

The Mail Bag

FROM A HOMESTEADER

Editor, Guide:—Please find enclosed \$1.00 for which please renew my subscription to The Guide, which I would not be without for twice the amount, even if it is a hard struggle for us homesteaders to make both ends meet. Conditions here are very bad, with oats at 15 to 18 cents at the warehouse, wheat 40 to 45 cents and flax about 70 cents. I can't see where we are going to get off at and pay 10 per cent. on our machinery notes and pay the bank 10 per cent. when we want to borrow any money from them. Hoping and fighting for a better day.

JOHN K. SUTHERLAND.
Obelisk, Alta.

COST OF OPERATING A FARM

Editor, Guide:—I was very much interested in Mr. Green's account of an interview with a farmer regarding the cost of operating a farm, because he has arrived at practically the same result that I reached by a totally different process.

Mr. Alex McCurdy takes exception to Mr. Green's figures, but only by giving the figures of an hypothetical case that lacks the conclusiveness of a concrete example. To me, however, the only correct method of determining the cost of operating a farm is to put everything on a capitalized basis according to present values, allowing sufficient margin for a reserve fund just as any other modern business man would adopt in industrial or commercial matters. Unless that course is done it is impossible to find the correct position of grain growing.

Land around Borden is said to be worth \$30 per acre, and this figure is now quoted by the C.P.R.

On this basis the working of a certain quarter section I happen to know would show some curious figures:

160 acres @ \$30 (\$4,800), at 8 p.c. Annual charge	\$ 384
House, actual cost, \$800	64
Barn and other buildings, actual cost \$311	24
Horses, \$1,200, annual depreciation	\$100
Implements, \$650, annual depreciation	120
	220

Total annual fixed charges and reserve \$ 692 |

Cr.

100 acres annual wheat yield, or not less than 2,000 bushels marketed at not less than 85c	\$1,700
Less—	
Twine	\$35
Stooking	25
Threshing, @ 10c.	200
Taxes	20
Insurance	25
	305

Total gross income 1,395 || Deduct annual fixed charges | 692 |
| Net results of year's turnover | \$ 703 |

From the above it will be seen that on grain returns alone, even at 85 cents a farmer does not actually receive as much as his daughter may obtain for teaching at the neighboring school, despite the large amount of capital he has to employ and his more serious financial responsibilities.

It is clear then that a farmer cannot afford to sell his wheat at less than 85c a bushel. That he has to do so only shows he is losing by the transaction. Those who claim that wheat can be profitably grown for less money probably have not taken the trouble to go into particulars.

At any rate the two hundred odd farm sales that have taken place during the last four months within a 50-mile radius of Borden, the owners leaving seem to be evidence enough that the farm to many is becoming less attractive than formerly and unless the marketing conditions and prices are improved I fail to see how the process of migration from the country to the

town that is now taking place can possibly be checked. Yours truly,
G. E. WAINWRIGHT.
Borden, Sask.

REPLY TO MR. McCURDY

Editor, Guide:—In reading the statement of Mr. McCurdy in your issue of April 16, about the right way of growing wheat, I was wondering if he ever plowed in stony land? And regarding some of his other statements, they sound all right on paper, but when you put them into practice, the time seems to fly. Maybe Mr. McCurdy would advise us how to procure city teams for their board in the winter. There are a lot of farmers who would be eager to get them for our city teams ask 5 or 6 dollars a day, summer or winter, and it would be a big saving.

I farm about 250 acres. Last year I shipped three carloads of wheat, for which I received the sum of \$960, while this year I shipped two cars of wheat and two cars of coarse grain (shipped in January) and up to the present time I have heard nothing of them. I had to borrow a large amount at the local bank at a high rate of interest, to pay my threshing and machinery notes. Does Mr. McCurdy figure the interest into the actual cost of raising wheat?

I have worked in town, and instead of working four days a week, I have worked continually six ten-hour days a week. I must have been one of the ten per cent. making more than a living, and still everybody around me seemed to be doing just as well. I often wonder why those men who tell us how to grow wheat right are always leaving the farm for the city. I think at least they should practice what they preach.

