully protected in their skinning of the workers. Even if the farmers were the most independent of the wealth producers (which they are not, as the average farmer works harder and more hours in one day than any other party of the producing class) it would be a mistake to tell them they are the most independent of the wealth producers, as it is hard enough to get farmers to take an interest in the system of living without making them feel independent of the other workers of this earth. Now, sir, would it not be better for all concerned if The Guide and the U.F.A. drop all this old party talk of reciprocity and protection and get busy and discuss the ways and means of forming an independent party who will be pledged to safeguard the interests of all workers? If we had reciprocity, would not American manufacturers raise their prices as they did on cement when the duty was reduced?

NELSON W. DANN.

Nateby, Alberta.

## PROTECTION DOES NOT PROTECT FARMERS

Editor, Guide:—Mr. John Robertson in a recent issue contends, "That there are many farmers farming under protection both in Canada and in the United States who are very well off indeed, if not actually rich." If he had said there is a "small element" he would have been much closer to the facts of the real financial conditions of Western farmers. I am informed by the farmers themselves in some districts that the whole settlement of farmers are so heavily obligated that they can never retire their mortgages. Again, Mr. Robertson says, "I am afraid you cannot convince those men who have farmed in England under 'free trade' and are now farming in Canada under protection that the former condition is better than the latter." In reply, I wish to tell him I farmed 300 acres in England, but owing to landlordism, with its monopoly and the agricultural laborers, three livings have to be made of the land, so you will see that upon strict analysis there is no real analytic resemblance of conditions.

Further, if some farmers in Canada and United States are well off, it is not to the credit of protection, but in spite of the heavy burden of protection, and said prosperity must be credited to other causes and conditions. If the United States is a wealthy nation it also is so in spite of protection. Has she not had absolute free trade within that vast area of states and within that immense population? Is her prosperity not due to that and other great facts of inherent resources of its vast territory and cosmopolitan enterprise in going after business, etc., etc.?

Mr. Robertson thinks that your statement that the average farmer pays out yearly \$200 on tariff taxes is a misprint, etc., etc. I would say if Mr. Robertson has an average family and lives as a man should do, with due regard to social, economy and well being in his home, he cannot get off on an indirect tariff tax of \$200 per annum with tax on farm tools and implements included.

The undersigned has not time to answer other portions of said letter, but will conclude by asking a few pertinent questions which if studied out without any bias or party prejudice should convince Mr. Robertson of the error of the position he advocates.

(1) Will Mr. Robertson name the duties in the Customs Tariff Act of Canada that are for and work out any protection to the grain growers of the West or any farmer of Canada?

(2) At the slow rate of increase of Canada's population since the adoption of the high tariff (National Policy) in 1879 by the Sir John A. Macdonald administration, how long will it take to build up a home market, when prices will no longer be set in Liverpool or Mark Lane on our prairie products?

(3) Can we as farmers after patiently or impatiently carrying the heavy load of high protective duties for thirty-three years be reasonably expected to build up a home market, which on the face of it is a hopeless task? As long as our products increase in greater ratio than our home consumption free trade Britain will fix our prices, till that time arrives protection is a burden upon the farmers of Canada.

Yours truly,

FREDERIC KIRKHAM.

Saltecoats, Sask.

## THE SIKHS AS FARMERS

Editor, Guide:—I have been deeply interested in Mr. K. L. Johnson's letter regarding the Sikhs as farm laborers. Like him I have had the privilege of spending some years in India. With him I agree as to the presence of a real difficulty in seeking to introduce the Hindu to Canadian farms, and yet I am cheered to know that this difficulty has already been overcome in many places, both in British Columbia and in California. Last winter in California I talked with numbers of employers of Hindus and was glad to find how well they were getting on. The superintendent of the Hindu Sun-day School, Dr. C. R. Hagar, Claremont, California, writes: "For a number of months I have been visiting most of the camps in Southern California and I must confess that in the labor market they have no peer as a class of laborers. There is only one opinion expressed by the Americans who have employed them, and that is, 'The Hindus are good workmen, superior to any class of laborers I have ever employed.' I have seen them at their heavy tasks of clearing orange land from rocks and rubbish of every sort and I can testify that they are most faithful to their employers."

As one sees the Sikhs at work one realizes that they are a vastly superior class to the familiar Indian coolie. They are for centuries agriculturists, farming their own lands in the Punjab. Many have had military training. Some are time expired soldiers. In a group of seven one day I found that five had been military policemen in Hong-Kong or Shanghai. Two of them were well over six feet. All men of fine appearance, already accustomed to hold positions of responsibility, and they come here like other enterprising people to improve their prospects. Most of them want to buy land of their own and farm it.

