



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. Each correspondent should remember that there are hundreds who wish to discuss a problem or offer suggestions. We cannot publish all the immense number of letters received, and ask that each correspondent will keep his letter as short as possible. 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 aim is to make this department of great value to readers, and no letters not of public interest will be published.

THE SECESSION MOVEMENT

Editor, Guide:—In a recent issue of the Grain Growers' Guide you refer Mr. Editor, rather gingerly to the rapidly growing sentiment in the West of secession from the East. You admit that a considerable feeling along this line is developing in the West but your brief reference to the subject is in the direction of a hush-up article. This seems to be the general policy of the press in considering the secession movement. The writers for the press seem to be either afraid to discuss the matter, or they have deliberately decided to kill it by silence. If the latter is the idea, I am afraid it will not work. I believe it is far better to know the truth than to endeavor to hush up a movement of this kind. There is more danger to be apprehended from a policy of deliberately closing our eyes to a disagreeable situation than there is of taking it into free and open consideration. The Saskatchewan rebellion of 1885 was the result of failure to take cognizance of a menacing situation. A little forethought would have prevented the disagreeable consequences that followed from neglect. A secession movement now among the farmers of the West is a matter of enormously greater concern than the half-breed rising of 1885, therefore it appears to me that it would be a great mistake to endeavor to hush up this matter by neglecting to give it consideration. Better to know the truth at once. If there is anything in the mutterings which we hear of, from gatherings of farmers in the West, it will be better to face the situation at once. Personally a movement with the object of dividing the people of Canada in the way proposed, would be a matter of great regret to me. But there is nothing to gain and everything to lose by refusing to take cognizance of the situation. It will be unfair to the people of both East and West to endeavor to hush up this matter, and in the end may result more disastrously than if we face the issue squarely at the outset. If a secession movement is gaining ground in the West, the people of the East should be informed of it and of its cause. They should not be kept in the dark. We cannot, of course expect anything from the privileged interests of the East, but if the common people of the East were informed of the terrible hardships and loss which their restricted trade policy has imposed upon the struggling farmers of the West, I think they would be inclined to sympathize with us, rather than otherwise. It must be admitted that the farmers of our Western prairies have been placed in a most trying position by reason of the restrictive trade policy that is forced upon us at the dictation of the privileged interests of the East. The defeat of the reciprocity pact at the late election extinguished the only visible ray of hope for relief. This wiping out of all prospects of any early amelioration of the almost pitiable condition in which the farmers of this country have been placed, followed by the unfortunate railway troubles, has made the situation simply one of desperation for many of the farmers. That they should talk of secession as the only available means of relief is not to be wondered at. The enormous loss which has fallen upon our farmers, through the rejection of reciprocity, is of course a loss indirectly to all our people, whether they are engaged in farming or some other calling. Whatever the future may develop, the present unbearable situation in the West cannot continue indefinitely. If the people of

the West, farmers and others, will stand together, irrespective of party, we will find a way to overcome the present difficulties short of declaring for political separation from the East. The people of Manitoba alone, at a time when we were vastly inferior in population and wealth to what we are to-day practically forced the East to abandon the policy of railway monopoly which had been forced upon this country. We now have three prairie provinces, any one of which is enormously stronger and more influential than Manitoba was in the days of the anti-railway-disallowance agitation. We also have a splendid organization among the farmers in all three provinces. An agitation such as we had against the railway monopoly would, with our increased population, have such a force behind it that it would be practically irresistible. It may be noted here that the railway monopoly which was abrogated as a result of the almost unanimous outbreak of the people of Manitoba against it, was part and parcel of the same restrictive policy which is now so grievous a burden to our Western farmers. The railway monopoly policy was conceived with the idea of forcing trade to move only along easterly and westerly lines, and closing off any trade with our neighbors to the south. This is still the policy of the eastern interests which have been able to dictate the policy of our federal government for so many years. It is also true that secession and talk of appeal to the Imperial Government, were freely discussed during the anti-railway monopoly agitation. But when the cause of all the turmoil had been removed nothing more was heard of secession. A movement among the people of the West, backed by the same unanimous sentiment that dominated the anti-railway monopoly agitation, would, I believe, soon bring the eastern trade restrictionists to see the necessity of giving the West a somewhat fairer deal.