H. AGEMA.
Edam P.O., Sask.

LUMBER FOR CAR DOORS

Editor, Guide:—Attached is a copy of letter I am forwarding to Claims Dept. of the Grain Growers' Grain Co., which explains its all-too-familiar self. It might also interest your readers to know that at a meeting of the Eagle Creek Grain Growers prior to the Saskatchewan Convention a resolution on this very subject was passed and forwarded with our delegate to the Convention to be dealt with there. Nothing further was heard of it, however.

It was in substance, if not verbatim, as follows: "Whereas it is frequently required of farmers at certain sidings and stations to furnish lumber and build their own car doors before they can load, and whereas payment of claims for lumber supplied is usually deferred for long periods, sometimes 12 months and then only at the instance of repeated demands; Be it resolved that the Grain Act be amended or added to as follows:

"That the agent of railway company shall, at request of shipper, note on bill of lading and memorandum, amount claimed for lumber supplied for car doors, and said claim shall be adjusted and deducted from freight charges when being paid."

I believe this matter is worthy of being brought before the Railway Commission by the Executive of the Grain Growers.

A. NICHOLSON.

[COPY]

Claims Department,
Grain Growers' Grain Co.
Winnipeg.

Dear Sirs,
Re lumber in car No. 59984, ex Asquith, Nov. 11, '12. Your No. of claim, No. 945, amt., \$2.47.

In your letter of Jan. 30th last you said our claim would probably be adjusted in a few days.

We have heard nothing further from you or the C.P.R.

It looks as though the tactics of 1911-12 are going to be repeated in 1912-13 by the C.P.R., when we had claims outstanding against them for 12 months for lumber supplied in car doors. The policy of long-deferred settlement of minor claims in the hope that they will lapse (which is the only inference we

can draw) may be profitable, but it is certainly not creditable to the railway company. Yours respectfully,
NICHOLSON BROS.
Per A. Nicholson.
Eagle Creek, Sask.

TOWARD DEMOCRACY

Editor, Guide:—Democracy means the oneness of all. It does not mean dividing into Liberals, Conservatives, Democrats, etc. He who is a member of a party cannot be a citizen of the universe. Parties are always as unprogressive (or retrogressive) as they dare be. That is one reason why we do not have Direct Legislation. Another is that until we do away with nominations they will continue to pretend their platforms (built to get in on) settle issues. The following is a way of eliminating nominations, parties and their "gum shoe" platforms:

Divide the voters into groups of ten. Let each voter vote for seven of his group, each group casting seventy votes. The one receiving the largest vote is chosen. (In case of tie, the one named first oftenest is chosen.)

He is to be joined by nine others, similarly chosen by nine other groups. Continue this process until the requisite number remain. Direct Legislation and this electoral method complement each other. And this method (called progressive selection) is the next step toward Democracy.

WALTER B. LOWENSTEIN,
32 Gothic Avenue,
Toronto, Ont.

THE STANDARD OF WEALTH

Editor, Guide:—Why should the farmers of the world submit to having the goldbugs set the prices on farm products? Why should gold be the standard of wealth, anyway? The man who works has no use for it, then why should his labor be valued by gold? It is now about seventy years since the nations assembled at Geneva and adopted the gold standard, and under it the farmer and workingman the more and the harder they work the smaller their reward for their effort. It's time for a change. Why not wheat for a standard of wealth? Our western associations should subscribe to the International Institute of Agriculture, Rome, Italy, and through it ask for a conference of the nations for the purpose of making a standard of wealth that is equitable.

CHAS. McLAY.
Melville, Sask.

COWARDLY CAPITAL

Editor, Guide:—Bert Huffman, of Langdon, Alberta, calls the capitalists cowardly in Western Canada because they will lend money on wildcat schemes and will not on actual farm property.

