



THE GUIDE'S "MAILBAG"



Selections from a Mass of Correspondence Relevant
to the Purposes of "The Guide"

THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE

Millwood P.O., Man., 22nd April, 1909.

To the Editor Grain Growers' Guide, Winnipeg :

Sir,—I should like with your permission to make some remarks on that part of Mr. Partridge's address to the members of the Grain Growers' Association attending the last annual convention, as reported in the February number of the Grain Growers' Guide, page 18, under the heading, "The Independent Candidate." I consider that every farmer in this western country owes Mr. Partridge a deep debt of gratitude. His namesake, the bird, is always prepared to defend her brood with her life, and Mr. Partridge and those who stood with him in a great emergency, known to all of us, risked the whole of their worldly possessions in a fight for us farmers. I therefore differ from him with some diffidence, but think that some of the consequences of acting as he suggests with regard to party politics may have escaped his notice.

I can't help thinking that Mr. Partridge's advice leads us into a cul-de-sac. He forgets that the party man who becomes a member of any of our legislatures always votes with his party, and is therefore perfectly useless to represent any interest that has no say in the party caucus. Take the position in the Dominion House to-day: there are 18 Government members and 17 Opposition members sitting in that House representing constituencies west of Lake Superior, or in other words, the Ins are all but balanced by the Outs, which means that this western country is practically without representation in the Dominion House. What a very different position we should be in if all these 35 members belonged to a third party representing the agricultural interests. The man who always votes with his party practically admits that he is either unable to form a judgment on any given facts or else that he has no care whether the country is governed by white people or black. Surely this is a very bad state of feeling for a man of sense to fall into.

But let us look ahead a little. The population of the west is increasing at such an accelerated rate in proportion to that of Quebec and the old part of Ontario that after the next census, which takes place in 1911, that part now returning 35 members will be entitled to something like 75. Let us remember that Quebec can never return more or less than 65. To-day the representatives of that province outnumber those of the West by 20 votes. In two years' time the West should have turned the scale the other way and be outvoting Quebec by 10. I think any man who thinks at all can see that we can come by our own if we will only stretch out our hands and take it; but we must give up party and vote one way. We want, however, a flag to rally under. I consider that the greatest and most unjustifiable disadvantage under which we labor to-day is the oppression inflicted on us by the

tariff, once the bantling of the Conservatives, but now equally adopted by the Liberals; it is hard to say which parent loves it most. We find many bad things in this world we can't alter, such as the confusion of languages. The protective tariff is also an evil which the nations have brought upon themselves, and to a certain extent, therefore, we must put up with it, but only so far as it helps to keep population in the country by providing them with employment. If we turn to the tariff to-day, what do we find, that the Western farmer derives no benefit whatever from it, whilst the price of everything he needs is enhanced to him by the same means, from the cap on his head to the boots on his feet, he is paying from 20 to 35 per cent. extra because of this protective duty, the cost of his tools, implements and machinery and everything that he needs is increased to him in the same way, but for whose benefit? The manufacturer, who is at present the dog on top, tells us it is patriotic to submit to this perpetual bleeding. Let us see where the money goes. If a man imports \$100 of stuff say from the United States, the duty collected on it goes into the treasury of the Canadian Nation, if he buys the same sort of stuff manufactured in Canada, an amount equal to the duty is added to the price, but the manufacturer puts this amount in his own pocket. How patriotic he is to be sure!

No Sir, the patriotic cry is played out. To enrich the few at the expense of the many is a kind of thing that won't work forever, and it will come to an end just as soon as the agricultural interests drop party politics and stand up for just bare justice to themselves. The power to obtain their just rights is now in the hands of the western population; let them go to work and get there as one man.

Yours truly,

P. H. SPENCER.

FIGURES THAT SPEAK

Editor Grain Growers' Guide,
Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Sir:—Some time ago at a meeting of the Pine Creek branch of the Grain Growers' Association, we passed a motion condemning the bonus system in the pig iron and steel industries. Since then I have been trying to get a few of the prices charged by our implement dealers.

For instance, I bought two small castings from the Massey Harris agent and paid \$2.25 for them. On weighing these castings I find that they weighed a fraction less than 7 lbs., but we will call it 7 lbs. I calculate this to be 32-1-7c. per lb., or \$642.85 per ton for cast iron. At other times I have bought 3 separate castings from the International Co. This was the same casting bought from three different agents, so they all weighed

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