D. W. BUCHANAN

Winnipeg, Man

ALASKA WHEAT

Editor, Guide:—If Alaska does not give good results, then none of our varieties do. In 1909 I planted about half an acre. This was damaged by both cattle and hogs, but even then I got ten bushels. In 1910 I seeded seven acres, the returns being 260 bushels, or 35 bushels per acre. This, as compared to 10 bushels per acre of Red Fife, shows fairly good results. Again in 1911 I sowed 60 acres of Alaska. I also had Red Fife, Red Hungarian and Marquis on similar soil. My returns per acre were, Alaska, 50 bushels; Red Fife, 26 bushels; Red Hungarian, 17 bushels; Marquis, 19½ bushels. The Alaska and Marquis were cut six days before the others. That looks to me like good results.

R. Harcourt, on Jan. 3, 1910 made me a baking test of this grain at the Guelph Experimental College and gives the average value at 82.3%. This was from the first crop of this grain grown in this climate by me. Sample of the 1910 crop and of the original seed were sent to another professor in an agricultural college, and he says:—"I may say that there is no comparison between the two. One is soft and starchy, the other being relatively hard and more glutenous." So it is apparent that the grain is greatly improved by being acclimatized.

I have used flour made from Alaska wheat in my own home all winter, and

prefer it to any other for cakes, pastry or bread. Others who have tried it are well satisfied with it.

J. R. BOOTH.

Raymond, Sask.

THE TOLL

Editor, Guide:—Would it not be interesting if statistics were collected and published, showing how much the farmers of the West were made to contribute to the U.S. treasury by the rejection of Reciprocity. I know one man that contributed about \$1,000 in order to get a decent price for his barley. It seems a strange kind of loyalty that forces us to pay tribute to an alien government. Business in this country seems to be in a muddle. I am told that flour made from our own wheat and ground in our own mills is sold in London, Eng., cheaper than we can buy it at the mill. I once got a few sacks at a mill out of a pile they had on a platform ready to load on car, for which they charged me \$2.25 per sack. Their clerk told me they were getting \$1.50 per sack F.O.B. for the balance.

I saw coal oil quoted sometime since in a small village in Ontario at 14 cents a gallon while it is 35 cents here. Now that Ontario man had to pay a considerable haul and one cent a gallon for teaming it 9 miles, and I suppose he would have some profit. So he would not have paid more than 8 or 9 cents per gallon for it. Dealers here no doubt get it as cheap as he does, say 10 cents a gallon. 5 cents ought to pay for handling it here. Who gets the other 15 or 20 cents? We are told that the railway charges are very high, but surely they do not charge 15 cents a gallon. That would be \$6.00 a barrel or \$30.00 a ton, which seems impossible. Still we pay the money and somebody gets it. Who? The Free Press lately gave a list of the retail price of coal oil in different places. Winnipeg was quoted 20 cents and Brandon at 30 cents. Why the difference? I was for a short time in a city in Wisconsin, some what larger than Brandon, and retailers were delivering coal oil to their customers' houses for 12 cents a gallon. It is hard to understand why we have to pay so much and it is only one of the many ways in which we are fleeced. It is much easier to point out a wrong than to indicate a remedy, but I venture to prophecy that if we could get co-operation so organized as to bring our own agencies in close touch with refiners and manufacturers, thus doing away as much as possible with the army of middlemen we are now supporting we would be agreeably surprised at the results. We farmers are getting a wonderful lot of cheap advice at present, they will force us into mixed farming, whether conditions are favorable or not. If these advisors would bend their energies to get the duty removed from cement and lumber so that we could afford to build shelter for stock, it would have more effect than any amount of advice.

JOHN McLAREN.

Note.—Mr. McLaren is nearly 80 years of age. But neither the young nor the older ones are able to escape the heavy toll levied by special privilege.—Editor.