Hold on, Brother Huffman, stop and think. Capital is invested for the sole purpose of increase. Now, let's look at both sides of this question. Who is getting rich in the West, the farmer or the wildcatter? Who pays his notes when due? The wildcatter. Why? Because he is not fleeced by the government through the tariff, railway freight rates, bounty-fed manufactured goods, etc.

If matters not to the banks how you get the money so long as you can pay up when due. The farmer can't do that at all times and it does not matter how hard he works nor how honest he is if he does not pay up when due he is labeled N.G. by the very people who are bleeding him.

Capital knows that the farmer is working at a losing business. Read page 10 of The Guide, March 26.

A. J. F., Ont.

MR. McCURDY CRITICIZED

Editor, Guide:—The institution of making money out of real farming, as dealt with by Mr. Alex McCurdy, April 16 issue, is not exactly the letter of a born-logician. I never knew a puffed-out optimist who did not suffer from the painful contraction of voluntary or involuntary mind cramps. According to his own statements the prosperity of himself and all those he instances was achieved not by authentic agriculture,

but by the consignment of himself as a hired man to the less stiff job of speculating in land. Real estate dabbling was Alex's short cut to making money, hence his slight spasm, which, in conjunction with his ilk, who happen to come out auspiciously, become afflicted with the sudden agonizing disease which I can only describe as prosperity-on-the-brain-men.

We can scarcely pick up a paper in these modern years without noting this frequent recurrence of the disease of mind-cramps of the materialists.

When settlers are dumped down in the West, to be exploited by manufacturers, bankers, railroaders, speculators and politicians, and their just rights and needs never attended to; when any complaint by them is made, the Alex McCurdy-ilk describe their letters as "Blue Ruin." It is only to be expected that this ruinous epidemic in The Guide ought to be quieted in the material interests of men of substance, such as Alex McCurdy and his ilk. If we do not stop this "Blue Ruin" talk and writing, there will be further spasmodic lessons of how to make money on the farm by those Alexs who gave work the go-bye and are gone to live in the cities. The Guide is not issued specially for smart Alexs, but if Mr. McCurdy really would like to digest the truth about working-farmers and their paper, The Guide, yet feels unequal to the task without risking the painful contraction of mind-cramps, he may be relieved from the agonizing pain by inaugurating an Association of the lucky men (farmers included) who are afflicted with the disease of prosperity-on-the-brain—the men who refuse to work because they have become owners. If this does not make him happy and immune from the "Blue Ruin" crowd, he may get relief from a good dose of castor oil and a hot bath, while the upper part of his throat and chest should be rubbed with the anti-spasmodic liniment of unselfish brotherly love to real working farmers.

Mr. McCurdy's letter distinctively shows that he is one of those who, having become a property-owner, assumes every industrious man may also become a retired owner. He and his stripe do not see that by this specific system of privilege to rob the workers, that they are boycotting the prosperity of every human being who is not lucky enough to become an equal-owner.

If all workers were to sell out and could, like Alex, become retired-owners and live in the beautiful parts of our cities, we should have a nation of idlers and no workers; but the puffed-out-optimists of the McCurdy school would, in that case, suffer, not only in mind, but from a combination of mind and stomach cramps, unless they either voluntarily or involuntarily returned to the land as hired men, in spite of their desire for ownership and preference for idle city life. I am writing this letter hoping that in future the puffed-out-optimists will do something with their money and mind-talents, for their half brethren, the workers; or at least to cease their false cry of prosperity until the time comes when it shall be real, true and general. The present conditions of prosperity for the few is not a thing for the press to flaunt, as it does every day, in the face of those who, by the exploiters, are made into discontented slaves and pessimists. Let these insults of the get-rich-quick (with their swollen fortunes) cease. Don't add insult to this detestable specific system of robbing the workers. If the Grain Growers' association and The Grain Growers' Grain company, which Mr. McCurdy says he did so much to start, are not going to do anything more for the farmers than Alex's letter will to stop this "Blue Ruin" Guide talk,

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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.

THE EM. WOM

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FRANC

WIVES CHE

Dear Miss l and say a few letter so I feel so many skill week. I am homesteading, back would be why a woman