As to the question of the government's reluctance to encourage Indian immigration, again I agree that there are problems. But I see far graver problems in the present policy of exclusion. If all Asiatics were similarly excluded the case would be different. But today Chinese and Japs are coming in and bringing in their families, while Hindu immigration has been stopped, and government has refused the 4,000 Hindus now here, many of whom already own land, the permission to bring in their families. Two well-off Sikhs tried last December. On the same vessel were fifteen Japanese wives who were admitted. The two Hindu wives were only admitted under bond. In spite of a deputation visiting Ottawa and getting a promise from the minister of the interior to admit the wives, government passed an order-in-council in April for the deportation of the two Sikh wives and the women were placed under arrest. After a cabled appeal to the secretary of state for India the minister of the interior on May 24 announced "as an act of grace not to create a precedent" that these two wives might stay on in Canada. But no more wives are to be admitted and no more men under existing regulations can come in. Yet these men are Aryans like ourselves, British subjects who have nobly fought for the Empire. At present, then, we have little prospect of a chance to try the Sikhs. Already there is greater demand for them by employers and farmers than can be supplied in British Columbia. Yet there is room for them in our great land—they could help solve our labor problems. They want to come. What justification is there for this discrimination against the Hindu?

E. R. GRACE.

Strassburg, Sask.

## FARMER CANDIDATE NOMINATED

Editor, Guide:—Farmer delegates from the different polling places in this constituency assembled here today in convention to nominate a farmer candidate to contest this riding at the next general election. A primary ballot was taken and about a dozen nominations resulted. Several withdrew their names. Mr. S. L. Fraser suggested that those who were standing for nomination be willing to sign their resignation to be effective immediately they violated the principles of the farmers' interests or platform. The candidates agreed to this and each was given five minutes to express himself as to what he thought was the duty of a farmer candidate. They all seemed to be agreed that the farmer candidate could do much by keeping awake, watching and suggesting and voting right on any good bill that came up. Balloting was then begun and the final ballot resulted in a majority for Mr. Gust. Malchow, with R. K. Peck a close second.

Mr. Malchow is a pioneer in Alberta, having moved here from the central states twelve years ago. He has always been closely identified with farmers' movements, both in the northern part and the southern part of the province. He very thoroughly understands the handicaps under which Western farmers are laboring and knows their needs legislatively very, very well. Mr. Malchow is a strong reciprocity man, a single taxer, a firm believer in Direct Legislation, in fact he is firmly endowed with the spirit of Western progressivism, has the confidence of his constituency and is backed by a permanent working organization.

Yours truly,

H. G. AHERN

Claresholm, Alta.

## THE BURDENS OF PROTECTION

Editor, Guide:—In response to your general invitation to reply to the letter of Mr. John Robertson in your issue of 31st July, under the caption "Believes in Protection," I beg space for a few suggestions anent this subject, protection and its burdens. Unfortunately, as Mr. Robertson suggests, there are quite a few farmers who "through misdirected statements and one sided argument" yet believe in protection and I suppose we who can see how it robs the toilers of the farm and hinders the national development must have patience and try by appeals to reason and justice to enlighten our brother farmers, who are in darkness, simply, I believe, because of a want of knowledge of the subject.

This is unmistakably shown in the letter referred to by the way a comparison is made between the farmers of Great Britain and ourselves. Surely a little consideration should have shown the writer that the farmer in Great Britain is relatively in the position of the manufacturer in Canada. There the farmer cannot nearly supply the nation with its food and has the advantage of a home market for all he can supply, his competitors, world wide though they be, having to pay a very high transportation charge as well as having to produce it at a relatively great handicap in the cost of their necessities. Think for a moment of the difference it would make in our position if instead of having to ship the bulk of our produce such a distance to market, the greater part required by the country had to be brought in from Europe. Again, in Great Britain the manufacturers are the great producers of the wealth of the nation through their world wide exports, and it is just as reasonable to burden that source of national wealth by increasing the cost of its production through enhanced cost of living for those engaged in the industry and enhanced cost of the raw material, as it is to burden the farmers of this country as they are burdened by this much lauded protection. But there is neither reason nor justice in either and I would venture the opinion that it will be a long day before the British people will go back to protection again. You don't like lengthy communications, so I must close now, but will have something to say later as to the burden placed upon my own back by protection.

Sincerely,

ROBT. FISHER.

Oak Bank, Man.

## WHAT I'VE



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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.