MIXED FARMING THOUGHTS

Editor, Guide:—We have heard a good deal lately from our politicians and others advising the farmers to go into mixed farming, and others advise them to store their wheat instead of rushing it to market all at once. Now as things are at present it is simply impossible to do either by the great majority of farmers or homesteaders. In the first place as to mixed farming, the great majority of homesteaders are men of small means who have to go in debt for horses or oxen and implements to make a start on their homesteads and by the time they get their patent have to go to the loan companies and mortgage their lands and very few can afford more than a cow for family use and some not even that. At present rate of settlement and prices of cattle each year is getting harder for anyone who wishes to engage in mixed farming. When our politicians and capitalists blocked reciprocity they at the same time blocked mixed farming, as in order to do that a large number of cattle, sheep, hogs, etc., would need to be imported which with present tariff restrictions on all things connected with farming is out of the range of settlers' pocketbooks; also as to mixed grain raising, barley has suffered more than wheat by the defeat of reciprocity. Then

as to holding the wheat, judging by this locality, nearly all farmers have to sell their wheat and any other grain they raise early in fall or winter in order to pay for their implements, store bills and the thousand and one expenses which go with farming, such as hired help, twine bills, threshing, in fact they are too numerous to mention, and the manufacturers and others all insist on getting their money on or about November 1, and if it is not paid they charge 10 to 12 per cent. interest, and if one goes to the bank, and they kindly let you have the money you also have to pay a high rate of interest. Add to this, the price of wheat is always lower after navigation closes and generally remains so till nearly spring. It is very easily seen that unless one has means to hold grain till well on into the spring months they are bound to lose, and in addition they would have to haul their grain 10, 20 or 30 miles as the case may be when they should be at work on their land. Much more might be said, but this much is sure that with everything against it, as above mentioned, and high prices of lumber for building either stables or granaries and our politicians laying on burdens and taxing the farmer on everything he does or attempts to do, the farmer is between the devil and the deep sea, and in a good many cases is driven out of business altogether or so burdened with debt that he knows not what to do or which way to turn. Asking pardon for such a long letter, I am,

Yours truly,

H. T. HARDING.

Lougheed, Alta.

NEVER SAY DIE

Editor, Guide:—I read with interest the letter written by Mr. F. E. Sugden, of Cheadle, Alta. Cheer up, Mr. Sugden, and hang on, for "God hates a quitter." Our country here is a new country, but it isn't cursed by the land speculating companies, for there is no company land except the Hudson's Bay. This is all open prairie and wheat was not badly frosted here last year. This country is so new and the farmers so poor that it seems hard to start an association. I am about to give up the task of organizing a local organization and send my contributions direct to help headquarters. I believe that the older members should be taxed \$5 per head per year to fight the battles of the farmer to circularize the farmers here in the West and to send experienced men to Ottawa.

I believe that in future the farmers' bank will go hand in hand with the farmers' elevator and I believe that now is the time to start planning and working up interest in a farmers' bank to start business three years hence. I would be glad to have information as to just how to organize a farmers' elevator company so as to allay suspicions among my neighbors of any snide game and make it so each farmer would feel secure against fraud. Also I wish to study the latest up-to-date elevator machinery so as to be ready to build by the fall of 1913, when I expect to have a thousand acres in crop. I would like to know where I can get books that will teach me how to organize a farmers' bank so I can talk up the advantages of same during the next three years and know just how to finance and organize the bank at that time.

M. L. SABIN.

Maude, Sask.

ONTARIO SINGLE TAX COMMISSION

Toronto, Ont. March 27.—A special committee of the legislature is to be appointed in the course of a few days to inquire into the whole question of assessment with the two single tax measures now before the House as a basis of the investigation.

The announcement was made by Hon. Mr. Hanna to-day during the debate and in making it he assented to the second reading of both bills. The provincial secretary suggested that the special commission take a number of representative towns and cities and work out the effect that the adoption of the principle of land taxation only would have.

HIGHER COST OF LIVING

According to a report tabled by Hon. T. W. Crothers in the House of Commons, wholesale prices reached a higher level in 1911 than at any other time in the present generation. As far as the department of labor can find out, the only years in which prices compared with 1911 were 1882-4 and 1872-3.